

## FICTION

Short stories by Flanders' greatest author

# Misery Loves Company. A Life In Stories

HUGO CLAUS

Hugo Claus is the internationally acclaimed author of dozens of plays, novels and collections of poetry. But over the course of 50 years he also wrote many short stories. A half-century filled with grotesque nightmares and charming scenes of love and loss, with mysterious and comical characters populating Claus' characteristic bitter-sweet world.

In his stories Claus explores themes he elaborates in later novels, plays and poems – as if they are finger exercises for future work. Nonetheless, the reader will recognize the author's mastery in these short pieces: in evocative prose, crystal clear and seemingly written with natural ease, his pitiful, at times wry and grotesque, but above all claustrophobic universe is present in all its intensity. The irony with which he masks autobiographical elements, the flashes of genius as he sketches the inner life of his characters in a single sentence, the exploration of themes such as the powerlessness of man who gets to fight his fate for the brief time fate tolerates this nervous scratching on the soles of its feet: all this epitomises Claus' stories.

**Incredible to see how much beauty someone can produce in half a century**

DE TELEGRAAF

Many of Claus' stories have been collected in 'Verhalen' (Stories, 1999) and 'Een andere keer. De andere verhalen' (Some Other Time. The Other Stories, 2000). 'Het verdriet staat niet alleen' (Misery Loves Company) is a new, inspired selection of Claus' short stories and novellas by author and Claus expert Mark Schaevers, to mark the tenth anniversary of the master's death.



## AUTHOR



**Hugo Claus** (1929-2008) is Flanders' most famous and most important writer of modern literature. He was extraordinarily productive and highly regarded as a poet, a writer of stories, novels, film scripts, libretti and plays. He was also a stage and film director, an artist and a translator. He wrote dozens of acclaimed plays, novels and collections of poetry. In his novels, Claus mixes crafted stories of post-war Flanders with poignant character portraits and telltale allusions to Greek and Christian mythology.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Het verdriet staat niet alleen. Een leven in verhalen (2018, De Bezige Bij, 488 pp.)

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