

A large, white, serif capital letter 'P' is centered on the right side of the page. A white crosshair, consisting of a vertical line and a horizontal line, is positioned behind the letter, intersecting at its center. The background is a solid, medium-blue color.

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Dutch
Poetry
Classics

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Herman Gorter Poems of 1890

Starting point of Dutch Modernity

Herman Gorter (1864-1927) was a leading member of the Eighties Movement, a highly influential group of writers in the Netherlands at the end of the nineteenth century. His first book, a 4,000 verse epic poem called *May*, sealed his reputation as a great writer upon its publication in 1889, and is regarded as the pinnacle of Dutch Impressionist literature. Gorter rapidly followed this up with a book of short lyric poetry simply *Poems* in 1890, which was equally hailed as a masterpiece. Thanks to the publication of a.o. *The School of Poetry* (1897) and his endeavours to combine lyricism and social involvement, his poetic significance remained undisputed. Today his poems are regarded by many as the starting point for Modernity in Dutch poetry as a whole.



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Herman Gorter in translation
Gorter's poems have been published in over ten languages, including German (Maas & Van Suchtelen), Frisian (Frysk & Frij), English and Japanese

Herman Gorter published his *Poems of 1890* one year after his very successful first book of poetry, *May*. It marked a radical new departure in poetry, not only in a Dutch but in a European context. Gorter aimed at a poetic form of what later became known as 'sensitivism': the recording of fleeting, fragmentary moments of individual experience with an almost mystical intensity. The only obvious point of comparison for this new-found artistic and verbal extremism is the Rimbaud of 'Le bateau ivre', 'Voyelles' and 'Un saison en enfer', though there is no question of any direct influence.

The result of Gorter's attempt was a series of a hundred or so poems, some of only two lines (e.g. 'You're a dusky white lily girl, / You're a butterfly velvet swirl') and none longer than a few pages. They still retain a thread of rhyme, mostly in full rhyming couplets, but this serves as a background for irregular line lengths and syntax, a radical use of neologism, synaesthesia, surging eroticism, a haunting fragmentary musicality and occasional astonishingly simple and direct love poems. Gorter's explosive and sometimes tortured expressionism recalls that of his contemporary Vincent van Gogh.

Any of our sophisticated compatriots, from the highest rank to the lowest, should take of his hat immediately, as soon as this man's immortal name is mentioned.

Willem Kloos, 1891

He hasn't grown old at all, Gorter, and I don't think his best work ever will.

Martinus Nijhoff, 1952

So many years after his death, it's still a great pleasure to read his poetry. For she is emotion, she is music, she is eroticism, and those never age.

Pieter Boskma, 1997

That cold flesh of another
against my own dry knuckles
and my eyes unseen in the night –
that cool, juicy flesh – and all the might
of me into the night – as if I'm dead,
all black, no white, no red –
my whole head cools, it would seem,
nowhere does a goal gleam –
so beautifully black the night's pall
eyeless, with no thoughts at all,
that wet bath of night,
that drowned state, that hole in daylight,
that dewy feeling round here,
my head so beautifully clear.

(Translation by Paul Vincent)

J.C. Bloem Collected Poems

Comforting gloom

The poet and essayist J.C. Bloem (1887-1966), after obtaining a degree in law, spent much of his life going from one uninteresting administrative post to another. Among other things, he translated the incoming nightly telegrams for a large newspaper, and worked as a clerk at magistrates' courts that had been listed for closure. He found this work an absolute torment and became legendary for his laziness and his drinking. But his small poetic oeuvre gained him great acclaim and an unprecedented number of readers.

Bloem's so-called laziness and his fame were interconnected in some way. His reluctance to commit to his jobs was rooted in a deeply felt belief that material success was meaningless, since human life is surrounded by the darkness of death. After the big dreams of his youth, he became more and more obsessed with the losses that life inevitably brings. Bloem felt that, as our existence is caught between two endless silences, the most we can say in the end is that it was loud for a brief moment. With his increasingly sombre outlook, he managed to touch tens of thousands of readers, and, paradoxically, offer them comfort. Reading his poetry helped them accept the unacceptable.

Bloem's poems are paradoxical in another way too: he uses strict classical forms, while at the same time his poetry sounds surprisingly natural and simple. The simplicity is deceptive, however; very tellingly, the 'lazy' Bloem would sometimes spend days reworking just a few lines of poetry. In this way, using a limited vocabulary, he could achieve his own impressively subtle range of suggestion within strict boundaries.

In Bloem's view, every passing day takes something away from life. But despite this gloomy perspective, his poems are rarely of a dull grey; the greyness has a soft glow, even if that glow is often almost beyond our reach.

What has always captivated Bloem's readers is the warmth and humanity of his voice. Not only has it earned him a place as one of the most important Dutch poets of the twentieth century, but it has made him loved by a wide audience, so much so that some of his verses have become winged words.

I wish for everyone to find the happiness of Bloem's
sadness and gloom.

De Standaard der Letteren

Dapper Street

Nature is for the satisfied or hollow.
And what does it add up to in this land?
A patch of wood, some ripples in the sand,
A modest hill where modest villas follow.

Give me the city streets, the urban grey,
Quays and canals that keep the water tamed,
The clouds that never look finer than when, framed
By attic windows, they go their windswept way.

The least expectant have most to marvel at.
Life keeps its wonders under lock and key
Until it springs them on us, rich, complete.

One dreary morning all this dawned on me,
When, soaking wet in drizzly Dapper Street,
I suddenly felt happy, just like that.

(Translation by Judith Wilkinson)

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J.C. Bloem in translation
Bloem's poems have been published in English
(Avalon Press) and Spanish (Plaza & Janés)

Martinus Nijhoff Awater

Twentieth-century exploration of the modern world

Martinus Nijhoff was born in The Hague in 1894, into a family of booksellers and publishers. During his life he published four collections of poetry, which belong to the best work ever published in Dutch. Right from his debut with *The Wanderer* in 1916, he was recognized as a poet of rare brilliance. His next collections, *Forms* in 1924 and *New Poems* in 1934, confirmed his reputation as a great innovator of the Dutch literary landscape, although he remained faithful to traditional verse forms. His last important work of poetry was the long poem *Zero Hour*, which was published in conjunction with *An Idylle* in 1942. After that, he mainly dedicated himself to writing plays and translations, until his untimely death in 1953.

The poetry of Martinus Nijhoff possesses an intoxicated clarity that conceals enigmatic worlds behind its ostensible simplicity. Nijhoff was familiar with international modernism: he stayed in Paris regularly in the 1920s and followed artistic developments there closely. As an influential critic he developed an anti-romantic, modernist outlook on literature that displays a correspondence with the poetics of Paul Valéry and T.S. Eliot: poetry is not an expression of emotion but rather an autonomous organism that the poet constructs with the application of all his or her technical ingenuity; the substance is generated by the language itself during the creative process.

His long epic poem *Awater*, which appeared in 1934 as part of *New Poems*, is indisputably one of Nijhoff's most important works, which immediately makes it also one of the most important works in twentieth-century Dutch poetry. It's an exploration of the modern world, but the purport remains ambiguous, as is often the case in Nijhoff's work. He's a master in presenting a vivid mystery that, in an apparently self-evident articulation, consistently challenges one to formulate new interpretations. His poetry has continued to fascinate readers right down to the present day and seems to function time and again as a point of orientation for new poets.

Nijhoff is undoubtedly one of the most important poets
of the twentieth century. Unique in his era, he managed
to reach out to the diverse movements of international
modernism without losing the distinctiveness of his own
oeuvre.

Leesidee

A very good Dutch poet is Nijhoff. His poem 'Awater' is the
poem to reckon with, one of the grandest works of poetry
in this [twentieth] century... This is the future of poetry,
I think, or it least it paves the way for a very interesting
future.

Joseph Brodsky

(...)

Bursts of electric light on the façade
keep writing and rewriting the restaurant name.
A doorman at the glass revolving door
is posted there to help a double queue
of people in and out. We go in too
and hear the sound of music as we enter.
Awater is no stranger here it seems.
Heads turn as he strolls in between the tables.
'What?' whispers someone. 'Don't you know Awater?'
I think he's an accountant, some such thing.
I do know him, I just don't know him well.
Some say he spends his evenings reading Greek,
but others claim it's actually Irish Gaelic.'

(...)

(Fragment of *Awater*; translation by David Colmer.)

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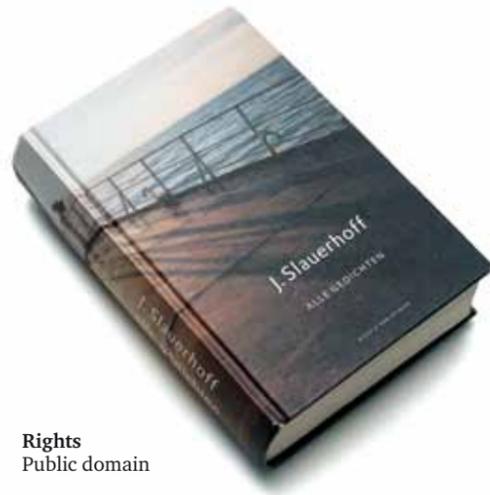
Martinus Nijhoff in translation
Nijhoff's poems have been published in over ten
languages, including English (Anvil Press Poetry),
German (Suhkamp), Russian (University of
St. Petersburg) and Slovenian (Sodobnost)

J. Slauerhoff

Collected Poems

A romantic poet in modernist times

Besides poems, J. Slauerhoff (1898-1936) also wrote stories, novels, and a play. In addition, he published travelogues and reviews. Ten collections of his work were published during his comparatively short life. Despite his 'violations' of verse technique, Slauerhoff was regarded by his contemporaries as a genuine poet with a completely distinctive voice. Nowadays he is still widely sold and read.



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J. Slauerhoff in translation
Slauerhoff's prose and poems have been published in over twenty languages, but until now a fully-fledged Selected Poems has only appeared in Frisian (Bormmeer) and Portuguese (Círculo de Cultura Portuguesa na Holanda)

J. Slauerhoff owes the unique position he occupies in Dutch literature to completely personal themes he carved out in equally personal poetry. Longing for the passionate love for a woman, struck by the tragedy of loneliness, the yearning to be elsewhere or somewhere in the past, the desire for the sea, the disenchantment with present-day life, the awareness of degeneration, all these themes mark him as a late Romantic poet. On the other hand, the rawness and acrimony of his tone, as well as his split personality, make him a true exponent of his era.

Born and raised in Leeuwarden, capital of the province of Friesland, Slauerhoff studied medicine in Amsterdam and became a ship's doctor on Dutch vessels sailing to East Asia. His poor health was repeatedly the cause of broken employment contracts. Accordingly, he led an itinerant life. 'Nowhere but in my poems can I dwell,/ Nowhere else could I a shelter find' are the first lines of one of his most renowned poems, which can be regarded as characteristic of his life and work.

His work also displays a certain restlessness, which he not only depicts in the content of the work but also substantiates in the form of his poetry. His verses are often 'unfinished'. Unlike most of his contemporaries Slauerhoff adhered to classical verse forms, but his verse structure is often irregular. A deliberate cynicism or grotesque imagery contributes to the coarse nature of his poetry, in which a vulnerable sensitivity shines through the thin membrane of the verse.

Slauerhoff, who is referred to as the only *poète maudit* in Dutch literature, was influenced by French poets (Rimbaud, Verlaine, Corbière), the Czech/German Rilke, and several Chinese poets (Bai Juyi, Li Po), whose work he translated.

His restless soul still shivers through in Dutch literature, incomparable to anyone.

Cees Nooteboom

Homeless

Nowhere but in my poems can I dwell,
Nowhere else could I a shelter find;
No love of home preoccupied my mind,
A tent could be uprooted by the gale.

Nowhere but in my poems can I dwell.
While I'm still sure that in the desert bare,
In steppes, in towns or in some wooded vale
A roof can still be found, I have no care.

Though it be long, the day'll dawn without fail
When before eve my former strength declines
And pleads in vain for the frail words and signs
I once built with, and earth will have to keep
Me enveloped and I'll have to bend down deep
To where my grave bursts open, dark and pale.

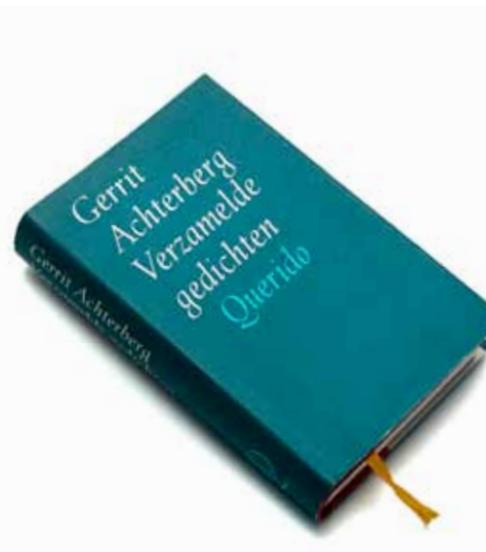
(Translation by Paul Vincent)

Gerrit Achterberg

Collected Poems

A living struggle between live and death

Gerrit Achterberg (1905-1962) won all the major Dutch literary awards, and in 2005 the 14th edition of his *Collected Poems* was published. Dozens of Dutch and Flemish writers dedicated a poem to him, including Harry Mulisch. What attracted him about Achterberg was purely the sound, the language, the invoking of something that is beyond the stars and that greatly appealed to his interest in metaphysics. He could think of no one to compare Achterberg with in foreign literature – except perhaps Paul Celan.



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Gerrit Achterberg in translation
Achterberg's poems have been published in over ten languages, including Spanish (Losada), Russian (University of St. Petersburg) and English (Oolichan Books)

From his youth until his unexpected death, Gerrit Achterberg lived in seclusion. Firstly on one side of the so-called Utrecht hill ridge, in the Calvinist rural village Neerlangbroek. There he made friends with the son of the local Count. Later, in the difficult crisis years of the 1930s, when Achterberg had failed as a teacher and in despair had killed his landlady in the city of Utrecht, this nobleman became his life-long protector. After detention in a number of psychiatric institutions, Achterberg went to live in Leusden, on the other side of the same Utrecht hill ridge. He lived there with his wife and wrote the impressive cycle *Game of the Wild Hunt* (1957). In it, the influence of living in the shadow of castles and churches is much in evidence – as is the universal theme of the search for a lost love. She sometimes takes the form of a marble statue and she's always alive in the completely original imagery of the poet. The same applies to other characters. His mourning mother, for example, can be 'a grey Friday morning' that has to do the room, while dust quivers; his father leads cows as if celebrating a mass: 'their tongues curled round his hands like a fish', and the poet himself is a cow that is so blissfully being milked by the farmer. In his poems, *bronze* becomes 'a tomb of wind and wood' and *cellophane* 'an aquarium of light'. Famous artists and philosophers such as Spinoza, Hercules Seghers and Zadkine populate his poems; politicians and psychiatrists are not spared criticism and, as a traveller, he visits Golgotha in order to meet Jesus, that 'trader in old rust'.

Out of dead matter, the poet makes a living struggle between life and death. In the poem he wants to come together with the beloved and he considers the poem toll-money, paid so as to be able to escape from the psychiatric institution. 'Leg als laatste wat gij doet, al mijn gedichten aan mijn voet, krachten, waarmee ik opstaan moet' (Place as your final act all my poems at my feet, forces, by means of which I must arise).

The Poet as a Cow

Grass... and having grazed,
lying here on folded legs
with eyes amazed
that I don't need to take a step
yet find my mouth as full
as when I walked the field.
It must have slipped my mind again
what kind of animal I am.
Reflected in ditches when I drink,
I see my head and think:
why is that cow so upside down?
In time the gate I use to rub against
grows old and grey and greasy smooth.
I'm shy of frogs and children and they
of me: they find my tongue too rough.
The farmer's milking is such bliss,
I overlook his avarice.
Quite unaware, I dream in mist at night
that I'm a calf, resting by its mother's side.

(Translation by David Colmer)

Ida Gerhardt Collected Poems

A sense of timeless clarity

Ida Gerhardt (1905-1997) was a teacher of classical languages from 1939 to 1963. In 1942, she obtained her doctorate for a translation of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, books I and V. Just before 1940, she made her debut as a poet with the collection *Cosmos*, which was to be followed by more than twenty collections of poetry. She received all the major Dutch literary prizes for her poetry and translations, including the prestigious PC Hooftprijs in 1979 for her entire oeuvre.

Ida Gerhardt is one of the most important female Dutch poets from the pre-feminist period. Her poems are written in the classical tradition of the Symbolists – nothing is arbitrary, unfinished or left to chance – modernism, with its 'loose forms and empty phrases' seems to have passed her by. According to her, the poet has the task of preserving and revealing to humanity the secrets of the cosmos and the micro-cosm.

Initially, she mainly wrote landscape poems, which always had an echo of both her own existence and divine unity. Later, her work also acquires a social element. In her poems she often expresses anger at the decline of culture and the manner in which people treat each other; she advocates serious and painstaking intercourse with life and an opposition to materialism and superficiality. One gets the feeling that she feels herself a solitary figure in this modern age, 'a contrary plant, alone with sun and moon', as she puts it in one of her poems. The solitary poet has the task of warning the world by holding up a mirror to it.

Highly distinctive is the alternation between resolute simplicity and the use of archaisms. In her sculptured use of language one senses a timeless clarity. This has led to her work being appreciated by a great many readers.

The fact that she translated such diverse works as the Old Testament Psalms and Virgil's *Georgica*, indicates the extent to which she wished to be a part of the Christian-classical tradition in literature.

The Carillon

The people in the streets looked stricken,
their ashen faces drawn and tight, –
then something made their features quicken
and, listening, they seemed brushed with light.

For in the clock-tower when, resounding,
the bronze-chimed hour had died away,
the carillonneur began his pounding
and everywhere was heard to play.

Valerius: – a solemn singing
with bass bell's tolling undertone
and flickerings of lighter ringing:
'We raise our eyes to Thy high throne.'

As one of all those nameless people
who by the house fronts came to stand,
I listened to the pealing steeple
that sang of my afflicted land.

This speechless gathering, beyond us
the city with Dutch light above –
I've never for what's stolen from us
felt such a bitter, bitter love.

(Translation by John Irons)

M. Vasalis Collected Poems

Transcendence of the earthly

M. Vasalis (1909-1998) studied medicine, married a neurologist and had four children, one of whom died very young during the Second World War. She worked as a child psychiatrist until her seventieth birthday. Between 1940 and 1954, three collections of poetry were published that gained her the highest literary awards and that were immensely popular with a large reading public. She is dubbed the Dutch Anna Achmatova by some, because right up to the present day, many Dutch people know Vasalis poems by heart. After her death in 1998, a fourth, posthumous collection was published. Her *Collected Poems* were first published in 2006, and reprinted several times since.

Many of Vasalis's poems are located in nature. This being in nature, however, always leads to an inner experience that is the actual subject of the poem. As is the case in, for example, the poem 'The IJsselmeer Dam', where the contrasts between internal and external, man and water disappear and where time finally stands still in a wonderfully illuminated now-moment. Nature grants access to a forgotten or repressed dimension in one's own existence. In many poems such an experience of mental transcendence is central, something that also fascinated Vasalis as a psychiatrist. It may have to do with inebriation, but also with passionate love, melancholy, the dream or vision. The unknown dynamics of the life within is her theme. The way in which she wrote about deep distress, melancholy and the loss of a child has touched many people deeply.

Already early on, Vasalis was compared with the medieval mystic Hadewijch. And a part of her work certainly fits in with the mystical tradition. Space, time and gravity can disappear in the course of a poem, as can the awareness of the ego and the difference between subject and object. These experiences are blissful or terrifying, enlightening or full of mere emptiness. The ego is thereby passively affected, and the oxymoron is the most frequently used stylistic means, since the experience is virtually incommunicable. Vasalis explores that other dimension which lies outside every religious framework. Her concern is pure immanence. Her fellow-poet Clara Eggink has called this the 'transcendence of the earthly'. That makes Vasalis a very modern poet.

The IJsselmeer Dam

The bus drives through the darkness like a room,
the narrow road is straight, the dam is endless,
the sea is on the left, subdued but restless,
we look out, a smallish moon relieves the gloom.

In front of me, the freshly-shaven necks
of two young sailors, who smother one yawn, then another
and later, after a quick and limber stretch,
sleep innocently leaning on each other.

Then all at once, as if it's a dream, I see in the glass
the thin, transparent gleam of a bus that's wed to ours,
sometimes as clear as us, then underwater, drowned;
the clumps of roadside grass
cut through the sleeping seamen.
I see myself as well, my features
floating over the surface
of the sea, an astonished mermaid;
lips move as if to say,
There is no tomorrow, no yesterday,
no start or end to this long trip,
just one extended present – strangely split.

(Translation by David Colmer)



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Ida Gerhardt in translation
Gerhardt's poems have been published in reviews and anthologies in English, French and German



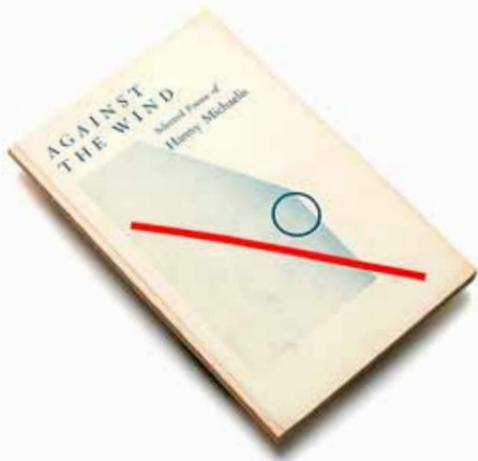
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M. Vasalis in translation
Vasalis's poems have been published in reviews and anthologies in English and French; a Selected Poems appeared in Spanish (Calima)

Hanny Michaelis Collected Poems

Focused poems with a curious strength

Hanny Michaelis (1922-2007) published only six collections of poetry, from *Short Prelude* in 1949 to *Galloping off to a New Utopia* in 1971. In them, as translators Manfred Wolf and Paul Vincent state, 'the poet shifts gradually from an intense preoccupation with her private past (...), to a still vulnerable, but more outward-looking confrontation with herself as a woman, a citizen of Amsterdam, and a Jewish survivor of the Nazi Occupation of Holland, amid a world of environmental pollution, political upheaval and brash materialism.' In 1989 a Selected Poems by her own hand, entitled *The Weed of Doubt*, was published. In 1996 her Collected Poems followed, reprinted for the fifth time by 2011.



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Hanny Michaelis in translation

Michaelis's poems have been published in reviews and anthologies in English, German and Spanish; a Selected Poems appeared in English (Twowindows Press)

The small but distinctive oeuvre of Hanny Michaelis has been awarded numerous literary prizes. She established a reputation as a poet of contained lyricism, and her work is characteristically tempered by an almost wry awareness of limitation. While her poems are often marked by an epigrammatic conciseness and an element of detached and analytical reflection, Michaelis nevertheless embraces the individual, felt experience, in which the overriding logic is that of the imagination.

Since the publication of her memoirs, in 2002, there has been renewed interest in her life and works. As the daughter of Jewish parents who died in Sobibor, Michaelis was confronted with loss and devastation at an early age, and these themes are inherent in much of her poetry. Her difficult marriage to the well-known Dutch novelist Gerard Reve, and the tragic death of her second partner, undoubtedly account for the mournful note of much of her love poetry.

In fact in some of her poems there is even a defeatist, tired quality, a sense that life, inevitably and repetitively, brings loss and disillusionment. Michaelis' range is not vast, moreover, and her vision not infused with immense variety and invention. And yet, arguably, in her best work, there is a toughness, an ability to re-inhabit an experience without sentimentality, that can lend her short, focused poems a curious strength.

A poet who works as carefully as Hanny Michaelis, should perhaps be read more carefully than one would think at first glance.

Leeuwarder Courant

A greyish light always shines on these poems. But they're totally authentic, totally reliable too. Things are named as they are. I've never seen Michaelis use an euphemism, or even attempt at one.

de Volkskrant

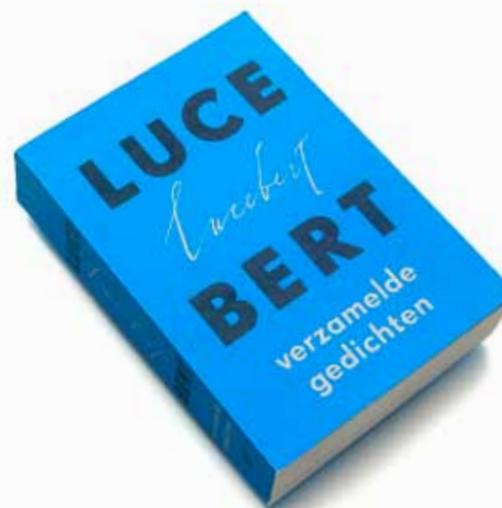
This evening I learnt
that the moon isn't round
but pear-shaped,
with at least two
bulges, maybe
even three. Later,
when I looked out,
a round, incandescent
disc climbed up
above the roofs
and I caught myself
harbouring the same stubbornness
with which I
honour other
dented illusions.

(Translation by Judith Wilkinson)

Lucebert Collected Poems

The 'Emperor' of his revolutionary generation

Lucebert (ps Lubertus Jacobus Swaanswijk, 1924-1994) is one of the most important reformers of Dutch poetry in the twentieth century. He was a key figure in the Fiftiers Movement, an experimental group of poets that changed the face of Dutch literature after World War II. Shortly after the war he began experimenting with abstract drawing and painting as well as with a new poetic mode. He maintained that his language and his country were 'ripe for a mild repetition of the dadaistic and expressionistic experiment' of the early twentieth-century avant-garde in Europe.



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Lucebert in translation

Lucebert's poems have been published in over twenty languages, including English (Green Integer), French (Le Bleu du Ciel), German (Kleinheinrich, Suhrkamp) and Spanish (Universidad de León)

The Fiftiers were connected to the European CoBra Movement and the Experimental Group in Holland, a group of painters and writers, established in 1948 who, as the painter Constant put it in his manifesto, were 'against the degenerate aesthetic concepts that had hindered the development of creativity in the past.' For the first time, a definitive break was being made with the established art and literature of the past.

One thing that characterized the revolutionary new poetry of the Fiftiers was an unrestrained pleasure in language and a belief in what language could bring to bear. Simultaneously the new poetry aimed to present a reality that was stripped of all metaphysical certainty. For Lucebert, such an experience was epitomised as a sharp awareness of being 'a breadcrumb on the skirt of the universe' and it is in his work that we find the expression of this sensibility to be at its most intense. Often hailed the 'Emperor' of the Fiftiers, Lucebert's growing reputation as a poet culminated in his receiving of the Dutch State Prize for Literature in 1983. Throughout his entire life he remained totally devoted to his drawing, painting and poetry.

Lucebert is a prophet who, with the greatest urgency, screams and whispers a message.

Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer

School of Poetry

I am no sweet rhymers
I am the swift swindler
of love, the hate beneath it heed
and there above a cackling deed.

the lyrical is the mother of the political,
I am none other than the riot reporter
and my mysticism is the putrefied fodder
of deceit used by virtue to purge it all.

I proclaim that the velvet poets
are dying timidly and humanistically.
from now on the hot iron throat
of moved henchmen will open musically.

yet I, who in these sheaves abide
like a rat in a trap, yearn for the cesspool
of revolution and cry: rhyme-rats, deride,
deride still this far too pure poetry school.

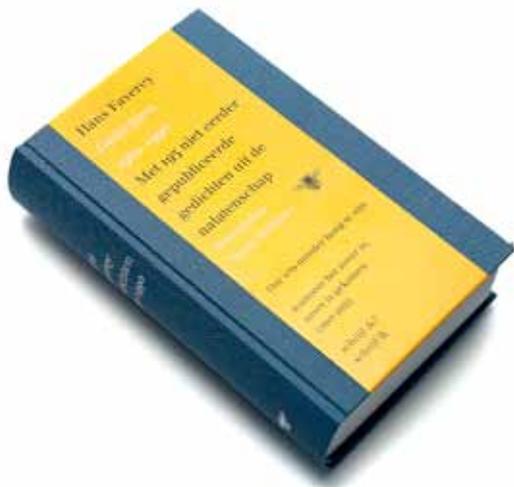
(Translation by Diane Buttermann)

Hans Faverey

Against the Forgetting

Modern and classical
at the same time

Hans Faverey (1933-1990) was born in Paramaribo, Surinam, but grew up in Amsterdam. He published eight collections of poetry, of which the last one, entitled *Default*, appeared only a few days before he died. He received many literary awards, including the Amsterdam Poetry Prize, the Jan Campert Prize and the prestigious Constantijn Huygens Prize for his work as a whole. A posthumous collection, *Spring Foxes*, appeared in 2000. A new, extended edition of his Collected Poems appeared in the Netherlands in 2010.



Rights

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Hans Faverey in translation

Faverey's poems have been published in English (Leon Works Press, New Directions, Anvil Press Poetry), German (Kleinheinrich), French (Théâtre Typographique, Joany) and several other languages

Hans Faverey is currently considered one of the greatest and most influential Dutch poets of the twentieth century, but his poetic reputation grew slowly. His first two collections, *Poems* (1968) and *Poems II* (1972) gained cautious critical acclaim and were seen by some as 'difficult' and 'hermetic'. His third volume, *Chrysanthemums, Rowers* (1977), however met with unanimous praise, and gained the Jan Campert Prize. The poems indeed seem more accessible, though they still contain a sense of mystery and paradox. They also became slightly longer, setting a tone and format which he was to retain for the rest of his poetic life.

The poetry of Faverey seems modern and classical at the same time, transparent and complicated, unpredictable and witty. His work contains traces of the ancient philosophers (e.g. Heraclitus, but also Meister Eckhart), Anglo-Saxon literature and Chinese poetry. Faverey's love for nature, his fascination for landscapes, is tangible in many of his poems. The title poem of *Chrysanthemums, Rowers*, in which eight rowers row further and further inland, until they simply cease to be, was an immediate household classic.

Hans Faverey was the purest poetic intelligence of his generation, the author of poems of lapidary beauty that echo in the mind long after the book is closed.

J.M. Coetzee

A real find among the extensive list of European poets being translated into English.

The Bloomsbury Review

Little by little –
they are drawing nearer: 8 rowers,
growing ever further inland

in their mythology:
with each stroke ever further
from home, rowing with all their might;
growing till all the water is gone,
and they fill the whole landscape

to the brim. Eight –

rowing ever further inland;
landscape, for there is
no more water: overgrown
landscape. Landscape,
rowing ever further

inland; land
without rowers; over-
rown land.

(Translation by Francis R. Jones)

The Dutch Foundation for Literature / Nederlands Letterenfonds

supports writers, translators and Dutch literature in translation

Information

The Foundation's advisors on literary fiction, quality non-fiction, poetry and children's and youth literature are present each year at prominent book fairs, including Frankfurt, London, Beijing and Bologna. The brochures *Books from Holland and Flanders*, *Quality Non-Fiction from Holland* and *Children's Books from Holland* recommend highlights from each category's selection.

Translation Grants

Foreign publishers wishing to publish a translation of Dutch or Frisian literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs. Having acquired the rights, the publisher's application must be accompanied by a copy of the contract with the rights owner and a copy of the contract with the translator. Application forms are available from the Foundation's website. Subsidies are disbursed after receipt of proof samples, citing the subsidy. If the Foundation is not acquainted with the translator, a sample translation will be evaluated by external advisors. The maximum subsidy is 70% of the cost of translation. Applications for translations that have already been published cannot be taken into consideration. Publishers looking for a qualified translator can request a list of endorsed translators for their specific language area.

Illustrated Books

In the case of illustrated children's books and/or graphic novels, foreign publishers can apply for assistance to cover a portion of the production costs. Subsidies are jointly funded by the Mondrian Foundation and the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

Documentation centre

The documentation centre is an extensive information resource regarding Dutch literature abroad. The library contains more than 11.000 translated titles in more than seventy-five languages. The documentation centre can be visited by appointment. One significant component, the database of Dutch-language literature in translation, can be perused online at www.vertalingendatabase.nl.

Promotional travel

The Foundation is able to support a publisher wishing to invite an author for interviews or public appearances. Literary festivals are likewise eligible for support. Additionally, the Foundation organizes international literary events in co-operation with local publishers, festivals and book fairs.

Writers-in-residence

The Foundation coordinates writer-in-residence programmes together with foreign universities and institutions. Foreign authors are also invited to spend time working in Amsterdam. They may stay one or two months at the writers' lodgings above the Athenaeum Bookshop on the Spui (in co-operation with the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts). In addition, Amsterdam Vluchtstad offers accommodation to writers fleeing the regime of their home country.

International visitors programme

The visitors programme and the annual Amsterdam Fellowship offer publishers and editors the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the publishing business and the literary infrastructure of the Netherlands.

Translators' House

The Translators' House offers translators the opportunity to live and work in Amsterdam for a period of time. It is involved with numerous activities assisting and advancing translators' skills. Each year the Literary Translation Days are held for those translating to and from Dutch. The event also includes translation workshops.

Grants

The Foundation for Literature is active locally, offering travel and work grants to authors and translators in the field of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and children's and youth literature. Workshops are also organized for beginning translators into Dutch.

Schwob

Schwob draws attention to as-yet undiscovered, untranslated world literature. Each month the editors select a modern classic, spotlighting it on www.schwob.nl, by way of reviews and sample translations.

Background

The Dutch Foundation for Literature, created in 2010 as the result of the merger between the Foundation for the Production and Translation of Dutch Literature (NLPVF) and the Foundation for Literature (FvdL), is an independent organization financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Policies and projects are carried out in close co-operation with the Flemish Literature Foundation.

Interested in receiving a newsletter via e-mail? Send your request to post@letterenfonds.nl or sign up on the website www.letterenfonds.nl

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for literature

‘Much of the best postwar fiction written in Dutch has recently become available in English. Much still remains to be done.’

Tim Parks, *The New York Review of Books*

Website

All titles in this brochure can be found on the Foundation's website: www.letterenfonds.nl. The category 'Authors and translators' offers information on the work of nearly 500 Dutch-language authors, and has a searchable database of more than 17.000 translations from Dutch into other languages.

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