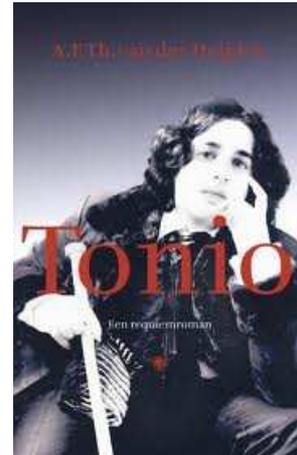


Book of the month June 2011

**“Tonio. Een requiemroman” (Tonio. A Requiem Novel)
by A. F. Th. van der Heijden (De Bezige Bij)**

Noted for epic broadness, a hard-edged grim style and a symbolical and autobiographical charged account of a whole generation, Dutch author Adrianus Franciscus Theodorus van der Heijden’s (short A. F. Th. van der Heijden) is talked about as the berserker of Dutch literary scene. However, no book that he has written before was as personal as his new released requiem novel “Tonio”.



The book documents the tragic death of van der Heijden’s only 21-year-old son Tonio, who died in a car accident on May, 23rd 2010. To overcome the loss, the narrative incorporates his grief, self-reproaches and memories expressed through first-person narrator Adri. The first part of the novel recalls the first six years of his son, the second part traces back the details of how the accident occurred. Tonio was on the way home, when he was hit by a car in the center of Amsterdam.

The requiem novel is meant as a tribute to Tonio. Being left behind broken by this event, van der Heijden dug in his memory, took notes and tried to find out more about the last hours of his beloved son. This quest led him to several eyewitnesses, friends, police men, doctors and a mysterious girl called Jenny who seems to play a major role in the last weeks of Tonio’s life.

The cover of the book shows a self-portrait of Tonio in which he is dressed and posed as the famous portrait of Oscar Wilde. Van der Heijden has already written three other requiems dedicated to his father, his mother and a friend of him.

Van der Heijden’s publications include a number of acclaimed titles such as “De tandeloze tijd” (The Toothless Time), an ambitious cycle of seven novels in which he portrays the life of his alter-ego Albert Egberts against the background of the postwar Netherlands. In 2003, van der Heijden launches a saga entitled “Homo Duplex” including award-winning novel “Het Schervengericht” (Judgement by Shards). Some of his books have been translated into German, Russian, Finnish, Swedish, Spanish and Bulgarian.