

The fragile emotions of a woman contemplating the passions within her

The Hidden Fabric

STEFAN HERTMANS

In a fragmentary way Stefan Hertmans explores and evokes the consciousness of Jelina, a forty-year old author. She is married and has an eight-year-old daughter, she leads a comfortable and independent life, and yet she feels dejected and discontented. Her fear of growing old, her sense of something lacking, her loneliness and underlying melancholy have come to assume a regular place in her life. Promises for the future have failed to deliver, any hope of finding happiness has shrunk. At a writers' congress and even when she embarks on a passionate relationship, the fatalism in the depths of her soul stays firmly in place. Will she choose her family in the end?

Its wording is exceptionally meticulous and subtle. A work of art

KNACK

The reader gets to know Jelina as a woman who is asking essential questions at a key moment in her existence: about her complex interaction with people and the things that concern her, about her anxiety and her ambition, about her longings and the underlying melancholy. Hertmans evokes the mind of an intense and lively woman as she draws up a midlife balance, weighing up hope and satisfaction, expectation and realisation. 'The Hidden Fabric' is a recognisable, probing, and sublime portrait.

The style of this compact novel flirts with poetry

DE MORGEN



AUTHOR



Stefan Hertmans' (b. 1951) biography reads like a 'bildungsroman': from teacher to jazz musician to professor and writer's writer to Belgian State Prize Laureate and major international success. He has published novels, short stories, essays on literature and philosophy, plays and poetry. Listen to Stefan Hertmans on 'Kopje Koffie' ('Cup of Coffee'), a podcast produced by The Dutch Embassy in Berlin, the Dutch Foundation for Literature, in cooperation with Flanders Literature and the General Representation of the Government of Flanders. *Photo © Praet*

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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Marijke Nagtegaal - m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl

TRANSLATION GRANTS Elise Vanoosthuysse - elise@flandersliterature.be , Marieke Roels - marieke@flandersliterature.be , Yannick Geens - yannick@flandersliterature.be