

FICTION

Love as a second skin

My Fellow Skin

ERWIN MORTIER

In 'My Fellow Skin' we look at the world through the eyes of an observant, impressionable boy, Anton Callewijn. The Flemish countryside, the old house belonging to Anton's parents, his room and his bed – all are made tangible in beautiful, affectionate language. We follow Anton's tentative steps on the path to adulthood as the boy begins to grasp an understanding of time and death. When he goes to school, love grabs him for the first time. Unlike almost all the boys in his class, Anton directs his attentions not at the cooing and ogling girls, but at his classmate, Willem de Vries. His love is reciprocated.

This Bildungsroman is related to much European literature from Proust and Mann onwards... peculiarly unforgettable.

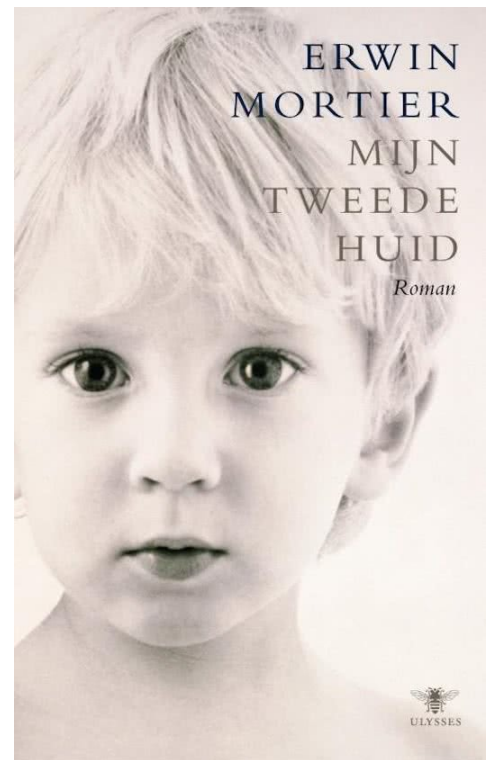
THE GUARDIAN

This awakening love gives Anton his own, undiscovered identity, envelopes him, as it were, in a second skin. What is so lovely about the description of their relationship and of the reactions of his parents and the school priest, is that their second skin remains invisible. Mortier writes with great powers of suggestion. So many things in this book, although remaining hidden, are made as clear as day.

'My Fellow Skin' is ultimately about loss. Anton loses not only his love, but also his youth, the protection of his parents and the old house in the village, and is left desolate.

A sparkling novel with a thunderous effect, a Flemish song of truth and semblance

VRIJ NEDERLAND



AUTHOR



Erwin Mortier (b. 1965) writes novels, poems, columns and theatre texts and has been steadily building an oeuvre of a consistently high literary standard. From the outset, Mortier's talent was recognised by literary critics and he quickly established a reputation as one of the leading authors of his generation. He has been praised for his sophisticated and sharp pen, his accurate and sensitive observations and his unbridled linguistic virtuosity. A grand stylist, his evocative descriptions bring past worlds brilliantly to life. *Photo © Lieve Blancquaert*

ORIGINAL TITLE Mijn tweede huid (2000, Meulenhoff, republished in 2006 by De Bezige Bij, 192 pp.)

RIGHTS SOLD German (Suhrkamp), English (Harvill / Vintage / Pushkin), French (Fayard), Turkish (Dedalus)

TRANSLATION RIGHTS Marijke Nagtegaal - m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl, Uta Matten - u.matten@debezigebij.nl

TRANSLATION GRANTS Marieke Roels - marieke@flandersliterature.be, Elise Vanoosthuysen - elise@flandersliterature.be