

**Estelle Wachtel-Torres, M.D. Literary Competition
2014 Grand Prize Winner
2014 Best Polish Theme**

**Poland
By Anthony Stachurski**

My father's homeland-

but have I come too late?

After all, the dead cannot be expected to

greet me at the station; therefore,

there is no one to whom I need apologize.

So why now?

An aging father? Guilt? A greater understanding of

my heritage?

For sure, I want to see his house on Henrietta Street,

the picket fence and garden with the sunflowers,

the pea and tomato plants, the rabbits in

the hutch, the pigeons on the roost.

Maybe I will learn the language

and read Polish history, ride the red

and white buses, walk in the parks

and admire the statues of Chopin, Copernicus,

Curie and Mickiewicz, shake hands
with the dairy farmers, truck drivers, teachers,
mayors, preachers, artists, and scientists.

I want to sing the national anthem
with my fellow countrymen on the occasions
of historical and national importance.

Ah! What's the use!

Who am I kidding? It's too late.

I'm too old.

But I will be sure to tip the taxi driver, nicely,
buy amber cufflinks from Gdansk
and glossy chapbooks of the lives
of famous Poles like Lech Walesa and Karol Wojtyla.

For sure, I will buy a large Polish flag
and fly it proudly from the patio of my house in
Tucson, Arizona.