

Queering the suburbs

The End of the Street

ANGELO TIJSSENS

After an incident of homophobic violence, a painter and his husband move into a house belonging to his parents-in-law, in a quiet residential district. While his husband Nicolas puts in long days at the office, the narrator is left behind on his own. In the blistering heat, the middle-class neighbourhood, where he has never felt completely at home, becomes increasingly oppressive. The vigilance of the neighbours feels like covert social control, their friendliness like misplaced sympathy.

The painter's loneliness grows to become isolation. Furthermore, doubts and his efforts to process the act of violence make his creativity run dry. When Nicolas confesses that he thinks he's in love with a female colleague, the couple drifts even further apart.

In spare and meticulous prose, Tijssens opens up a complex inner life in which doubt and melancholy are central. ****

HET NIEUWSBLAD

An order of blank canvases for a new series of paintings sets off a process of change. When the painter asks the delivery man to pose, sexual tension arises. Something starts to stir inside the painter: a fascination, perhaps even a desire. That attraction accentuates the ups and downs of his marriage, but it also breathes life into his work. The painter who feels watched in his own neighbourhood because he is different rediscovers the queer outlook on his work.

In 'The End of the Street' Angelo Tijssens shows two men trying to find their way amid social expectations and heteronormative role models. In an unadorned and subtle style he lays bare the main character's search, both in his personal life and in his work as a painter. Recurring images of relentless heat make the oppression of heteronormativity tangible. 'The End of the Street' shows how brittle acceptance can be.

A mature, cleverly constructed book, with a rich array of themes and sensory



AUTHOR



Angelo Tijssens (b. 1986) is a scriptwriter, dramatist, actor and writer. He has co-written films including 'Girl' (Caméra d'Or, Cannes 2018) and 'Close' (Grand Prix, Cannes 2022). He also travels the world as a stage actor and director with the Ontroerend Goed theatre collective. In his work he transforms a critical view of social themes into individual stories with penetrating depictions of character. In a gripping and pared-down narrative style, his novels explore a wide spectrum of human emotions and relationships. His semi-autobiographical debut novel 'The Edges' harnesses vulnerable emotions to reflect on growing up in an environment that's not fit for purpose, that's 'on the edge'. The book was nominated for the 2023 Bronzen Uil and has been translated into French, German, English and Spanish. *Photo © Willy Vandepierre*

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