

Threnody VIII

Orszula! Your death has left a void in our home,
As your lingering afterglow fills each room.
Dear child, our hurt is made worse by the memory
Of the sweet little soul who brought us such joy.

Kochanowski's lament for the death of his little daughter at the age of thirty months is eloquent and striking. It reveals a humanist poet, a learned man, overcome by grief for a daughter, not only a child, whose social consequence in that era was small, but a female, whose consequence was smaller yet. To underscore his pain, the poet chooses (and freely adapts) the genre of the threnody, for which he must reach into Greek antiquity.

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Although a number of versions of Kochanowski's *Threnodies* have been published in English in recent years, Barry Keane's version is undoubtedly the best English translation of this masterpiece of Polish Renaissance poetry. The accompanying scholarly commentary only completes this achievement, elucidating as it does the Classical traditions in which Kochanowski wished to place his most personal work.

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Professor of the University of Warsaw

Grief – Anger – Acceptance. Jan Kochanowski's Threnodies

Grief – Anger – Acceptance

Jan Kochanowski's

Threnodies

A verse translation with Introduction and Commentary
by Barry Keane

with a foreword by Margaret King