

Unique post-war female voice

A Very Tiny Ship

CHRIS YPERMAN

When Chris Yperman published her debut 'A Very Tiny Ship', the book quickly acquired a cult status. In the novella, protagonist and narrator Christina describes and documents her turbulent love life and her interaction with a group of friends and lovers. The characters spend their time in idle chatter, continually hoodwink each other and fill their days with casual sex. They are conscious of the emptiness of their existence but nevertheless seek refuge in irony and posing. The only thing that counts for them is the now, the ephemerality with which they fill their apparently pointless lives. Yet there is one ideal that escapes that lightness and about which Christina continues to dream: love, the one tiny ship on which a person can sail away from a futile existence.

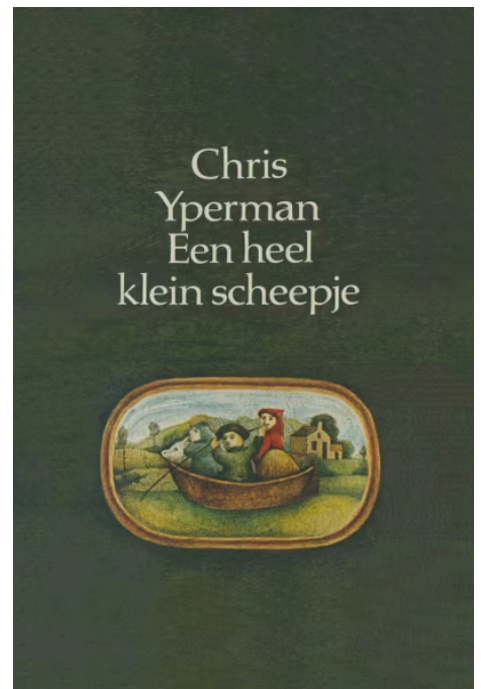
This book by Chris Yperman both surprised and instantly moved me. I read it with growing admiration.

LOUIS PAUL BOON

'A Very Tiny Ship' gave a voice to the young, misunderstood post-war generation that was trying to interpret a sense of existential emptiness. It immediately led to comparisons with Françoise Sagan and the French new wave. The book was striking not just for the way that the author uninhibitedly describes female erotic pleasure and unattached amorous escapades but for its stylistic originality. In writing that is poetic and rich in imagery, the author interweaves an extremely fragmentary account of Christina's inner world with the events around her. Because of her playful and associative style, Yperman's novella has been called a forerunner of *écriture féminine*.

A masterful little work.

LOUIS PAUL BOON



AUTHOR



Chris Yperman (1935 – 2015) was the author of prose, poetry and theatre scripts. Her debut, 'A Very Tiny Ship', attracted the attention of both literary critics and a broad readership as soon as it was published in 1959. The book introduced an innovative female voice into post-war Flemish literature. Yperman's lyrical and associative style prompted comparisons with Françoise Sagan and turned her novella into both a cult phenomenon and a commercial success. Photo © AMVC Letterenhuis

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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Dominique D'Haese – dhaesedominique@gmail.com

TRANSLATION GRANTS Marieke Roels – marieke@flandersliterature.be, Yannick Geens – yannick@flandersliterature.be