

## Translated Titles

*Der Anwalt der Hähne*  
Advocaat van de hanen  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995, 1997, 2001

*Die Drehtür* De draaideur  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997

*Das Gefahrendreieck* De gevarendriehoek  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000

*Die Schlacht um die Blaubrücke*  
De slag om de Blauwbrug  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001  
Also in Russian (Inapress, 1999)

*Engelsdreck* Engelenplaque  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006

*Der Gerichtshof der Barmherzigkeit*  
Het hof van barmhartigheid  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003

*Päivän mittainen elämä*  
Het leven uit een dag  
Porvoo, Helsinki, Juva: Werner Söderström  
Osakeyhtiö (WSOY), 1990  
Also in German (Suhrkamp, 1992, 1999),  
in Spanish (Península, 1995), in Swedish (Forum, 1991)  
and in Bulgarian (PIC, 1997)

*Unterm Pflaster der Sumpf*  
Onder het plaveisel het moeras  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003

*Fallende Eltern* Vallende ouders  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997, 1999

*Die zahnlose Zeit* Advocaat van de hanen,  
De gevarendriehoek, De slag om de Blauwbrug,  
Het hof van barmhartigheid, Onder het plaveisel  
het moeras, Vallende ouders, Weerborstels  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003

*Der Widerborst* Weerborstels  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993, 1996

## In Preparation

De Movo Tapes: een carrière als ander  
Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp

Vallende ouders  
Paris: Stock

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## General Information

Foreign publishers wishing to publish translations of Dutch literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs. We would be pleased to provide more information about this subsidy. For more information, please contact: Maria Vlaar (m.vlaar@nlpvf.nl) or Henk Pröpfer (h.proepfer@nlpvf.nl).

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 Foundation for the  
Production and  
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Dutch Literature

He manages to describe Amsterdam as a metaphor for the world in which pace, aggression, and Dostojevski-like corrupt politics rule the day. Van der Heijden is a writer who etches our modern times.  
Doeschka Meijsing

Those who know Amsterdam can indulge themselves. Not only the topography but the whole atmosphere of seventies Amsterdam, with its squatters and junkies, bars and misplaced artists, the whole 'lost generation' is evoked with unequalled skill. Trouw

Like fireworks on a half rained-out summer night when suddenly a single rocket shoots up, momentarily hovers in the dark and then explodes in a pandemonium of sparks ... till the whole sky is strewn with a rain of artificial radiance. de Volkskrant

Sein Werk steht einzig da in der gegenwärtigen Weltliteratur. Die Zeit

A.F.Th. van der Heijden

**To write at full stretch**

In the hands of A.F.Th. van der Heijden disillusion is given a fabulous lustre. Like Baudelaire, that other poète maudit, he is familiar with the art of turning mud into gold, the morass into an artwork.  
de Volkskrant

A.F.Th. van der Heijden  
To write at full stretch

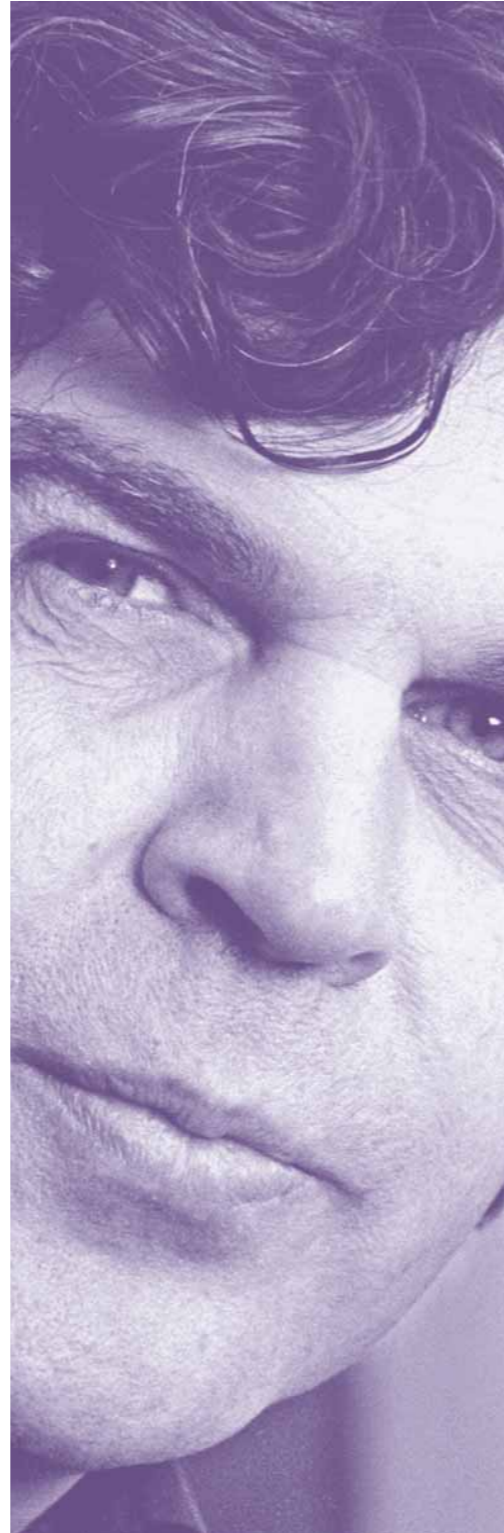
**Harry Mulisch once divided writers into three types: those who write sentences, those who write books, and those with an oeuvre in which everything is interrelated. Mulisch placed himself firmly in the last category. The same applied more or less to his renowned contemporaries W.F. Hermans and Gerard Reve. Together, they dominated post-war Dutch literature, and were referred to as ‘The Great Three’. Regardless of their many differences, they were, in effect, authors of one immense book articulated in all kinds of novels, stories and poems.**

**A.F.Th. van der Heijden** (b. 1951) is also an oeuvre-builder pur sang, regarded as the only Dutch writer of his generation capable of being an honourable successor to the ‘Big Three’. From the very first sentence he ever published — he made his debut in 1978 under the pseudonym Patrizio Canaponi — he has applied the highest possible standards to his work. In his stories and novels, which he began to publish under his own name in 1983, ‘no sparrow drops from a roof without significance’, in the words of W.F. Hermans. Moreover, his books are cathedral-like constructions that leave the reader gasping. From the moment he began on the novel cycle *De tandeloze tijd* (‘The Toothless Time’), Van der Heijden has been viewed as a ‘chronicler’ because of capturing the spirit of the seventies and the eighties so marvellously. But he is oriented toward much more than realism.

The hero of the cycle, Albert Egberts, wants ‘to live at full stretch’, to experience every moment as intensely as possible, and thus escape the superficiality and aberrations of the daily grind. Van der Heijden, his creator, wishes ‘to write at full stretch’, as it were. He is not a journalist, but rather an author who knows how to recreate the past — just like Proust in *A la recherche du temps perdu* — peerlessly and with sophistication, simultaneously restructuring and mythologising the past. In all his novels Van der Heijden deploys his imagination to furnish our tragic human existence with significance and meaning.

Nevertheless, characterizing Van der Heijden as an oeuvre-builder doesn’t do him justice. It pays too little attention to his exceptional style. In his writing, Van der Heijden plays all the registers — from raw and austere to ecstatic and exuberant — relaying echoes of such great modernist writers as Céline and Joyce, whose stream of consciousness in *Ulysses* he transforms into a ‘scream of consciousness’ in his new novel cycle *Homo duplex*.

In his references and allusions, Van der Heijden’s every sentence, even in diaries and letters, is unmistakably peculiar to him. The baroque brilliance, wealth of imagery, and elegance of his pen are admirable.



## A Gondola in the Herengracht

In his letter to the editing staff of *De Revisor* literary journal unknown writer Patrizio Canaponi introduced himself as Italian-Dutch — ‘born on the boat from Messina to Genoa’. The letter accompanied the story ‘Bruno Tirlantino of de bruiloft van prinses Ann’ (‘Bruno Tirlantino or the Wedding of Princess Ann’). The journal’s editors were astonished by this debutant’s talent and published the story in their next issue. Querido Publishers then picked him up and published a collection of his first stories. In retrospect, one can see that the young author’s imagination didn’t stop at a bogus autobiography. Each of the five graceful stories in *Een gondel in de Herengracht* is ‘fantastic’ in the double sense of the word. They are constructed in a world of exuberant imagination, dream and decadence, in which a crocodile ends up in a student’s room, and a black, slender gondola suddenly appears on the Herengracht canal in Amsterdam. Above all, his debut is ‘fantastic’ due to his baroque, Italian style.

*Een gondel in de Herengracht* // 1978 // 248 pp



## Falling Parents

The parents of Albert Egberts fall twice in this sophisticated novel. Once, literally; into the ditch with their bikes, where they are ‘festooned with slimy strands of green’, and, figuratively, from their pedestal. When the student Albert is evicted from his house in the seventies, he is forced to prepare for his finals in his parental home in the provincial town of Geldrop, where the disgrace and ignominy of his childhood loom once again. Albert was weighed down by the terror of his father who came home drunk from bars and threatened his mother with scissors.

The scissors act as symbol for Van der Heijden’s narrative method with past and present sliding over one another like two sharp blades. In the present, discussions take place between Albert and his friends Thjum and Flix (there is a point to the first letters of their names being the writer’s own initials), and the past is brought back with force. Literature rescues this painful and poignant portrait of Albert’s lost youth.

*Vallende ouders* // 1983 // 470 pp



## Lawyer to the Punks

The main character in *Advocaat van de hanen* is Ernst Quispel, a successful Amsterdam lawyer who guided his practice to great prosperity in the eighties. Quispel has a darker side, however: he is a dipsomaniac and has annually recurring periods of serious inebriation that put him in a state of euphoria — despite the equally intense hangover that always follows. Quispel is appointed as lawyer to a group of squatters. One of the squatters, Kiliaan Noppen, dies in a police cell in Amsterdam one evening, just at the moment that Quispel is locked up for being drunk. Quispel feels obliged to tell the truth of what he has witnessed — which costs him his marriage and his job. Van der Heijden based Noppen’s death on the story of Hans Kok, a real-life squatter who died in police custody for reasons still unknown. Van der Heijden’s use of this incident — which caused great upheaval in Amsterdam — as his point of departure was appreciated neither by the police nor by the squatters themselves. Not that this affects the literary quality of the book, which, largely due to the magnificent and ecstatic passages on drink, in combination with its scintillating plot, formed the basis for a successful film.

*Advocaat van de hanen* // 1990 // 572 pp

## Mayfly

Ionesco’s words ‘L’enfer c’est la répétition’, are printed as the motto for this small, symbolic novel *Het leven uit een dag*. Hell is about repetition, which leads to boredom and indifference which in turn destroy the purity of the individual moment. This is also the case in the imaginary world of the novel in which Benny

Wult and Gini Trades are born, meet one another, and are doomed to die. It is a world in which life lasts only a single day and each event occurs only once, thereby being both grandiose and unique. ‘Our lives and the love they contain take their great intensity from this uniqueness.’ In fact, the pursuit of the uniqueness of each moment is an allegory of the ‘life at full stretch’ which Albert Egberts, the hero of *De tandeloze tijd*, attempts to lead. Benny and Gini make love almost divinely and are tempted to surrender to the opposite of their belief: to succumb to Hell, to repetition, because they feel the ‘divine flame’ burning within them and cannot accept that it will die at once. *Het leven uit een dag* is a cruel and tender love story.

*Het leven uit een dag* // 1988 // 238 pp



## Scattered Ashes

*Asbestemming* is a requiem, that — keeping Kafka’s book in mind — can be regarded as a long letter from the author to his deceased father. It is a shameless, provocative, raw book. This is partly due to the material — Van der Heijden’s father was given to drinking and violence and he terrorised the writer’s youth ‘with a mask of clotted blood’ — as well as to its strikingly austere style, which makes the requiem even more painful and authentic. *Asbestemming* is more than a posthumous settlement; it is, above all, an attempt by the author to truly fathom his father — and himself via his father. Blood will out: in unparalleled fashion, the son mirrors himself in the father, whom he tries to outdo in that hated drinking, so laying the foundation for his own drunkenness. Not without reason, *Asbestemming* opens in the writer’s local bar: ‘Café De Z., that’s a way of life.’

*Asbestemming* // 1994 // 342 pp

