

Making the unknown tangible

Nothing that Says

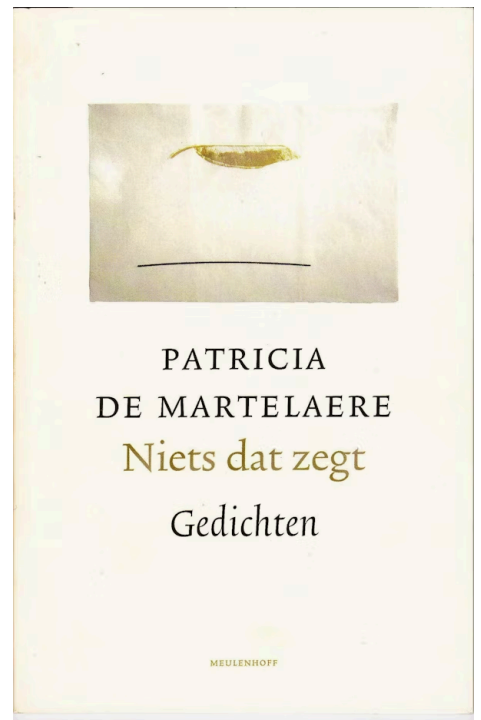
PATRICIA DE MARTELAERE

Patricia de Martelaere is especially praised for her philosophical essays and novels, which received several awards. Her poetry is just as extraordinary, collected here in 'Nothing that Says', both her first and only work in the genre. This poetry collection consists of, on the one hand, work from her youth that marks, as it were, the start of her career, and on the other of more recently-composed poems.

Her directness and use of language, the supple and unexpected twists and turns, the often condensed, clear simplicity – it all radiates an enormous power of attraction

VALÉRIE MANNAERTS

Love, insecurity and an endless longing for another are the most prominent themes in the poetry brought together in this anthology that spans 20 years. De Martelaere is not too shy to grapple with big topics, describing them without falling back on clichés, with subtle and restrained imagery and metaphors that leave sufficient space for undertones. Her poetry is compact, powerful and evocative. De Martelaere leaves no aspect of the language unused in order to let the inexpressible sound out in between the lines. The unknown and exciting are always hidden behind the familiar and accessible. The poetry in 'Nothing that Says' portrays something that cannot be made tangible in any other way.



AUTHOR



Patricia de Martelaere (1957-2009) made her debut at the age of thirteen with the children's book 'King of the Wilderness' (1971), about a lion trying to commit suicide. She was later to become a professor of philosophy. The language in her often brilliant philosophical writings and in her intriguing stories and novels is always crystal clear. Paradox was her preferred form. 'If you can't speak about something you must write about it,' she said. Her work exudes disconsolateness and a longing for disconsolateness, as one of her essay collections is entitled. Patricia de Martelaere died of a brain tumour in 2009, leaving six novels, as many essay collections, a book of poems and a selection of tractates. All of them awe-inspiring. Photo © Tom Van Hove

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