



I was eight years old that year.

Each day of the summer holidays,

I wrote one sentence in my notebook:

one thing that had happened to me.

That was my assignment from school,

the condition for moving on to the next year.

I still have the notebook.

17.7.1939

A young girl arrived at the guesthouse
where I'm staying.






23.7.1939

I found a big caterpillar and brought it to our garden.







An oil painting of a landscape. The foreground is dominated by a large, dark brown tree trunk that curves across the bottom. The foliage is rendered in vibrant, textured brushstrokes of various shades of green, from bright yellow-green to deep forest green. In the background, there are hazy, blue and purple mountains under a pale, yellowish sky. A small, dark silhouette of a plane is visible in the upper right quadrant, circled by a thin white line. The overall style is expressive and somewhat abstract, with visible brushwork throughout.

26.7.1939

A plane circled over Anin.





28.7.1939

I saw a beautiful woodpecker.

31.7.1939. r.

Nad Aninem samolot na =
ciągał szybowca.

1.8.1939. r.

Przyjechała do mnie bab =
cia.

2.8.1939. r.

Czekam na przyjazd
mumusi.

31.7.1939

A plane towing a glider flew over Anin.

1.8.1939

Grandma came to see me.

2.8.1939

I'm waiting for Mummy to arrive.

3.8.1939. r.

Byłem na stacji Amin.

4.8.1939. r.

Byłem 2 razy na stacji
Wawer.

5.8.1939. r.

Przyjechał do mnie dziad-
dziwis.

3.8.1939

I went to Anin railway station.

4.8.1939

I went to Wawer railway station twice.

5.8.1939

Grandpa came to see me.





25.8.1939

I read a nice story.



29.8.1939

Daddy came to visit me.








6.9.1939

They dropped a bomb near us.



11.9.1939

We can hear cannon blasts.

About the Book

The author of the notebook on which this book is based is still alive. In 1939, he lived with his parents and younger brother in the Mokotów district of Warsaw. That year, he was spending the summer holidays with his brother in the care of their nanny, who after a while was relieved by their grandmother. After staying at a guesthouse in Anin (a residential area in the Wawer district, then adjacent to Warsaw), followed by several days at his family home, he went to stay with his grandparents at their house with a garden in the Żoliborz district. After the war broke out, the boys' grandfather took them to their great-grandfather's house in Milanówek (a town about 30 km southwest of today's Warsaw), where they stayed with their grandmother.

In each of these places, eight-year-old Michał wrote one sentence a day in his notebook. That very notebook has been reproduced in its entirety within this book. Most entries have also been replicated in text on the illustrated pages, with the translated text using corrected and standardised spelling.

The sentence dated 29 August records the author's last meeting with his father. His father was a pilot and leader of a bomber squadron. He lost his life on 9 September 1939 in a plane crash.

The last sentence of the notebook – which is not accompanied by an illustration – probably repeats rumours that were circulating at the time and is not historically accurate. It does convey, however, the prevailing mood in the country and the widespread faith in British support.

The “Jabłkowskis” mentioned in the text refers to the Jabłkowski Brothers department store on Bracka Street in Warsaw. Magdusia was the author's cousin. Miłosna likely refers to today's residential area of Stara Miłosna in Warsaw's Wesoła district. Żeromski Park is also located in Warsaw.

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