

A D A M C Z E R N I A W S K I

Hunting the Unicorn

Stepping lightly along cresting waves
he was now a speck on the far horizon
clouded round with sky-blue leaves—
and behind him a pack of hounds and huntmen
blundering about baying and blowing horns
sinking in bogs and overgrown gulleys

His watery eyes
reflected the sea wind's veins

There were 37 huntsmen
and 31 hounds, the best of their breed

the above facts were set down in a district office
in the presence of numerous witnesses
but we still lack the data
needed to say what equals x

Listening in the distance
to the barking of horns
and the crack of thickets and branches
he pauses
milk-white and solitary
veiled in a landscape of ferns
lit by a sun of edgy leaves

And so on a warm day he set off for the west
on a wave of blue wind

but we still lack the relevant facts

July 1955

(Translated from the Polish by Iain Higgins)