

Mother Tongue

By Cyprian Kamil Norwid

"Let's first be a thunderbolt rather than a thunderclap:

For wild horses thunder and whinny;

First d e e d s !

(ind) - and words? and thoughts?...

(ind) - later!...

The enemy has corrupted our mother tongue -- --"

Energumen shouted at Lirnik

And pounded his shield until it bent out of shape.

Lirnik replied: "Not sword, not shield -- defend our Language,

But --- masterpieces!"

-translated by Walter Whipple