

An autobiographical novel full of warmth and wonder

By the Sea

ERIC DE KUYPER

At the end of the 1940s a family from Brussels resume a pre-war tradition of spending the summer in Ostend, on the Belgian coast. As he plays, the young boy Eric takes it all in: the sights, textures, tastes and smells – all the things his adult self will remember with delight and wonder. About ‘Ostend green’, the beach and the waterline, romances and flirtations.

Fresh and candid. De Kuypers’s amused style lifts everything up out of the everyday.

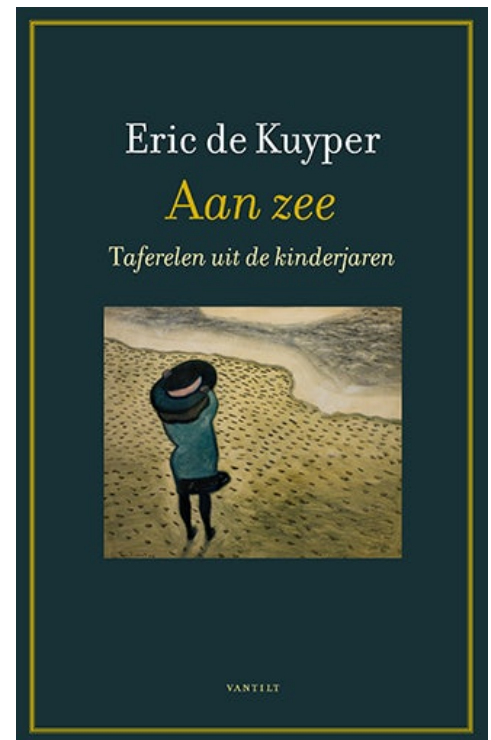
VRIJ NEDERLAND

‘By the sea’ is a light-hearted evocation of the mundanities of summer, made up of rituals and social codes that little Eric can’t help but marvel at. Between the lines, De Kuyper shows his fascination for the two different faces of tourist haunts: before and after the season.

‘By the Sea’ is the first part of a cycle of books Eric de Kuyper devoted to his childhood, also including ‘Aunt Jeanot’s Hat’ and ‘Three Sisters in London’. He evokes his memories of the world of his youth as an ode to *Sehnsucht* or yearning. His tone is melancholy, but not nostalgic: the latter always has an undertone of sadness and sorrow, and ‘By the Sea’ is packed with warm, cheerful memories.

De Kuyper uses his pen like a camera

CORRIERE DELLA SERA



AUTHOR



Eric de Kuyper (b. 1942) is a splendid maverick in Flemish literature. In addition to being a writer, he is a film director and theoretician, a semiologist and a connoisseur of ballet, theatre and opera. The autobiographical cycle about his youth earned him the title ‘Proust of the Low Countries’. De Kuyper is a chronicler with a refined, light-hearted and ironic writing style. Keywords such as melancholy, refinement and beauty typify his kaleidoscopic collections of scenes. *Photo © Stef Verstraeten*

ORIGINAL TITLE Aan zee. Taferelen uit de kinderjaren. (1988, SUN (republished by Vantilt in 2015), 118 pp.)

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