

## THE OLD TOWN

In a poem, in a dream, I turn and find myself walking through the Old Town. Is it Edinburgh? Krakow? In the poem, in the dream, it's both, somehow, it's both at the same time.

I walk on down the Canongate to Market Square. It's Festival time, there's jazz in the streets, poetry in the air. I turn and find myself in a poem in a dream. Where? Here in this bright room.

Stevenson and Conrad trade stories, tell their tales, travellers come home at last to this place. Milosz and MacCaig flyte, take flight, a zen Calvinist, a catholic atheist - their ideas fizz and flare.

Language is the only homeland, says Milosz. MacCaig responds, My only country is six foot high... Beyond the poem, the dream, the world is turning mad, hellbent on self-destruct.

So praise them, these sister-cities of literature, as one, Edinburgh - Krakow, Krakow - Edinburgh, as one, holding to the dream, the poem, to language, our homeland, our hope.

Alan Spivey

A gift for Krakow UNESCO City of Literature  
from Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature

May 2018