

Precocious and languorous poems

Complete Poems

KAREL VAN DE WOESTIJNE

Karel van de Woestijne is perhaps the most important post-symbolist poet to have written in the Dutch language. While he was profoundly influenced by the French symbolism of the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, he also formed part of the international reaction against symbolism. His early poetry has much in common with the inclination to the everyday and to nature inspired by André Gide and Francis Jammes. Later, after World War One, his work connects with the late, modernist lyricism of Yeats and Rilke. This poetry is mystical, employing a language rich in meaning and on occasion surreal imagery. He remained one of the most influential poets in Flanders and the Netherlands until shortly after the Second World War.

Van de Woestijne's collected work consists of almost one thousand pages of poetry and an equal amount of prose, a significant portion being dedicated to epic poetry and essays on the visual arts and literature. Van de Woestijne was a precocious artist, who was capable of rapidly absorbing influences of every kind, from the French Parnassians to Paul Verlaine and Emile Verhaeren. It was only during a later period in his writing that his poems were to shift in the direction of the work of Baudelaire, the nineteenth-century poet with whom Van de Woestijne is most compared.

He has attracted significant recent attention from poets who admire his final two collections 'God aan zee' en 'Het berg-meer'. In 2007, a new edition of his collected poetry was published in the prestigious Dutch Classics-series. In the same year, his biography and several studies on his work appeared.

Karel van de Woestijne
Verzameld dichtwerk



DELTA
LANNOO

AUTHOR



Karel van de Woestijne (1878-1929) did not complete his secondary education, but he nevertheless became a professor at the University of Ghent in the 1920's. Prior to this, however, his life was characterised by a consistent lack of financial means. His marriage in 1904 and the arrival of a first child made the need to provide for his family all the more pressing. In 1906, he became Brussels correspondent for the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (New Rotterdam Newspaper) and he combined this function with a job as a minor civil servant.

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