

Mince



Edith Doove



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*'Mince' brings together observations/poems/commencements that were written over a period of about ten years and somehow seem to belong to each other. Titles sometimes work as counterpoint. Originally written in Dutch they were put in alphabetical order which does not work once translated.*

*Plymouth, September 2014*



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## Bangkok/Bangkok

I asked him whether the exhibition was any good. He answered: “It’s like the new Volkswagen Passat: sound, but it does not arouse you.”

## Berlin bis

First encounter: Martin from Teheran, German foster mother, cab driver. Happy to give me a ride although I am not standing in the right spot. Immediately wants to show me all of Berlin. Gives me his business card – is actually an engineer. I can always call him.

The second impression is better than the first. Maybe it is the time of year – the lights in the trees along the Ku'damm. I wander through streets that seem familiar.

*Man trinkt Tee, damit man den Lärm der Welt vergesst.*  
[One drinks tea to forget the noise of the world.]

## Brussels

And if summer will not be after all...  
Almost longing for autumn  
for elegant shoes  
fresh green cache-coeurs  
and burgundy red floral skirts.  
Stockings.  
The wind blows cold  
I walk out of the cinema  
Greet – into town  
Downwards  
The sounds of this city  
the shadows  
An open door of a balcony  
reminds me of that hotel room in Lisbon.  
The sounds –  
is she laughing or crying?  
A Jamaican reggae orchestra.

## Dreams of Chandigarh\*

Red chairs against green grass, green light, pink light.  
The night and the building wrapped dark around it.  
A small pond and its own light.

\*In response to an exhibition by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster,  
DeSingel, Antwerp 2005

The words will whirl from my fingertips like butterflies.

My thoughts will drop like wet autumn leaves on the pavement.

-

I have seen the days and the dreams. And then I thought: now that's enough.

I feel like a penetrated little rosebud.

-

Greco swirls

## E finito

Later I heard he had fallen of his roof terrace. While concentrating in the morning sun on his tai chi exercises, he miscalculated the turn of a new movement and got out of balance. The roof terrace was small. The fall did not surprise him. Completely relaxed he let go and smashed four floors down on the flat roof of the garage, a blissful smile on his face.

## Freud

Is it true, I had asked the porter, that Freud stayed here while in London? He had said yes. And he had reached up to a photo above the counter. “Here, he said. “You see him get out of a cab. The hotel had a different name at the time.” The old man sounded somewhat proud, as if he had been there himself. Which could have been the case given his age. Soon, in fact next Friday, the hotel would be renovated and transformed into a four star, maybe even six. The way he said this made it clear he would be renovated away himself on this occasion. Together with the hotel cat Mouse that was born here. The receptionist had told me that morning that I could take the cat if I wanted to. Clearly no issue with sentiment. Mouse had crept into my room the night before, had drunk two cups of milk and had fallen asleep next to the radiator. In the middle of the night she wanted to leave again. Maybe the receptionist didn’t like cats or was afraid of them.

That afternoon I went to visit Freud’s house. There was an exhibition of Sophie Calle’s work. One of her stuffed cats looked suspiciously like mine.

## Yellow

The smell of camomile and rapeseed is inextricably linked to a new beginning. The apartment blocks were brand new, the lawns not yet landscaped. The rough grounds, where weeds had free play, became an adventurous playing ground. Endless explorations through hip height grass, children's gardens laid out against the foot of the concrete mastodon.

In April and May, but sometimes even later, half of Europe is bright yellow, united by rapeseed fields.



Me a seaman's wife  
She the sea, the ocean  
Me your land, your solid ground.

Or the other way around –  
I the sea, the ocean  
She your land, your solid ground  
She, the seaman's wife.

Both of us someone's feast  
And you ours...

I feel like a dog  
that urgently needs  
to shake the water  
from its coat

Or a snake  
that  
wants to  
get rid  
of her old skin

Maybe I need to dance  
all night long

## Lasse

Sometimes it takes a long time. At least halve a day, of getting up, going away, return, pick something up and putting it away again, read a fragment, a book, a newspaper, a magazine, the radio, internet. And then suddenly there's a word. Like 'lasse': "...the untranslatable word lasse: a kind of decadent tiredness. Sagan called it 'the passionate boredom.'"

That's it – maybe the only thing today.

-

Indeed – nothing more than this. The day refuses to brighten. The motionless fluff balls in my garden are as grey as the sky.

A cotton-blanket.

Windless.

## Manifesta

You wonder why people in a public toilet (the filthy one in the station of Luxemburg City for instance) write an ode to their loved one on the wall. Who would never see it while someone else knowing this loved one is rather unlikely.

## Mince

Because it is a word in two languages, in both English and French. Minced meat, hoity-toity, to speak with a pointed mouth, toddle, chop, express affectedly, white-wash.

Or thin, insignificant, an expression: really, honestly, gosh, get a bitch. And MD's infra-mince ofcourse. In-between, thin stories. Mince.

## Nothing

‘What music do you like?’

‘Music.’

‘What books do you like?’

‘Books.’

‘What tea do you want?’

‘Tea.’

And I asked him: ‘What do you enjoy?’

‘About everything,’ he said.

‘Or nothing,’ I thought.

Footballer without shoes,  
a stone in his dreams.

## Nomad

Far away – further away. No, not yet here. Further.  
Closer to them that are mine.  
Further away. To return in the end nevertheless.

?

When she walks through the park a neat clean boy approaches her. She expects him to ask what time it is. Instead he asks: “Are you looking for company?”



## Wellenstein

Little man passes – takes one brusquely step with his right leg and then makes three quick hopping ones as if he tries to prevent himself from toppling over. And then again the right leg...

Berlin 2002 but I can imagine how Grosz would have seen this same little man passing some eighty years ago and how he would end up in one of his drawings. How the little man also passed somewhere during all previous centuries. The French Revolution, the Fall of Rome... And thus this cripple little man, seemingly without any importance, is of all times and has unimaginable value for eternities. Like the screaming woman in the Paris subway who amongst the teeming Christmas crowd, suddenly makes me realise what the Middle Ages must have been like.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Edith Doove** is a writer, curator and researcher, currently based in the UK, who occasionally also creates images.



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