

Preparing a Curriculum Vitae

(*Pisanie zyciorysu*)

Wisława Szymborska

What is required?

Fill out the application

and attach a curriculum vitae.

Regardless of life's length

its outline should be short.

Mandatory are conciseness and selectivity.

Substitution of addresses for landscapes

and firm dates for shaky memories.

Of all the loves only the marital will do,

and of all the children only those actually born.

More important than whom you know is who knows you.

Mention travel only if abroad.

Membership in what but without the whatfors.

Honors but without the wherefores.

Write as though you have never talked with yourself

and have always steered clear of yourself.

Say nothing about your dogs, cats and birds,

your precious keepsakes, friends and dreams.

Rather the price than the value, the title than the contents.

Rather the size of the shoes than where he is going,

the person they take you for.

Attach a snapshot too, with one ear exposed.

What counts is its shape, not what it hears.

And what does it hear?

The clatter of machines turning paper into pulp.

(Engl. transl. by Magnus J. Krynski and Robert A. Maguire, in "Two Poems by Wisława Szymborska," *The Polish Review* 26/1 [1981], 58–60)