

# An ode to the complexity of loving

# The Immaculate

ERWIN MORTIER

Marcel returns to his grandmother Andrea's house, hoping to uncover the secrets of the past. He wants to know why he was named after his grand uncle Marcel, Andrea's brother, who died on the Eastern Front. During World War II, Fleming Marcel fought alongside the Germans in the Flemish Legion, a military unit of volunteers fighting the Soviet Union's Red Army.

With death imminent, Andrea is also grappling with the past and the loss of her brother. She reminisces about the farm where she grew up, the death of her parents, her craft as a dressmaker, her children. The book ends with grand uncle Marcel's letters from the front, the last anyone heard from him before he fell in battle.

**His delicate prose can be as rhythmic and evocative as poetry. \*\*\*\***

NRC

Twenty years after his sublime debut, Mortier harks back to Marcel, the mysterious grand uncle from the book of the same name, which has become a modern classic. At the same time, both books are completely self-sufficient. Like previous work, 'The Immaculate' showcases Mortier's elegant, evocative and dazzling style. The book is brimming with astute imagery. It's not war and conflict that are at the heart of this book, but the way in which the past has a lasting influence on subsequent generations. With this book Mortier proves yet again that he ranks among the top of Dutch-language literature.

**Mortier roots around in the catacombs of wartime collaboration and does so in a dazzling style.**

DE MORGEN



## 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** De onbevleete (2020, De Bezige Bij, 142 pp.)

**PRIZES** shortlisted Libris Literature Prize

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

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