

The Proteus of Dutch letters

Poems 1948-2004

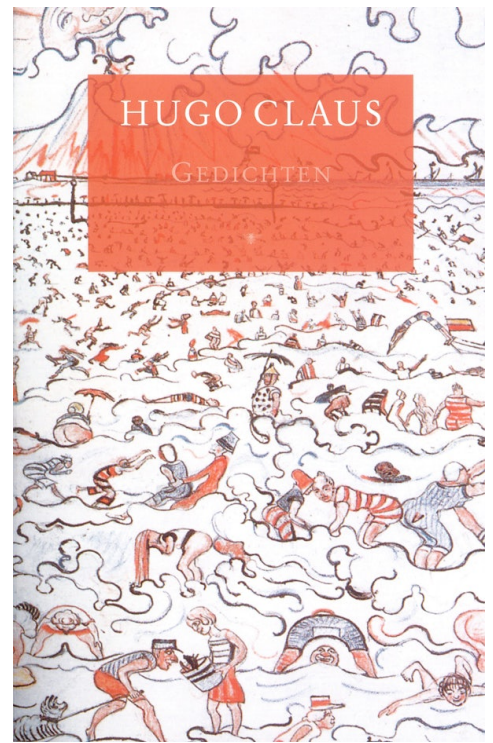
HUGO CLAUS

Hugo Claus' poetic output, running to over 1,400 pages, is a plethora of forms, styles, themes, even poetics. He made his début as a poet in 1947 in a rather traditional manner, with a volume of confessional poetry, which he published on his own. In Paris in the early 1950s he came into contact with existentialism and surrealism, and with artists of the CoBrA group. Immersed in 'the cult of the spontaneous' he produced several volumes of experimental verse, of which 'The East Acre Poems', is generally rated highest. From about 1960 Claus began to allow more of the outside world and current events to enter into his poetry and with social involvement came a growing interest in the (literary) past.

Impressive, many-voiced poetry, generous, rich, unhampered by conventions of fashion or good taste

JURY VSB POETRY PRIZE

His later collections display his full poetic range: next to moving autobiographical poems there are complex, intertextual 'rewrites' and text montages, satirical occasional poems, doggerel rhymes and poems commenting on other poems, or on a photograph or work of art. All the themes from his earlier work – time, motion, transience, consciousness, corporality, sexuality, language and tradition, return.



AUTHOR



Hugo Claus (1929-2008) is Flanders' most famous and most important writer of modern literature. He was extraordinarily productive and highly regarded as a poet, a writer of stories, novels, film scripts, libretti and plays. He was also a stage and film director, an artist and a translator. He wrote dozens of acclaimed plays, novels and collections of poetry. In his novels, Claus mixes crafted stories of post-war Flanders with poignant character portraits and telltale allusions to Greek and Christian mythology.

ORIGINAL TITLE Gedichten 1948-2004 (2004, De Bezige Bij, 1427 pp.)

PRIZES Flemish State Prize for Poetry, Constantijn Huygens Prize, Grand Prize for Literature

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