



Chanel Brenner

### What Would Wisława Szymborska Do?

I sit, pen in hand, journal before me,  
and think, “What would Wisława Szymborska do?”

She, with her multi-faceted lens,  
her uncanny ability to surprise,  
her buoyant, elegant words.

The pen in my hand writes:

I would reassemble him,  
piece by piece.  
Un-burn his flesh, chips of bone  
and teeth, powdery ashes  
like seeds in soil birth anew.

I would reclaim his beating heart,

his kidneys, his liver.  
Kindly return the recipients their own.

I would cross a line through the words,  
He died.

I would classify an Arteriovenous Malformation,  
a work of fiction.

I would place him back in his bed where he  
was safely tucked and have him awaken after  
a dream-filled slumber.

I would create something out of nothing.

Birth out of death,

Life out of loss.

Isn't that what poets do?

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Chanel Brenner's poem, printed above, won the 2012 Words For Riley Poetry Contest; as a result it was placed on temporary display at the James Whitcomb Riley Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana. Brenner has studied "method writing" with the poet Jack Grapes and is a member of his Writers and Poets Collective.

Image: "Wisława Szymborska," from Vitro Nasu.