

What can you say about your own time?

Displacements

STEFAN HERTMANS

If there is one line that's been reverberating in Stefan Hertmans' mind for years, it's a well-known quote from Victor Klemperer, which was written with a steady hand in his famous journals during the Nazi period, amid terror and uncertainty: 'The contemporary witness knows nothing.'

Hertmans is on the cutting edge of his own era.

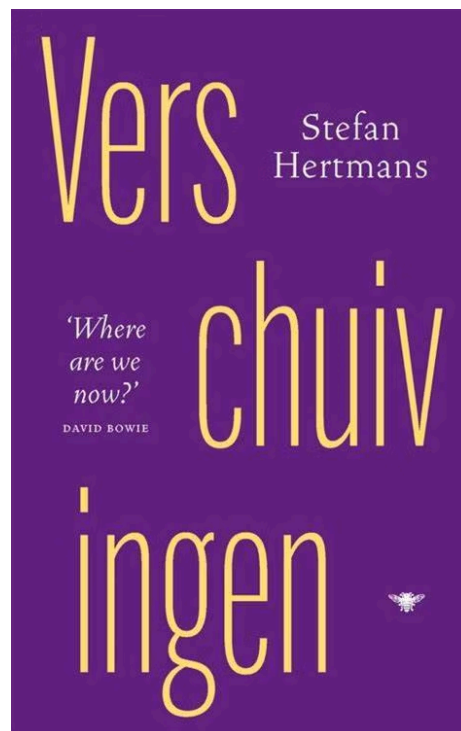
VRIJ NEDERLAND

There is one thing that we do know: this is a time of transition, transitioning to something we're only just beginning to understand. We are all eyewitnesses, although we're only partially aware of what it is we're witnessing: current reality. Every day we see new changes, without knowing exactly what they will amount to.

Each chapter is a gleaming pearl in these dark times.

DE VOLKSKRANT

In these ruminations, as erudite as they are sensitive, Stefan Hertmans undertakes the challenge of trying to capture something of this zeitgeist, of pinning down the things that tend to elude our grasp in the chaos of day-to-day life.



AUTHOR



Stefan Hertmans' (b. 1951) biography reads like a 'bildungsroman': from teacher to jazz musician to professor and writer's writer to Belgian State Prize Laureate and major international success. He has published novels, short stories, essays on literature and philosophy, plays and poetry. Listen to Stefan Hertmans on 'Kopje Koffie' ('Cup of Coffee'), a podcast produced by The Dutch Embassy in Berlin, the Dutch Foundation for Literature, in cooperation with Flanders Literature and the General Representation of the Government of Flanders. *Photo © Praet*

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