

Rebelling against powerlessness

Collected Poems (1942-1972)

ALBERT BONTRIDDER

Albert Bontridder was a Flemish architect and poet. Together with contemporaries such as Jan Walravens and Hugo Claus, he was part of the ground-breaking modernistic magazine 'Tijd en Mens'. Bontridder was a modernist both in his architecture and his poetry. His meandering, experimental writing, filled with surprising imagery and dumbfounding comparisons, is pervaded by societal and ethical issues. For example, he devoted one collection to the Prague Spring and the fight against authority. The problematic father figure, as a traditional representative of power and authority, appears regularly in his work.

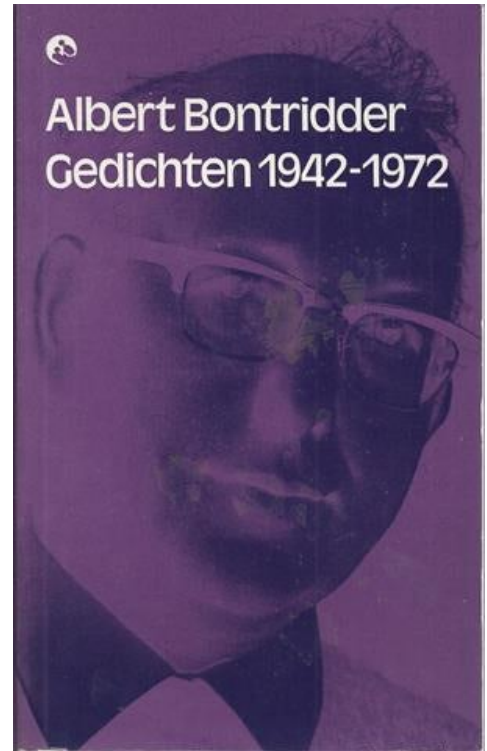
One of the most dynamic and sophisticated poets in the Dutch language

ONS ERFDEEL

Acutely aware of the destructive power of time, Bontridder does not set an ethical or aesthetic example to his audience. Rather, he holds a broken mirror up to them, creating a reflection in which the poet and reader rebel against their powerlessness. Bontridder was able to convincingly unite a quest for 'ethics' with 'experimentation'. In that sense, his poetry cannot simply be categorised as autonomous, nor as engaged. It is a combination of both: sovereign, yet simultaneously in dialogue with the reader and their living environment.

Each poem attests to a supreme form of living – even in failure

TOM VAN INSCHOOT



AUTHOR



Albert Bontridder (1921-2015) was a Flemish architect and poet. He was editor for the innovative magazine *Tijd en Mens*, introducing modernism into poetry and literature in Flanders. Bontridder debuted in 1951 with the collection 'Poésie se brise' in French and 'Hoog water' in Dutch. His breakthrough came in 1955, with his socially-committed poems about Willie McGee in 'Dood hout'. Bontridders verbose, experimental writing – full of surprising images and dumbfounding comparisons – is pervaded by social and ethical issues.

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