

The dark universe behind each façade

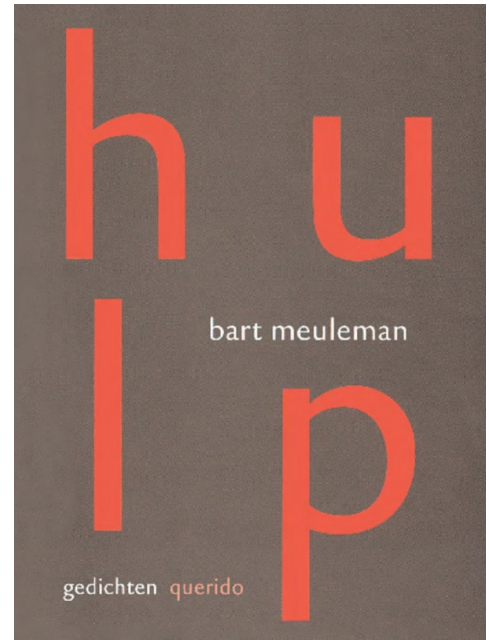
Help

BART MEULEMAN

The poems in 'Help' show the influence of the theatre: the two characters presented are utterly at the mercy of their urges, fears and desires. It never really becomes clear who is crying for help and who actually offers it, and whether help is even a viable option. Consolation is conspicuously absent from this volume. Looking through the eyes of a slightly confused and power-hungry first person, we observe the sadistic experiments he carries out on a submissive second person – all described in clinical yet familiar language. 'Help' is representative of Meuleman's themes and obsessions; he is a cold observer of what might better be concealed behind closed doors. Meuleman portrays characters who cast off their façades and make their way through a dark universe of loveless dependency, power, perversion and rampant sexual compulsions.

This is great theatre on the square centimeter. The leading role? The classical duo: you and me.

LEONARD NOLENS



AUTHOR



Bart Meuleman (b. 1965) is a playwright, writes essays on subjects such as politics and pop music and, together with illustrator Paul Verrept, writes children's book featuring his alter ego 'Mister Retch' (Meneertje Kokhals). Above all, though, Meuleman is a poet. His debut 'kleine criminaliteit' (petty crimes, 1997) already hints at the menace and ambiguity pervading his second volume 'hulp' (help, 2004). This second volume was nominated for the prestigious VSB poetry prize and awarded a Charlotte Köhler bursary. His third poetry volume, 'omdat ik ziek werd' (because I got ill) won the VSB Poetry Prize 2009 for young readers. His most recent volume 'Mijn soort muziek' (My kind of music) was published in 2015. © Paul Verrept

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