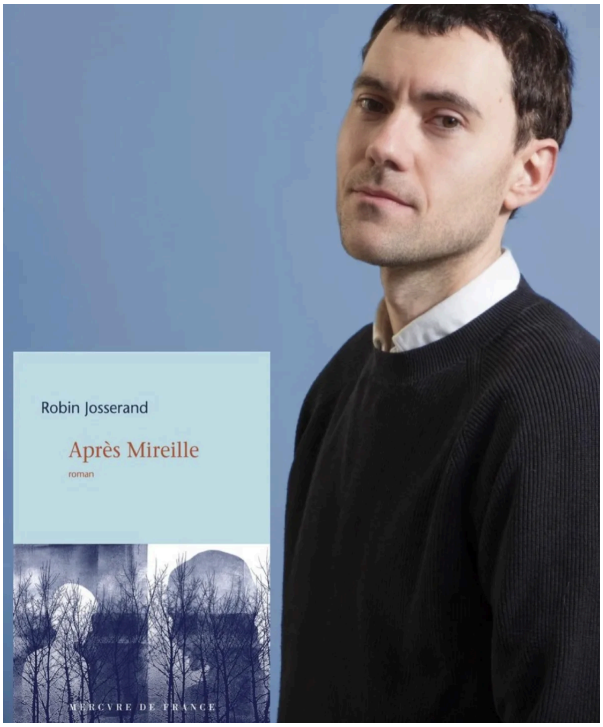
REVIEW

Après Mireille, or the Archaeology of a Trauma

by Nicolas Becard

October 7, 2026 · On *Après Mireille*

Robin Josserand traces the genealogy of an original wound: the story of Mireille and Gaston, two great Resistance fighters destroyed by their deportations. A bittersweet experience.



In this new text, Robin Josserand offers us a bittersweet experience. Bitter because of the terrible subject we are looking into, but I insist on sweet, because the restraint and intelligence of his writing immediately put us in a mood of confidence and intimacy. A book that at first has the contours of an investigation, but also of an attempt, if not to rehabilitate, then at least to understand this ancestor, the epicenter of a suffering that spread.

The author traces the genealogy of an original wound. To do so, he sets out to retrace the terrible story of Mireille and Gaston, two great Resistance fighters destroyed by their deportations. Sadly, Gaston died very soon after his liberation, while Mireille, on her return, found herself unable to fulfill her role as a mother.

How could she have? Robin follows the path of the deportation of his ancestor, who died before he was born, and visits the places where she was held captive and where her body was exploited as a slave laborer. Aware of how lucky he is to belong to a generation without war, he manages to draw a less severe portrait of her than his beloved grandfather Jean-Claude did.

For us devoted readers, it is impossible not to notice the many novels, memoirs, and autofictions by a third or even fourth generation of authors who are now speaking out. This movement, moreover, is not limited to the descendants of victims of Nazism. The same deadly pattern seems to apply every time. A relentless mechanism of Evil that first orders the direct victims into silence. Is it possible to tell the unspeakable? So begins the reign of aphasia and secrecy. The poison has been injected; it can now spread insidiously.

Then comes the generation of the Break, aware that it carries ills, trauma as an inheritance. Evil has never stopped devouring, damaging, lurking in the shadow of things left unsaid and of genes.

Don't you see the sea drawing back, the animals' song falling silent, the rumbling silence and the blinding night to come?

We won't be able to say we weren't warned.

— Nicolas Becard

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