

A unique female voice

Miroirs. Poems since 1946

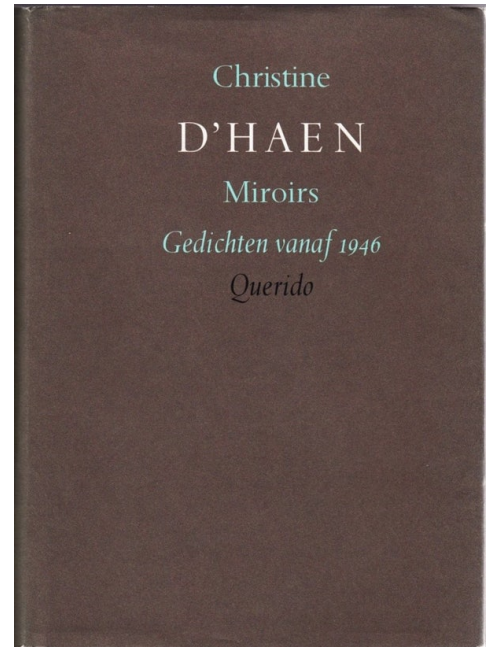
CHRISTINE D'HAEN

Christine D'haen was undoubtedly the most important female poet of post-war Flemish and Dutch poetry. Her poetical work is unique in its voice, remarkable in its wide spectrum and incomparably rich in its content and form. As the first woman in the list of illustrious predecessors to that date, she was awarded in 1992 the highest literary prize possible to obtain in the Dutch-speaking area, the three-yearly Prize for Dutch Literature.

Everything proves that the work of Christine D'haen is unique in Dutch-language literature

JURY REPORT ANNA BIJNS PRIZE

Although time is at the core of her poetry, and although her poems are temporally rooted through the use of quotations from and references to mythology, art, science and literature, her work is also characterised by a certain timelessness. This explains the large number of 'classical' poems that are anthologised again and again. This timelessness also allows the possibility for different eras to revive certain aspects of her poetry. For instance, the postmodern poetry which arose in the late 1980s evoked a renewed interest for intertextuality and brought her poems again to prominence. It is certain that the oeuvre of Christine D'haen will be read by different generations for many years ahead. This dense and highbrow poetry asks much from its readers, but in return they enjoy broad vistas that invite reflections on life and culture.



AUTHOR



Christine D'haen (1923-2009) studied Germanic Philology, used to teach in Bruges and later on became curator of the Guido Gezelle Museum. She translated poems by Gezelle into English and wrote a fascinating biography on this great Flemish poet of the nineteenth century. She quoted with great ease Gertrude Stein or James Joyce as well as ancient Greek and Roman poets. In addition to poetry, Christine D'haen wrote autobiographical prose in which the construction of a life through writing was more important than the actual biographical information.

ORIGINAL TITLE Miroirs. Gedichten vanaf 1946 (2002, Querido, 319 pp.)

PRIZES Arkprijs van het Vrije Woord, Lucy B. en C.W. van der Hoogt Prize, Interprovincial Prize of Poetry, Henriëtte de Beaufort Prize, Anna Bijns Prize, Grand Prize for Literature

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