



My Body and I

René Crevel , Robert Bononno (Translation)

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In *My Body and I* (*Mon Corps et Moi*, 1925), René Crevel attempts to trace with words the geography of a being. Exploring the tension between body and spirit, Crevel's meditation is a vivid personal journey through illusion and disillusion, secret desire, memory, the possibility and impossibility of life, sensuality and sexuality, poetry, truth, and the wilderness of the imagination. The narrator's Romantic mind moves from evocative tales and sensations to frank confessions, making the reader a confidant to this great soul trapped in an awkward-fitting body. A Surrealist Proust.

My Body and I Details

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Author : René Crevel , Robert Bononno (Translation)

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ralowe says

le sigh. sparse self-flagellating opulence, written in 1925. the drama ensues: will rene onan or not? will rene off himself or not? emo-to-death "erotic" vaguebooking with an algebraic equation and a prayer, two of my favorite moments. i guess everyone was on that stream-of-consciousness tip around then, this reads like vanity-incarnate poetry in paragraphs. apparently this queer anarchist was very cute and i guess that's all that really matters to me. crevel deserves a merciless spanking.

Skyelis Tyler says

oh my god. you ever feel like you've already read, or at least heard of and contemplated, every good book you'll ever read in your life? maybe working in a bookstore did that to me. but this! this book! where had it been all my life? i'd never heard of it, and yet from the first sentence to the last i was stunned and overjoyed by both its substance and its style, amazed that somebody had written, and so well articulated, all those thoughts that play out like fireworks in my mind at my darkest moments and most exalted states. PERFECT

Sonia says

I pulled this off my shelf today instead of dozens of other unread, mainly because it fits into the pocket of my duffel coat. It is great--someone aptly called him one of the accessible surrealists--and full of current interest since I am almost the age Crevel was when he committed suicide.

Miah says

I am obsessed with Rene Crevel, and this book in particular. If you're going to read Rene Crevel, start here instead of with 'Putting My Foot in It' which has some laborious humor at times. This little book isn't meant to display the Surrealists' trademark "black humor", but is instead a somber contemplation of solitude and the nature of human bonds. It's also poetry. It's also an entreat to suicide. It's also a chronicle of despair, disappointment, and the more painful facets of the human experience. Memory, mimosa...

Castela says

"A felicidade nascerá dos golpes desferidos ou dos golpes recebidos? E a infelicidade dos que não foram desferidos, dos que não foram recebidos. Estranha pergunta para fazermos a nós próprios com as pálpebras fechadas, quando viemos pedir a mais íntima e solitária das metamorfoses ao sol de junho, ao ar dos glaciares. Ai de mim! Um corpo exige sete anos para se renovar. A montanha, essa, muda insensivelmente de cor. Mas de que valem os símbolos de um alpinismo primário e reconfortante, se esta noite não vou chegar ao azul, a esse azul chamado, muito a propósito, azul-celeste?"

Brook Miscocki says

An introspective work by a very suicidal author. It has its ups and downs but I like the way he observes objects and people.

Michael A. says

A sober psychological examination on the subjects of solitude and depression among ruminations about bisexuality. Beautiful writing every other paragraph or so.

Howard says

This is a semi-storyless inner narrative of the troubled author written in 1925, just ten years before committing suicide at 35 – a readable prose-poem which orbits around human pairings and life. It is a surrealist version of Pessoa's 'The Book of Disquiet' - unlike Breton quite enjoyable and readable. Without much psychology (and before I checked online) it is evident from the style that Crevel was troubled by his sexuality (Apparently he had problems with others in the surrealist movement). Its story is angst, depressed, lonely and deep.

One can usually know a good book when sentences and quotes leap out as being interesting and thought provoking:-

Here are just 3 interesting of many quotes:

“But since God the Father wants nothing to do with me in His paradise, the same as yesterday, I must go on using objects, earthly creatures”

“Christen the little lie that has been so carefully wrapped a perversion”

“‘I think therefore I am’. I know that I think. But am I?”

A good read – 4 stars.

Brian says

"Rare are those who will help me discover something of myself." Here is a meditation on solitude and the human condition. This anti-novel contains some of the most profound musings ever written; Crevel does trace the contours of the body, the "geography of the body" in words that are devoid of substance and meaning. When I first decided to read this work, I immediately discarded it and shoved it back into the empty slot on my shelf. Its abstruse and difficult pages were hard to comprehend and (regretfully) I labeled it as nonsense. After a complete and thorough reading, I'll admit that this one particular book will undoubtedly reshape your entire approach in finding meaning in this life.

Crevel, bisexual and suicidal, attempts to delve into his psyche, which is in conflict, and return to the surface with Truth and understanding. The origins of this anxiety felt by the author, I believe stem from his sexuality; everything in the external world (objects/ people) are infused with a memory that subsists within the mind. One can never escape oneself, one can never find solitude since we are made up of certain moments that fleeing would only create new moments. Unable to satisfy the self, how can we satisfy others? These are some of the ideas that fill this book. So death is the ultimate response. Once we commit an action we have to live, continue, in doubt or certainty. There is nothing, but our fabricated desires, our lies, and our false truths. We deform our memory, change shape to exteriority through subjectification. How can we ever be certain of something? I felt that Crevel was disgusted with himself, disgusted with his body's desires since they didn't correspond to his spiritual essence. The language of this book is a lyric, a beautiful poem that reaches everyone; "Mon Corps et Moi," a surreal voyage into the landscapes of the self. Here is a litany for all who know how to judge.

Kelly says

dangerous rationalization of suicide

Eddie Watkins says

For many of us, that is those of us who seriously think on things, the greatest problem to overcome in life is the activity of our own brains; not political corruption or poorly paid jobs or gas pains or the daily bastards we encounter, but the sparkings of our own grey matter. Our brains dictate the tenor of our lives. They can create prisons and paradises and everything in between. They are the worlds we each live in and are in continuous flux, but within this flux are inherent tools to alter its course and solve problems encountered and shape the very world we live within, though the flux remains and there is no final solution. This life within this world created by our brains is an unending ride in a vehicle with a variable accelerator but no brake pedal, though there is an emergency brake located somewhere deep in the debris between the seats - beneath the condoms and coffee cups, the maps and unpaid tickets, bagel crumbs and baby vomit, there is suicide. Rene Crevel ultimately yanked up this emergency brake by cranking up the gas in his stove, but before he did this he created a highly articulate road map toward his destination. *My Body and I* was one of the first installments of this map, and what made it so haunting and moving for me was that suicide had not yet been decided upon as an option to overcome the problem of his brain, considered, sure, but not intentionally and consciously predestined. This book is an honest and detailed account of Monsieur Crevel attempting to solve the problem of his own brain, and to read it is to take a convoluted interior journey through his life thus far; a swarm of memories drawing everything in its wake from his father's suicide to his love affairs with fat singers to his self-prostitution to his tormenting dreams. He tries to solve his problem by achieving total aloneness, but everywhere he turns he encounters memories and dreams and objects that make this perfect aloneness impossible. In the end he is alone, but it's not a perfect aloneness, not a transcendent aloneness, but rather an aloneness still besieged by the problem of his own brain, and it would be ten years before he pulled the brake; ten years of Surrealism, black humor, politics, sexual torment, high society cocktails, and ceaseless thinking and dreaming.
