

**Krzysztof Zanussi**

## **On the Path to Melancholy**

Everyday concepts often carry a unique emotional color, rarely showing any ambivalence. Such is the case with melancholy. The veil of sadness that envelops melancholy can be pleasant and unpleasant, desirable, or unwanted. On one hand, there is romanticism, Chopin's nocturne, an indefinable longing for an unreachable ideal. The memory of lost happiness transports us back to past times, which we only perceive from a distant perspective as the best of what could have been given to us. On the other hand, melancholy is an expression of disappointment, and barrenness, a void that dangerously floods the oppressed soul, emerging from some dark corners of the subconscious.

Melancholy is always slow, unfamiliar with violent swirls or sudden outbursts. It meanders rather than strides and certainly does not rush or race anywhere. Melancholy descends like fog and, until it thickens, can arouse sensations that we consider pleasant. Yet, when intensified and denser, it sucks like a whirlpool into the abyss. Its victims elicit deserved sympathy, but there are also beneficiaries. Whoever has lightly immersed themselves into melancholy is richer than those who have never encountered it. Those who have never heard the rustle of fleeting moments in their lives, who have not tasted the sorrow of transience, and who are unaware that everything that happens on this earth is irreversible and thus final should seek an encounter with melancholy. Conversely, the other half of humanity would guard against the treacherous charms of little sadness, which can deceitfully lead to despair.

*Trans. Adrian Mróz*

