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Abstract

Sickness - Relative - Loss. The Sickness Narrative in the Recent Works of Ludmiła Marjańska

The sickness narrative characterizes disease as a process of change, decay and instability, which indicates the need to redefine itself. The most often described subjects of analysis are diseases such as cancer, AIDS and heart attacks. Diseases with less known aetiology, such as those associated with brain function disorders, are less often culturally interpreted. Ludmiła Marjańska in her recent poetry, in particular the collection entitled *Żywica*, deals with the problem of staying with a relative who suffers from dementia. It records her careful observations of her husband and the recognition of herself as being in a crisis which radically transforms their previous intimacy. It also registers changes in the behavior of the person with dementia, the gradual loss of their mental and physical abilities, reminiscences of the past. Important indicators of her narration are: an acceptance of her weakness, her sense of despair and helplessness, her attachment to her ill husband, and the acceptance of his weakness. The poet enriches the cultural discourse devoted to illness related issues with a subjective reflection on accompanying a relative during his loss of identity and the dramatic contraction of his perception of himself and the world.

Keywords: anthropological literary studies, contemporary Polish women's poetry, the absence of intimacy, the perspective of a carer, Alzheimer's disease.