Committed poems with a twist

As If I Am Nearly There

CHARLES DUCAL

Charles Ducal's poetry contains much irony and casual humour, yet doesn't shrink from such grand themes as language, religion and sexuality. His poetry is allegedly blasphemous, but 'shocking' would be a better epithet. He set the scene in his debut 'Marriage' by criticising the sacred institution of marriage. Subsequently, in 'The Duke and I' he changed track by recycling myths and fables to evoke an alienating world. In 'Mother Tongue' he expanded on the relationship between motherhood and language. Language, according to Ducal, may at once draw reality in and push it away.

> **Act like Elvis and shoot a bullet through your telly: it is here you have to look**
>
> HUMO

In 'Towards Earth', Ducal finally chose a poetic in which social commitment is the ideal to strive for. This social commitment is also expressed in a series of leftist papers on the far right and the war in Iraq. After the volume 'Naar de aarde' Ducal kept quiet for eight years. It was feared that with this volume he had written his literary testament, but nothing could be further from the truth. The volume 'Washed in Ink', published in 2006, proved Ducal still has much to write about. His most recent collection of poems, 'Covered with a Song' appeared in 2009.

AUTHOR

Charles Ducal (b. 1952) is the pen name of Frans Dumortier. He studied Germanic Philology and taught at a secondary school in Leuven. He is one of the most important poets of Dutch-language literature. He is socially and politically committed and was appointed the first Poet Laureate of Belgium in 2014. *Photo © Merlijn Doomernik*

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TRANSLATION GRANTS Patrick Peeters - patrick@flandersliterature.be