

Astrid Heligonda Roemer

Curriculum vitae 1947-2026

1947	Was born in Paramaribo, Suriname, on April 27.
1966	Went to The Netherlands to complete her training to become a teacher.
1970	Using the pseudonym Zamani, published her first literary work, a poetry collection called <i>Sasa: mijn actuele zijn</i> .
1974	Published her first novel, <i>Neem mij terug, Suriname</i> .
1975	Settled in The Netherlands.
1982	Got her breakthrough in the Dutch literary world with the novel <i>Over de gekte van een vrouw</i> , which, 40 years later, would be rediscovered and recognized as a “classic of queer literature”.
1985	Published <i>NoordzeeBlues</i> , her most lauded poetry collection.
1996-1999	Published <i>Gewaagd leven</i> (1996), <i>Lijken op liefde</i> (1997) and <i>Was getekend</i> (1999), a trilogy of “decolonization novels” that has become known as ‘Roemer’s Triplets’ and that is widely recognized as her magnum opus.
1999	<i>Könnte Liebe sein</i> (1998), the German translation of <i>Lijken op liefde</i> (1997), received the LiBeraturpreis, a German literary prize for outstanding works of fiction by women writers from the global south.
1999-2016	Withdrew to a secluded life; lived variously in The Netherlands, Suriname, Italy, Scotland, and Belgium; wrote an occasional story, radio play, or essay, but no novels or other major works.
2015	A documentary film about Roemer’s life, <i>Astrid H. Roemer: De wereld heeft gezicht verloren</i> , was released in The Netherlands.
2016	Received the P.C. Hooftprijs [P.C. Hooft Award], a Netherlands-based lifetime-achievement award for literature in Dutch. Roemer was the first Surinamese writer to receive it.
2021	Received the Prijs der Nederlandse Letteren [Dutch Literature Award], a lifetime achievement award for writers from The Netherlands, Belgium or Suriname, which is considered the most prestigious literary award in the Dutch-speaking world. Roemer was the first Surinamese writer to receive it.
2023	Published <i>Dealers dochter</i> , which became her last literary publication.
2023	<i>On a Woman’s Madness</i> (San Francisco, USA: Two Lines Press, 2023), the English translation of <i>Over de gekte van een vrouw</i> (1982), was a finalist for the National Book Award for Translated Literature, which recognizes books of fiction or non-fiction translated into English and published by a US publisher.
2025	<i>On a Woman’s Madness</i> (London, UK: Tilted Axis Press, 2024) was longlisted for the International Booker Prize, a literary award for the best work of fiction translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland.
2025	<i>Over de gekte van een vrouw</i> was translated into Portuguese as <i>Sobre a loucura de uma mulher</i> (São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras), and Roemer became the first Surinamese writer to participate in FLIP, the International Literary Festival of Paraty, Brazil.
2026	Passed away in Paramaribo, Suriname, on January 8.