FICTION

Poetic parable about human fragility

I’m Going to the Sheep

MARIEKE DE MARÉ

Simone and Andrej have lived for many years in a house on the edge of a sparsely populated village, looking out on their sheep barn. Their daughter Tove is an artist and she rarely visits. Not far away lives their only friend, Rocco, a funeral director with whom they try to solve mathematical riddles each week. Simone has a congenital condition that means her bones are literally fragile. It dictates that she has to lead a ‘limited’ life that depends upon habits and minor diversions. Andrej is home every day too now, having lost his job as an engineer. He often seeks out the company of the sheep in their barn.

> Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent. In Marieke De Maré that silence is highly expressive. ****
>
> DE STANDAARD

We look at the couple’s small world over a period of two weeks. Simone’s mother dies; Tove prepares an exhibition. Events large and small are set side by side. Not much is said and problems are bottled up, but beneath the surface is a richer inner world than its external features would suggest. The quietude speaks volumes, the silence of the characters is multifaceted. Shimmering through the daily routine the reader can detect fairy tales, magic realism and a touch of absurdist humour.

> This story feels both utterly Flemish and astonishingly universal.
>
> FEELING

The form of the book is exceptional too. In the many blank spaces the tension between telling and keeping silent comes into its own. Simone and Andrej slowly win you over, through the great suggestive power of this sparely written book. De Maré succeeds in touching a sensitive chord with her poetic parable about life, parenthood and love.

AUTHOR

Marieke De Maré (b. 1985) is a writer, performer, director and teacher. Her poetic prose is characterized by refined visual imagery and an ability to create atmosphere. She manages to incorporate contemporary and recognizable themes into her work, such as seeing beauty in the moments when a life is at its most vulnerable. © Paul Willaert

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