

NONFICTION

A child of Einstein and Marilyn
Monroe

A Longing for Inconsolability

PATRICIA DE MARTELAERE

De Martelaere once claimed that the essay is the genre in which you can do everything at the same time, 'explore and embellish, demonstrate and entrance'. To illustrate what the essay could do, she ended with a magnificent comparison: 'The essay is like a trial marriage between Einstein and Marilyn Monroe, with the secret intention of conceiving a child that will have both beauty and intellect, but taking a serious risk that the child will be both dumb and ugly.'

She is the only philosopher writing in Dutch who can make philosophy not just nonacademic and understandable but moving

HERMAN DE CONINCK

'A Longing for Inconsolability' contains twelve essays about elemental subjects such as life and death, art, writing, speaking and reading, about 'the colour of sounds', fiction in literature, 'the diary and death' and the uses of philosophy. Wittgenstein, Freud and Nietzsche are the philosophers this time round. The great value of these essays ultimately lies in what makes them rise above philosophical debate. Whereas philosophers like to make readers furrow their brows as deeply as possible, De Martelaere excels at laying out a clear line of argument, avoiding jargon and applying convincing logic.



AUTHOR



Patricia De Martelaere (1957-2009) was a philosophy professor and literary author. Her debut novel 'Night Book of an Insomniac' (Nachtboek van een slapeloze, 1988) won the prize for the year's best debut. De Martelaere is one of the most interesting essayists in the Dutch language. The language in her brilliant philosophical writings and intriguing stories and novels is always crystal clear. Paradox was her preferred form.

ORIGINAL TITLE Een verlangen naar ontootbaarheid. Over leven, kunst en dood (1993, Meulenhoff, 176 pp.)

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