

FICTION

Pastiche of the roots novel
**To Blackbird
Creek**

STEFAN HERTMANS

In 'To Blackbird Creek', Stefan Hertmans narrates the coming of age of a boy in a Flemish village in the 1950s and 60s, in a grotesque, but just as often moving way. His budding sexuality and lively imagination so take possession of him that the world appears dark, terrifying and full of secrets.

'To Blackbird Creek' is a penetrating portrait of a generation growing up with fantasies about the Cold War and inaccessible continents. Between the familiar world and absolute desolation - the landscape of adulthood - there is a chasm that can only be bridged by the imagination.

**Hertmans looks at the world through a
microscope**

LEIPZIGER ZEITUNG

"Anyone who knits their story together with lies, perhaps tells more truth about themselves", as Hertmans put it in an interview about his novel. In 'To Blackbird Creek', he pokes fun at the impulse that resides in every writer, and which he himself is similarly unable to escape: his desire to write his own 'A la recherche du temps perdu'. 'To Blackbird Creek' is an ironic confession, but also an infectious pastiche of one of the most striking themes in Flemish literature: one's own roots.

**A triumph of imagination over
autobiography**

DE MORGEN

**FLANDERS
LITERATURE**



Stefan Hertmans

NAAR
MERELBEKE

Roman



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. Immediate classic 'War and Turpentine' was chosen as one of the 10 Best Books of 2016 by The New York Times.

ORIGINAL TITLE Naar Merelbeke (1994, Meulenhoff/Kritak, 191 pp. Latest edition by De Bezige Bij in 2014.)

PRIZES Shortlisted for the Libris Literature Prize

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