

BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY LUUK GRUWEZ

Luuk Gruwez was born in Courtrai (Belgium) on August 9th 1953. Since 1976 he lives in Hasselt (B), where he used to work as a professor in an art school until 1995.

In 1973 he made his debut with a collection of poetry, called *Stofzuigergedichten (Vacuum Cleaner Poems)*. Thereafter followed *Ach, wat zacht geliefkoos om een mild verdriet (Ah, what a soft Fondling for a mild Sorrow)* (1977) and *Een huis om dakloos in te zijn (A House to be Homeless in)* (1981). From then on he was considered the most important poet of a generation that was called neo-romantic. His early poetry, in particular, attempted to compensate for permanent absence and loss by creating a cult of beauty. Linguistic subtlety and stylistic refinement were meant to offer an alternative to an inhospitable, unbearable world. Later, from *De feestelijke verliezer (The festive Loser)* (1985) and *Dikke mensen (Fat People)* (1990) on, he evolved towards a more conciliatory attitude towards reality, drawing compelling portraits of individuals, who had in some way or another been neglected or forgotten. In pursuing these themes, he continued to be an interpreter of existential failure. This was also the case in *Vuile manieren (Dirty Manners)* (1994), a book of poetry that contained among others a cycle of poems on cancer. In 1996 *Bandeloze gedichten (Riotous Poems)* appeared, a large anthology of revised poems that had been written before 1994.

It is only since 1992 that Gruwez had also been publishing more or less autobiographic prose, first together with Eriek Verpale, *Onder vier ogen, siamees dagboek (Face to Face, Siamese Journal)*, later solo with *Het bal van opa Bing (The Ball of Grandpa Bing)* (1994).

In 1995 he wrote *Lucky Star*, a monologue for the Flemish and the Dutch television. In 1996 followed *Een bijzonder bevallig paar (An extremely charming Couple)*, a television play for the same broadcasting corporations.

Gruwez' most important prose is perhaps to be found in *Het land van de wangen (The Country of the Cheeks)*, published in Privé-domein (Private Domain), the prestigious Dutch series of autobiographic prose from all over the world and from all periods. A collection of columns appeared at the end of 1999 under the title *Slechte gedachten (Bad Thoughts)*.

Dieven en geliefden (Thiefs and Lovers), a new collection of poetry, is published in 2000. The poet in this practices also the genre of the longer epic poem.

In 2002 appears *De maand van Marie (The month of Mary)*, a book with four monologues, in which each time a woman of a different generation occupies the centre stage. 2004 is a productive year for Luuk Gruwez. In *Een stenen moeder (A Mother of Stone)* he collects short pieces of impressionistic prose and the collection of poetry *Allemansgek (All Men's Fool)*, accompanied by a cd on which the poet reads from his own work. In 2007 *Psilo* appeared, a collection of very short stories that could even be considered as poems in prose. Recently Gruwez received tremendously positive reviews for his latest poetry: *Lagerwal (Lee shore)*, that was published at the end of february 2008.

For both his prose and his poetry Gruwez has been awarded prizes numerous times.