

An autobiography about a liberation

A Different Life

BART MOEYAERT

"Moeyaert's condensed and musical language vibrates with suppressed emotions and unspoken desires." This according to the jury report at the presentation of the 2019 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award to Bart Moeyaert, one of the Netherlands and Flanders' best-known writers for children and young adults. It's a qualification that can be applied equally to his latest book, 'A Different Life', published by De Arbeiderspers in their renowned Privé Domein series of autobiographical works.

Taking a 1996 city trip to Paris with his seventy-year-old mother as his leitmotif, Moeyaert sketches an intimate portrait of his mother, but also discovers how surprisingly often Paris has played a role in his life and realises how little he told his parents about himself. Drawing on letters, photographs and diary excerpts, he gives a frank discussion of his late coming of age – the period of searching after his early debut as an author. He tries to find answers, including ones for the questions he didn't ask his mother in Paris.

Critic and academic Frauke Pauwels described how she experienced the book. "'A Different Life' can be read in countless ways: as the different life his mother could have led if his father hadn't died so young, or if she hadn't brought seven sons into the world, as the life his father hadn't envisaged for his son, as something the son too had to come to terms with, as the life the writer holds up to his readers, which is always, unavoidably, different from the one the writer really leads. 'A Different Life' contains all of these things and this multiplicity testifies to Moeyaert's extraordinary talent as a writer – and person."

The book won the prestigious 2025 Henriëtte de Beaufort Biography Prize and was named BruutTAAL Rainbow Book 2024. It has already gone into its fifth edition.



AUTHOR



Bart Moeyaert (b. 1964) was barely nineteen when he made his debut in 1983. A master of the unsaid, his books are always received with great acclaim, and have been described by critics as poetic, cinematic and appealing to the senses. Moeyaert often deals with complex existential subjects, in an insightful and accessible way. His books have won many awards at home and abroad, and have been translated into more than twenty languages. In 2019 he won the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, the world's most prestigious award for children's literature. Photo © Diego Franssens

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