

Seducing rhetorical strategies

We Are Parallel

MAUD VANHAUWAERT

Maud Vanhauwaert already had won her spurs on the stage before notably debuting as a poet with her collection 'I am possible' (Ik ben mogelijk). That stage experience is omnipresent in her new volume 'We are parallel' (Wij zijn evenwijdig): the poet is used to taking into account her audience, be it listeners or readers. The blurb on this book's cover actually is a reading guide that considers freedom of paramount importance: 'You may read this book as a collection of poems, a winding story or a colorful procession of sad jokes.'

The design of the book also offers the reader complete freedom to seek her own way through the texts. Each page contains two text blocks, aligned to the left and to the right, which have been closed off from each by an underscore. It looks like the separate text blocks form a chain, in which the links are connected to each other, but not necessarily in a uniform manner or direction. As a matter of fact, one also notices that page numbers are absent in this book: readers appear to be free to set the sequence of the texts themselves.

Her wonder on existence becomes the wonder of the reader

JURY REPORT VSB POETRY PRIZE

Obviously the collection also contains elements that give the reader something to hold on to by suggesting relevant connections between the text blocks. The first element that functions this way is the frame story that hovers above the texts. The narrator seems to write down all sorts of images, recollections, fragments of discourse, and considerations during a long walk through a metropole. Considering the citations are in French, and the fact that a metro crosses the city, one could think of cities like Brussels or Paris. Furthermore, there are returning themes, motifs and images that link different text blocks to each other.

'We are Parallel' is a complex collection that at a closer look gets more and more coherent, using rhetorical strategies that easily seduce the reader. Reader and poet, walking parallel, touch each other in infiniteness.



AUTHOR



Maud Vanhauwaert (b. 1984) is a poet, writer, performer and drama teacher at the Royal Conservatoire Antwerp. Her debut collection 'Ik ben mogelijk' (I am possible) was published in 2011 and won the Vrouw Debuut Prijs (Women's Debut Prize). Vanhauwaert was a finalist of the WK Poetry Slam (2012) and of the Leids Cabaret Festival (2014). She is one of the primary editors of the literary journal *Dietsche Warande & Belfort* (DW B) and has written columns for newspaper *De Morgen*. Since January 2015, Vanhauwaert has been on tour performing her solo theatre program 'Het is de moeite' in theatres and cultural centers throughout Flanders. *Photo © Annie Boedt*

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