

JEROEN VAN DEN BERG,  
IAN ROWLANDS

FRAGMENTS  
OF JOURNEYS  
TOWARDS  
THE HORIZON

# DE NIEUWE TONEELBIBLIOTHEEK

# Characters

Gwyn

Maarten

*A man sits on a rock. White noise.*

A VOICE Louder than a train... a fucking train.  
Not that I've been on a train for an age. I've  
been sitting here, on this rock (zero North,  
zero West) so long my arse has atrophied  
from going no-where fast... slow... inertia...  
gone.

*With 'gone', noise fades. Perceived silence.*

And you? Where are you now, my friend;  
mon ami, mi amigo? Sitting? Standing! Still?  
Moving? You're moving! Mm, nice. To  
where? To see what you can see, see, see? I  
see. You've seen so much. I've only ever seen  
selectively. Saying that, mostly, when there

was something to see, I kept my eyes closed. I only opened them now and again to catch fragments... moments, impressions; a herd of cows blocking a country lane when I was four. Fucking Friesians, probably; a snap shot of fear, bastard! And you? What do you remember? I mean really remember. I'm not talking family myth about a small boy who, as a man, believes he remembers seeing, at some point, some pissy little thing. I'm talking deep memory here, mm? Oh, you do, do you! Father, mother, Hoogland, broad horizons; all white clouds and grey sea, blah, blah, bastard! You know that I can only see

slivers of sky caught between mountain peaks. You know that! You're just trying to make me jealous; you and your broad horizons. What! So fucking what if envy has stunted me – physically, emotionally. What do you expect? I am a man born on this Rock, blinkered by psychofuckinggeography  
Yes, I remember your horizon, dankjewel; I fucking remember, okay!

I remember an horizon broader than a slag's crack; too wide for me; too much sea, too much sky. I prefer smaller, containable landscapes. What? 'Cause that's what I am!  
A man on a rock in a small perfectly framed

landscape of certainty. Okeyfuckingdokey?  
in response to a comment Fuck you. I've got  
better things to do with my time than talk to  
a Dutchman!

*white noise again*

What? Can't hear. Are you talking to me?

*beat* Fucking train...

*He resigns himself to the memory. Noise  
fades.*

Okay, okay. Yeah, I remember an island, (2  
degrees North, 9 degrees East); one island in a  
string of islands, lying like a corpse, face  
down in a shallow pond. Her blonde head, a

shifting dune, her navel, Midland, her feet,  
pointing East towards the German isles. I  
remember an island that lends a kind of  
permanence to a seascape of riddly diddly  
sands... Mm? Riddle of the Sands. Erskine  
Childers! Novelist; Irish Republican.

Foretold the rise of Germany pre 1914. Shot  
for treason. No, I haven't read Johan fucking  
Huizinga. Should I? Okay, I will... sometime,  
but not now. At the moment, I am  
remembering your broad horizons. That's  
what you wanted me to remember, wasn't it!  
If you want me to talk, fucking listen!



I remember that morning. Before we set out, we had breakfast in West-Terschelling – in that café opposite the conning tower.

Fucking tower my arse; just dumped there on the quay; more of a mnemonic than a war trophy. On this rock, it would be a big fuck off monument to victory. We showed those bastards – three times; 1918, 1945 and 1966! We fucked, they fuck, we'll fuck those Germans again! EU Referendum, bring it on! What? No, not my words. Theirs. Little Islanders. Why? Is that a rhetorical or just plain stupid? Because this rock was never invaded, my friend; never in living memory.

Well, apart from in one episode of Dad's Army... oh, yeah , and Jersey! But who gives a fuck about fucking Jersey!

So, their grandfathers never needed to walk the grey line as your grandfathers did, falling either side of it; collaborator, resistance fighter. Not on this rock, not on your fucking Nellie! On this rock, 'Collaborator' is just a character in a film (killed off by Richard Burton), not a real person; a family member; remembered, possibly best forgotten. Mm? Yeah, I know your family history, you've told me, I was just being glib. Okay? Can't you take a joke? Isn't this gezellig? Oh, come on.

Where's that famous Dutch sense of humour, full of irony? Mm? *beat* Okay, sorry, I'm sorry... what was I was saying? Oh, yeah, that morning, in that café opposite that conning tower, we were talking collaboration as we ate garnalen and drank karnemelk before we set off; walking the long shadow of the island clock tower towards the dunes...

Before Terschelling, I remember another island, (11 degrees South 69 degrees West).

Nieuw Amsterdam, that's where we first met; in a fuck me landscape with fah-bulous horizons. The light that night was pure

Hopper, remember? The music, pure  
Heggarty; misty, diffused, redeeming. I stood,  
corner of Fifty-sixth and Eighth, outside the  
Vitamin Shop waiting for you. Yes, I waited  
for you!

I am more empirical in time and place. You  
float through life like... like fucking Denver,  
outwards from a virtual centre! What? Yeah,  
you float. Okay, that's how I imagine you.

I said, I imagine; choose to imagine, maybe.

Okay, you don't float. You appear to float...  
through life... it's just my perception, okay!

You probably perceive things of me. Do I  
censor them? Do I fuck! Will you listen!

Will you fucking listen? You keep  
interrupting me, I'm trying to... God's sake!  
Louder than a fucking train. Listen, *then*  
*calmer* please...

I stood on that corner, waiting for you; at the  
junction of the world, Thai, Cuban, Sushi,  
Chipotle, Wendy. We hadn't met before. A  
friend hooked us up. 'You're both European,  
you'll get on'. Thank God we weren't both  
from Belgium... Belfast... The bastard  
Balkans; New world kindness, unchecked  
prejudice.

I remember you floated towards me from

Broadway. My first impression of you?

Negative; a kind of 'through the looking glass' impression, you know. After all, we were...

we are each other's negative reflection.

You're tall. I'm short. You're slight, I'm broad. You're popular, I'm prickly. You knew the territory, I'd only just arrived. 'Hello. Are you Eye-an?' you asked 'Guess I am' 'Good to meet you. Shall we?' And you led me across town. We walked three, four blocks. I don't recall any traffic, just emptiness; whole avenues of emptiness. I love those moments in that city; brief moments of silence

amongst the mayhem; silence, remember  
silence? Have you ever forgotten it? I miss...  
*beat* We must have crossed Seventh Avenue,  
Sixth, Broadway. I know we didn't get as far  
as Fifth. We stopped at a deli; I haven't found  
that deli since, though I've looked... I've  
looked. And there, you drank coffee and I  
endured, fucking en-dured Liptons, and we  
talked like polite Europeans lost in an  
American mist...

Anyway, after breakfast, we headed West of  
West-Terschelling; two little lost boys  
walking through the dunes; I followed your

tail. You pushed the gorse forward as you walked, and it'd spring back onto my legs like little hypodermics; prickly little bastards! I knew I should've worn moleskin! We didn't say much as we walked. The wind was blowing out to sea. I could barely hear you, but you heard me. 'This place reminds me of home' I said. 'Everything reminds you of home!' you said. Did you say that? Did you? Bastard! I couldn't see your face. Was it just a trick o' the wind, or sarcasm? I wasn't sure; wasn't sure we'd known each other long enough for ribbing, had we? Maybe? Maybe not. Not sure we'll ever know each



other that well. Yeah, we are fellow writers, collaborators – thinking we know so much about each other! But what the fuck do we know really? You bastard, you just presumed. You just presumed that I always look for home in foreign landscapes, even if I do; even if I fucking do, it's none of your business. You'd no right, no fucking right! So what if I triangulate... I said, tri-ang-u-late foreign lands from my own perspective, I need to, I need... Why? To make sense of this fucking geography, that's why, to try and... *in exasperation* Ah, fuck it!

*beat*

You know, to be honest, I don't know why the shit I've wasted so much of my life. I've been all over this bastard planet, but, in there, *taps his head* in this coco de fucking mer, truth is, I've never left this rock; never. Wherever I've been, I've carried this rock around with me, and, believe me, it is shit heavy! That's the difference between us – weight of legacy; eroding cartilage, bone, bowing legs, grinding down. My shoulders are as wide as you are tall, my friend! It's odd how history shapes an anatomy. Twenty nine, inside leg, I'm a fucking dwarf in your

country... a dwarf. Do they still throw  
dwarves in Drenthe?

I remember this dwarf walking towards the  
high dunes. I had to walk quicker than you;  
my five paces for your every four. Hard fact,  
Sunshine! As a man of this rock, just to get  
through life, I've had to use twenty five per  
cent more energy than you; you and your  
broad horizons and long fucking legs!

Generations of poverty have conspired  
against me. Whilst my forefathers ate shit,

yours gorged themselves taller on herring;  
bastard; my lack, your excess!

I know! Let's swap landscapes, shall we? I am willing to trade my mountains for your low lands. I think, you know, I... I think we'd suit each other's territories. You Dutch are like sunflowers – sun, sun, sun, fucking growing. It's obvious that you crave height, 'cause you haven't got it geographically. No offense, I'm not being funny, but Wales would be ideal for you. We've got mountains coming out of our arse. We're pig sick of the fuckers, we just want an easy life, you know,

a quiet walk down to the Spar to buy fags and beer! The Netherlands would suit us down to the ground, and the cycling would be good for us as well – ‘cause we’re all dying of heart disease. So, what do you say? And after a few generations, the anatomical balance would be re-dressed, and we could walk shoulder to shoulder, step for step. And on a future Terschelling (which would obviously have to be re-named, and as unpronounceable to you then as it is to me now) we would reach the broad horizon together; having used the same amount of energy! Fucking result! *beat* So what do you say, my little Zizekian. Eh? *He*

*listens*. What? 'Ik kom van de klei' Is that  
you're final answer? *with irony* Sure you  
don't want to phone a fucking friend? *beat*  
Bastard! I'm... You've disappointed me. I  
think your reaction betrays the vestiges of  
colonial arrogance I always suspected lurked  
within you. Ves-ti-ges! Haven't I said that  
before? I thought I had. Well, I've said it now.  
You are England's brother by another  
mother, my friend! Yeah, fuck you as well.  
You're not the only friend I have journeyed  
with, not the only friend! Who? Does it  
matter who? What do you want, a list? I  
don't care if you believe me! I don't fucking

care! *beat* Okay, if you must know, his name was Fergus! Yes, 'was'. His name 'was' Fergus, and he drove a car... What else do you need to know about him? Did I walk with him? *beat* Did I walk with him... I walked away from him...

*He acts out the following.*

Break eye contact, turn around, walk away...

*He stands with his back to the sea. Silence.*

*Picks his moment to turn back at some point during the first few lines...*

One Easter... mind you, it's always Easter on that bloody island! One bone fide Easter, I set out to see Fergus in Galway (2 degrees North, 4 degrees West). Thing was, I just missed him. Well, missed him alive anyway! He probably died when I stopped in Gort... God damn, Gort! Worked the timing out in retrospect. What? No, I didn't feel anything at the time; no, 'walking over my grave' bollocks, nothing like that – just the relief of a piss, I guess! Isn't that pathetic? But saying that, why should I have felt anything! It's not like we were family; twins ripped apart at birth. God no, we'd long since slain Colm-



killer, Patrick and Saint fucking David! Our kinship wasn't based on some Celtic twilight blood tie shit; none of that crap. No, our friendship was based on our shared sense of politic. Mm? Example? Okay, take the day of the Royal Wedding. What?

God knows which one! Any Royal, take your fucking pick! That day, he was in a hospice; cancer was getting the better of him, again.

I was in Cilmeri standing on the grave of the last true Prince of Wales, when I phoned him. 'I think you'll appreciate where I am, Fergus'

I said, and he did! 'Right. What you want to

do, Een' he called me Een 'What you want to do, Een, now that their backs are turned, is find a handy Post Office and storm it!'

*amused* That was Fergus all over; Irish pragmatist. 'Moore Street was a beginning not an end' he'd say, pointing at the small plaque above an Afro-Caribbean hair product shop! 'They bayoneted their way through, house by house, from the Post Office. This was where nineteen sixteen ended, and where nineteen twenty one began!' Once, he slapped a book down on the table in front of me: Frongoch, the University of Revolution, 'You want to write, write about that; the part

your nation played in my freedom.’ Fergus gave me context. Michael Collins learnt Welsh for God sake! Welsh, not fucking Dutch! ‘Let’s collaborate!’ he said, and we collaborated... I miss the dreaming; late nights in the Firkin Crane – the sean-nos singers keening... I miss; so fucking angry, so... I miss...

The last time I saw Fergus, alive, was outside Galway coach station; almost a month to the day before that Easter visit. We’d spent a few days with him... Mm? No, not us, not you and me – another friend – another cancer

victim, but that's another story; another turn and walk, to my shame! Anyway, we were heading back to Dublin, this friend and me, and Fergus dropped us off outside the coach station. 'Until next time' I said, as I got out of his car. We both smiled... hoping, knowing... Yeah, I could've reached out to Fergus, could've taken his hand; captured a moment – like one of those photographs people take of the dying – as if the dying don't know why the photograph's been taken. They're dying and they've got to stand there smiling, it's fucking obscene. Give a man his dignity for God's sake. Yeah, I

could've taken his hand and held it a moment, but I would've had to have let it go at some point. He knew that, I knew that. So, why bother reaching? Instead, I kept my hands resting on the outside of his car and he kept his on the steering wheel; still in the driving seat, pride, better that way. We just nodded... broke eye contact. I turned for the bus and walked away...

Mm? I don't know whether I'll hold yours when the time comes! I don't want to hold yours. I don't want to hold the hands of the dying any more! That's the trouble with

friends, they end. You will end, as he ended, as others... One friend.... Christ, one friend died at thirty two, leaving a son 'And the worse thing is' he said, stroking his little boy's hair 'the worse thing is that I'll never see him grow into a man'. I had to shake his hand! I had to look him in the eye and shake his hand and he was crying; fucking tears, fucking... 'Why you crying, Dad?' his son asked. I turned, to my shame, I turned, broke eye contact and walked away...

Anyway, Fergus... our friendship was a series of premature turns towards buses and trains

and ships and planes. 'You never stay long enough in one place, Een' he'd say as we'd shake and I'd turn again. *beat* To be honest, that Easter, I only planned to stay overnight in Galway; time to say hello, time to say goodbye. I had only the shirt I stood up in. But in death, he held me captive; the bastard! He held me, and I had to buy a new shirt before three days were out. And in that Easter weekend, there was no resurrection, no hope, just one last walk together to a cold grave.

You know, in life, we walked all over; Banks of the Clyde, down the Falls Road, Through

Trinity 'This is the last shop standing from Joyce's Ulysses' he'd say 'Really... C'mon, I want to show you Moore, Een' He was my guide, he drew the maps I needed at the time... Yeah, you give me context, as well, I'm not denying that. But we're on a different journey, you and me. We're on a Vineland projection. Okay?

Grey... a grey, Atlantic evening, clouds over Inis Mor; freezing outside the funeral home in my new Dunne store shirt with free black cufflinks. Just family and close friends. I didn't expect to be in that tight circle. I think



I just turned up at the right / wrong time;  
synchronicity! I can't remember when I first  
met Fergus, but I'll always remember the last  
time I saw him. I don't know about you  
Dutch and death, but uh... on this rock  
we've sanitized it. Years ago, we'd lay bodies  
out in parlors; old women would gossip and  
have tea over the corpse. Not any more, no.  
These days death lies in secret quiet places.  
Not that I haven't seen death in life, just...  
rarely... twice. First time, when I was a little  
kid, my grandmother died upstairs and dad  
told me to go up and say good-bye to her.  
What did he think he was doing! I was eight!

Fucking eight, fuck... you know. So, when the door of the funeral parlor opened and I saw Fergus propped up in an open coffin, it freaked the hell out of me.

'You want to know what Ireland's really about, Een? Look at me now! How much more context do you want, my friend?' His wife... oh, his wife... I don't want to imagine what she was thinking, feeling. I could presume, but I won't, because anything I'd presume would be a violation. She just crumpled... just fucking crumpled in the vacuum of empty years left to mourn him. He was fifty

three! Fifty god damn three! Fucking waste!  
How old are you? How old am I! Old enough  
to start counting again; but, this time,  
counting down... reduce to nothing... twenty  
years – hopefully, fifteen – maybe, ten –  
really, five – don't fuck with me... four,  
three... two... one... revelation...

*He closes his eyes, fade in and out of white  
noise. Contemplates nothingness for awhile  
before re- opening them.*

In that funeral parlor, we sat around the  
coffin; wallflowers waiting for a last dance;

only one card to fill. After a while, I sensed it was my turn, so I got up, walked towards him. I didn't want to say anything, but I felt I should. 'Always le mot juste, Een.' he used say to me. So, I tried to make some witty comment – a last joke between friends – failed. 'Jeez, Een!' 'Yeah, I know, Fergus.' 'Call yourself a writer!' 'Sorry.' Then I reached out a hand, the hand I should have reached out in Galway coach station a month before, and stroked his cheek with the middle of my fore finger as if I was stroking a bastard bird or something! God knows why I did it like that,

I just... thing is, I'd never touched him before. Yeah, I'd shaken his hand dozens of times, and once I put my hand on his shoulder; the first time I visited him after he'd found out he had cancer – the third and final relapse. Six in the morning, he'd woken early to see me off – he couldn't sleep, he said; the smell of shit in the air, the chemo was affecting him...When my taxi arrived. I touched his shoulder, saw the fear in him...a snap shot of fear. Then I turned, as I always turned, and left for a train... always a fucking train...

A lone piper led the walk from the funeral parlor to the church. Then, came the hearse, we walked behind that. The road was lined with mourners. I tried to walk humbly, the whole town was watching; tried to fill the short journey with memories – An Cheathru Rua, Karnak, Caerdydd (where everyone we met I knew. ‘Jeez, Een. What are you doing? Running for mayor?’). Then our last real walk together; after lunch in Ballynahinch. He was in so much pain, but he wanted to show the lake to my son. Go raibh mille maith aghat, my friend. Memory after memory just... trying to fill the empty

journey, you know... the empty journey...  
*then, in anger* It's got everything to do with  
Terschelling! I want to tell you, as a friend,  
what a friend meant to me, because I will  
never tell you face to face, as I never told  
him... really. Listen to me, please. Please...

Fergus was a difficult man – you either loved  
him or hated him. Do you have Marmite in  
Amsterdam? Think, the saltiest licorice –  
acquired taste. Once, we didn't speak for...  
for too long. He cut me down in company, in  
that cute Connemara way of his. It was over  
a year before we made up, I never forgot.

Possibly, the last time we spent together, he apologized for being a shit that day 'It was nothing.' I said; it was everything, and he knew that. In his last few weeks, he went round apologizing to everyone 'He didn't need to do that.' I said to a stranger at his wake 'Jeez, he fecking did,' your man said without shame, drinking the family's free Guinness! Without fucking shame... fucker! I wanted to... But I'm jumping time...

Four of us carried his coffin from the hearse into the church; Fergus' two brothers, myself and Pol – an old friend from up North. We were, 'triangulation', Fergus, Pol and me; an



unholy trinity... blasted apart... broken. *beat*

Anyway, inside the church, it was standing room only for the requiem mass; the full bollocks, you know, the return journey home. And I realized as I sat there that we'd never talked religion – him and me, only politic – and I thought I knew him! I knew fuck all about him; know fuck all about you. Are you Calvinist? Catholic? Which side would you lie of the Belfast divide, orange or green? Is your bible Dutch or Latin? Eh? You know, I can't remember if I've ever been to a church with you. I don't mean to a service, just to... admire the fucking hubris, well

that's how I would see it anyway. How would you see it? Mind you, I do remember discussing terps one night skirting the kirk after a few beers in De Stoop. But I reckon, that's probably the nearest we've ever been to a house of God, my friend? In nomine patri, filli et spiritus sanctus... eh?

After the mass, we all turned, and walked away, leaving Fergus alone in the shadow of the cross and the care of Saint Ignatius?

Those fucking Jesuits – they got him in the end! For two days he lay in their care – just round the corner from the Firkin Crane. I

hope he slipped out for a last glass when the Brothers weren't looking! Slantje, my friend! Then after those two days, the four of us carried his coffin to the cemetery on a cold hill above the city. We shouldered the rope; one final intimate act of love from two brothers and two friends, as we lowered Fergus into his grave. He was a large man, he grew, unfettered by oppression; big heart, heavy coffin 'I only came to say hello.' I said, as we settled him back into dust. 'Goodbye, my friend.' Then we released the tension, threw a handful of earth onto that big black

box of his, turned and walked away... turned  
and walked away...

Who will go drive with Fergus now? Who  
goes with you now, my friend?

Will you bury me when I die? Will you? Not  
that I want to be buried. I want to burn. And  
of my ash, I want a pinch of it thrown from  
the rock. My wife knows which rock. And as  
for the rest, I want it transformed into a  
diamond and I want it to be thrown into the  
Grand Canal in Venice. Hold my son's hand,  
will you? If you truly are my friend, hold his

hand and help him release me from the side  
of the number 1 Vaporetti between the  
station and St Marks... promise? La  
Serenissima, I'll find silence there, from  
this...

*closes his eyes*

Chhhhhhh!

*he opens his eyes*

That beach, you know... the beach that runs  
along the whole of the West coast of  
Terschelling is so flat; it's so flat, isn't it. It  
slides almost reluctantly into the sea. That

day, we walked along it, keeping the dunes to our left, talking plastic and shit; somewhere in the Pacific, you said, there was a plastic sea hundreds of kilometers wide and someday, all the plastic on that bloody beach would eventually find its way there; plastic eels to a plastic Sargasso. We agreed on plastic, we disagreed on the Euro. I said I missed all the different coins, different currencies, boundaries. You said you favored free flowing trade and expediency – the Euro was ‘less of a coin more of a pebble in the shoe of a forgetful continent’ you said. No, I said that; not that I said that at the time, I’m

saying it now. I prefer speaking in hindsight, real speech fucking tongue ties me. Once in the Alsace, I walked up a mountain with this German from Regensburg. Have I told you this? Yes, I've told you this. How, close to the summit, we came across an empty schloss; Germanic, thirties architecture, bit of Bauhaus with an empty swimming pool. And how we wondered who'd swam in that pool above the clouds. And how a hundred meters on, there was a German concentration camp. Busloads of children, German children, driven there just to see the mistakes their grandparents had made. 'That

is the trouble with you British' the German said 'whereas you glorify the war, we are taught the shame of it.' What the fuck could I say to that? What the fuck! I remember when I first told you that story, you agreed with the German. Do you still agree with him? Is that what truly separates us – shame, or the lack of it? Is it? Then, can we ever be friends, my friend? Can we ever collaborate if I can't glimpse the hidden geography? How can we ever journey together if we're not even on the same bastard map? I don't fucking know! What? *beat* I know I swear too much... it comes with the territory; the



punctuation of skull on rock, the full stop of  
a child falling. You know that shiver you get  
when you see a child, fall? Fucking crack!  
That's me... fucking! Okay, I'm sorry if I  
offend you, but I am remembering; mapping,  
... charting the known knowns, the  
unknowns knowns, the known  
unfuckingknowns, the fucking unknown  
unknowns for you, for us. Okay, from my  
own perspective, but how else am I supposed  
to fucking map!  
*having settled the matter, then*  
*deliberately...*

I remember a pass in the dunes. Do you? A pocket of yellow sand. 'A sun trap' you said, 'a sun trap.' We thought of working class families from Rotterdam... long Summer days... somewhere where families could repair the damage of a year's living, blah, blah, start of a play maybe; point of collaboration... remember that? But as we walked through that Eden, snakes appeared, Do you remember them? Oh, I fucking remember. Snub nosed snakes, half hidden in the dune grass; burrowing... Bombs... they were unexploded bombs. Bombs my fucking arse! This was Terschelling not fucking

Mogadishu! Bombs on the fucking beach of civilisation! And not just a few, a whole blanket of the little bastards, some gutted, some intact. It was a minefield, one wrong step and... Who took it? You, me? Mm? Who led us into the labyrinth?

One minute, we were picking our way through bombs, the next, I remember dropping down, down through light, until we reached the shore of a lake, a place of glass (latitude and longitude of unknowable degree – we'd slipped off all fucking maps). And in that perverse no-place, we left life's tinnitus

behind... in that place, there was just absolute silence – the impossibility of life in the midst of a vacuum; a shark drifted slowly, ever so slowly by. ‘How the hell is that shark alive?’

I thought to myself. ‘Shark’s need to swim free in order to breathe. Come to think of it, how are we breathing in this place of nothing?’

A land of nightmare, though whether the nightmare had already happened, was happening, or had yet to happen was an unknown; time held no truck there. The place put the fear of God in me; *mise en*

scene, Czech animation circa 1960!

Thankfully, there were no trees to sing – though singing wasn't an option in a fucking vacuum! I half expected a demon dwarf and a big, fuck off flying goldfish. It was a childhood 'terror-scape' sans pareille!

'This place is beyond belief' I said, or rather thought – thought somehow traversing the nothingness? 'We could easily die here waiting for death to happen!' 'I'd rather live in Belgium!' you said. There are other places of death for me – rooms painted orange and brown, Dunkin Donuts and the whole

county of Monaghan – ‘Drumlin country’  
they call it, where the wind sweeps across  
the low mountains sucking the hope out of  
each valley! Once, Fergus sent me there to  
finish a play; I finished it and got out fast!  
‘We are writers’ you thought, / said, said /  
thought ‘our trade is action / reaction;  
conflict is our pain quotidian. This place is  
devoid of life. Succumb to the inertia, and we  
will certainly die’, you said ‘No shit, Hans  
fucking Brinker!’ Then you placed your hand  
upon my shoulder ‘We must believe in the  
possibility of life again, Eye-an.’ Again! You  
used the word, ‘again...’ God! At the time, it

never crossed my mind that 'belief' could ever be an historic verb for you. How could you ever be found wanting, then or now? You always seemed so fucking self-assured. It's why I liked your company, I leeched certainty from you. Okay, there were times I sensed a doubt, but I thought I was just projecting my own fucking inadequacy... I believed in you; in your essential Dutchness. Your forefathers conquered the world, for fucks' sake! Doubt is a chapel boy thing. 'We must believe in the possibility of life... again' you said. I'd never believed in the possibility of life full stop, fucking punt and point

finale! 'We must create' you said 'and fast.  
We've threatened collaboration long enough,  
Eye-an. Now is the time for us to dream it; to  
escape this nightmare place.' 'Okeydokey' I  
said 'so where do we begin?' I'm not sure'  
you said 'but, something will come out of  
nothing. It has to. It's the Dutch way, it  
must...' Must. Verb auxiliary. (Past and  
present), must. Negative, must not. Welsh  
translation – 'Mmm, maybe.' 'But how?' See  
– that seed of doubt within me again! 'We  
will build our stage here. In this no-place,  
we'll create our own context' you said as you  
crushed the exoskeletons of small dead



animals underfoot. 'We should erect a massive plastic cube – ten by ten by ten – here, and now.' 'A cube? OKAY...' I thought 'but couldn't we work with the fluidity of the landscape and create a more organic form? Just a suggestion,' I suggested, bending in the wind; though there wasn't a wind to fucking bend against. We, Welsh bend against anything – mostly the imagined. 'No, I think a cube would be best' you were insistent 'and it should be black.' 'Black!' 'Yeah, we will erect a black plastic cube; a black hole in time, and space!' Fuck! Such clarity of vision controlled the Spice trade,

played beautiful football, fucked tulips! 'And on the interior walls we'll project reality' you said 'that way, we'll keep the perverse and the natural in a constant state of flux. And within that fertile no-space space, we will create belief and then suspend it...' Thus thought the apotheosis of Mondrian as Steve McQueen as God!

'Shit!' I said, accepting form, but doubting content 'but, what will we say in this black plastic box of yours?' 'I don't know, you're the 'word wizard', say what you need to say.' 'But I don't know what to say.' 'That's our

problem then!' Damn fucking right, it was!  
*beat* 'Ok' I offered 'what if, um... what if we  
say nothing, because anything we could say  
would be interpreted out of context.' 'What?'  
Why don't we just use, I don't know, 'found  
text' or something as a basis for  
collaboration; less problematic, more  
universal...' 'Found text! Where will we find  
text here, in this no-space space?'  
'Somewhere, I don't know, we just need to  
look for it.' 'Ok, so what are we looking for?'  
you asked 'Um, I'm not sure... glyphs, words,  
half words, tmesis.' 'Tmesis?' 'Fractured  
meaning.' 'Meaning?' 'I don't fucking know!

Let's just look, eh? Let's see what we can see.  
Okeydokey? Alstufuckingblieft?'

So heads down, we searched. For how long did we trawl those slow shifting sands, my friend? Glass is liquid! Moments drawn out eternally... However long, I didn't find a single word to utter in that black box of yours – not even a breath upon which to hang one! That's all I found in the sands, was fear... that cockroach emotion again; survives everything, even a fucking vacuum! In those shifting sands I was paralyzed by absolute fear, my friend – the fear I saw in

Fergus' eyes that day in Galway Coach station... when I should've reached out my hand. I should've reached out my hand but I didn't, I just turned. *into panic* But, I couldn't turn away from the fear in those riddling fucking sands; as I turned away from the fear in Fergus' eyes; as I'll turn away from the fear in yours, as I've turned away from the fear in others. I hate you all, my fucking friends! But most of all, I hate you! I hate you, do you understand? I hate you because, one day, you'll put your hand on my shoulder and turn! And you will turn! You will turn,

because if you don't, I will... and I don't want to fucking turn again!

*Silence. He steels himself.*

Big. Black. Plastic. Box. What do you fill a big black plastic box with? Eh? Now that's an icebreaker at a party. 'Hey! How ya doin? What do you fill a big black plastic box with? Sorry, did I say something? Did I? Please don't turn away from me, perhaps we can collaborate? Yeah... bye.' What did you find in the sands, my friend? What did you find? Eh? Were you even looking? Were you?

Answer me, for fuck's sake! Were you looking? What is this? A 'Dutch' collaboration? Who do you think you are? You bastard; so fucking European! You are nothing more than context, my friend! You are just my fucking context! Now, what did you find in the sands? Tell me! *beat* You found what! Betrayal? I see. Now that's a bastard thing; betrayal. I didn't betray you, did I? Okay, I... I used you, but I didn't fucking betray you. Yeah, I took your life and used it to form my own text, this text, my context; saw your horizons, through my eyes, put your thoughts, into my words. But, 'We

exist only in relation to each other.' You told me that, my little Sloterdijkian. So semiotically, maybe I stole from you, but I didn't fucking betray you. I'd never do that, you're my friend. I'd never betray a friend. Fuck, there's a bond of trust between us; between friends. And in my book, the man who breaks that bond, deserves a fate worse than cancer. A man like that deserves to be locked in a big black plastic box, and the insides should be completely covered in mirrors and shit, and he should be left alone for eternity to reflect upon his crime in a perpetual Droste effect of fucking shame!



*beat* Perhaps that's what we should put in  
your box, my friend? Betrayal? Shame? Loss?  
Fear; all the permutations of knowns and  
unknowns, the living nightmare...

What do I remember happened next? I  
remember that I looked up as the shadow of  
the clock tower fell upon me 'The all  
composing hour... she comes, she comes...  
night primeval and chaos old'... such a large  
clock tower for such a small island! I  
thought. The hands sped around the dial; day  
followed night, night followed day with  
indecent haste! Tic, tic, tic, tic, tic, tic, tic,

tic, tic, tic – no room for a fucking toc! We had passed from a place of silence into a place of mayhem in an instant.

*Sudden white noise.*

Sound poured in; deafening. Bastard! Fucking stop. Fucking... sound!!

*Noise increases gradually in volume.*

Fuck! Squelching; the squelching of feet! I looked down, and saw that we were both knee deep in marsh grass, and that we were slowly being sucked down into the dark quagmire. I remembered that you were wearing Dutch designer shoes, I was wearing

Veldtschoen. 'Both pairs will be ruined' I thought. So I searched frantically for a dry path out of that sodden place. Leaving you, I'd wade off on a tangent, thinking for a while I'd found a way through, only to be checked by a deep channel of water and mocking ducks! So I'd wade back to you, then head off in a different direction. I lost count of the times I did this, getting more and more frantic whilst you just made a B line for the clock tower which never got any closer, however far you walked. The fury was disorientating! Marsh birds strafed our faces with shit, leeches sucked our resolve, eels

bit, coiled and ripped flesh as we advanced; if you can advance towards an ever-receding point. 'I never mind the not getting there' you shouted above the fucking din 'because I always get there in the end.' Remember, 'We'll get there in the end.' But I wasn't so sure, we were getting no-where fast; the quagmire was absorbing everything that was us. And the clock... day followed night, night followed day with increased ferocity until dark and light strobed; fractured moments merged – all was nothing – nobastardhope, nobastardanything. And I looked across at you and you were neither corpse nor child;

primeval nor stellar. You were life and death simultaneously made and unmade! It was then that I really began to panic; Fear is a bastard thing – fear of nothing, fear of everyfuckingthing; the dyke was holed, fear flooded in... Play one last song for me, will you, though I can barely hear the music over this fucking din, play Dido's lament to Aeneas as we go down...

*Under the white noise we hear Dido's lament to Aeneas from Purcell's opera – pure music tries to break free of the white noise but fails...*

One night... one night at that age they say suicide is optimum, I went to bed with the flu... la grippe! Next morning, I awoke with tinnitus. Have I told you this, my friend? I keep repeating myself, tell me if I uh... viral tinnitus, louder than a fucking train. Hell, is on this earth, my friend, whatever they say, hell is here on this fucking rock!. For three months I was fucked by sound.

Chhhhhhhhh! Without end. 'Oh, it must be horrible to live with that.', people'd say. Do they think I needed fucking reminding!

Chhhhhhhhh! 'You'll never get rid of a high

pitch.’ the specialist said. Chhhhhhhhh! No fucking end! The sound killed all calm; no respite, especially in a quiet room – even now – there’s no rest for me. I played with madness as a youth, who hasn’t, now it played with me. Be careful what you wish for, my friend! After the first month, I asked to be sectioned. The doctor said ‘You wouldn’t want that’ ‘I would.’ ‘No, you wouldn’t, believe me.’ he said. I cursed the fucker, I’ve never thanked him. Because there was a time when I’d walk into his surgery and there’d be a waiting room full of people slowly dying, children screaming, but

he'd see me straight away; straight away! I never thanked him for the hand he held out when I was in that place of absolute terror, never. I went for walks; long walks, as Sebald walked *The Rings of Saturn*, searching for some fucking peace. I couldn't stay still at home, the sound drove me out my house, out of my fucking mind! How my wife endured those days I don't know; we shared the same house but not the same sound-scape! When I looked in the mirror, that's all I could see was fear; a fuzz of fear-full sound!

Chhhhhhhhh! The person in the mirror had such horror in his eyes. I didn't want to be



him. I wanted to kill him, to kill the fear he felt; the fear that was killing me. That's why I turn away from fear in others, my friend. I have felt absolute terror and it never leaves me... it dogs me; a lone wolf waiting its moment. And, that's why, whenever I see fear in the eyes of others, it fears the hell out of me. That's why I could never be a doctor – I could never stare fear in the eye, day in day out and endure it... fuck! I couldn't do that, no fucking way, so I turn away and walk. To my shame, I turn and walk.

*fade to nothing*

But you didn't turn away from me, did you.  
As I sank into the quagmire, even though  
you were fearful yourself, you saw the fear in  
my eyes and you reached out; you reached  
out, took my hand, and pulled me free – just  
enough belief for the both of us, that old  
historic belief, revisited! I don't think I  
could've done the same for you; no, I know I  
couldn't have. Not that I wouldn't have  
wanted to, I just couldn't have, The verb,  
'belief' has ossified within my vocabulary;  
it's prefuckinghistory, it's chhhhhhhh,  
louder than a fucking train! I would've  
turned away. That's the truth of it, I'm sorry,

I would've turned away... as I turned away  
from Fergus... from others: betrayal, shame,  
fear, loss, cowardice... now that's a cunt of a  
'c' word! Lock it in a big black plastic box. I  
am the found text; the found fucking text,  
this fucking found text... suspend, dis-  
believe, burn me... as for the rest, you know  
what to do. I'm counting on you. When the  
times comes, I'm counting down on you ...do  
what you have to, please; thank you, my  
doctor, dankjewel, my friend...

*beat*

Hey, I'm sorry... it's the weather here... it,  
uh... it... there's too much of it! So what's it

like with you, eh? Is it skating time yet? Is  
Zwarte Piet coming?

Black and White Minstrels, Dutch style! I  
know you've told me that it's not a racist  
thing, it's more to do with the chimney soot  
– blacking him up. But in a post-colonial  
context, and being sensitive to that kind of  
shit... you know.... sorry, yeah, so fucking  
what... so, fucking what. *beat* We escaped...

And as we left the dunes, I remember we  
passed a group of Dutch boys playing rugby  
on the Groene Strand; Dutch boys shouldn't

fucking play rugby, mind you, neither should Welsh boys pole vault dykes; everything has a time, a place. The time on the clock tower, showed that it was time to escape the island.

*interrupted* What? It's not a clock tower?

What is it then? It's a lighthouse. I thought it was a clock tower. You've let me think all along it was a... that's not fucking gezellig, mate. Clock tower, fucking lighthouse, whatever, the ferry was about to leave, for the mainland, for the train – Harlingen to Amsterdam Centraal via Leeuwarden. *half beat* I remember, we walked along the quay in silence. Do you remember? Our thoughts

turning away from the sands, towards our real lives; the business of being which will always put off any real collaboration between us, I guess. We'll only ever talk it, won't we? We'll never walk the walk of it... and that's ok; less collaboration, more inspiration – nothing wrong with that. Nothing at all. But never say never, eh? This rock is a lonely fucking place, a fucking lonely co-ordinate – zero North, zero West, it lacks a certain... yeah, context. At the ticket gate, we shook hands. 'One last chance.' I said. Remember? 'One last chance. Will you swap your sands for the rock? Go on! Swap my shards of sky,

for your asthma pumping seascapes? Eh? Oh, come on... for the sake of the European project. What do you say?''' We laughed, we shook hands, broke eye contact, we turned and walked away. *beat* From the ferry, Terschelling receded into a broad, broad horizon.

*white noise fades up, holds, then falls as the lights dim.*





EEN STEM Ik ben een man van de klei. Dat zijn geen praters, kleimensen. Stug volk. Harde werkers. Mensen met visie, een ruime blik. De kleigrond is uitgestrekt, land met een perspectief, eindeloze uitbreidingsmogelijkheden, de wereld op de klei houdt nergens op, gaat ver voorbij de uitgestrekte horizon. Ik heb eens gehoord van een bus vol Chinezen die er niet aan konden wennen, het Groninger landschap. Als die de touringcar uitstapten vielen ze spontaan om, te veel lucht boven hun hoofd, te verloren in de ruimte, een vorm van omgekeerde

hoogtevrees was dat. Het duizelt je, zo klein als je bent op de uitgestrekte akkers. Dat is waar kleimensen tegen kunnen: een leven lang alleen, verloren in de leegte... Mannen van de klei, mannen van het grote gebaar, 360 graden rondom zich uitgestrekt bezit. Dat zijn de heerboeren. Totaal ander slag dan mensen van het zand. Zandgrond, is armoe. Zandmensen hebben geen visie, schrale grond, schrale ideeën.

Bietsuiker, aardappelmeel en strokarton. Dat komt uit de streek waar ik vandaan kom. Oost-Groningen. De Veenkoloniën. Waar

arme sloebers de kanalen groeven, waarna de bovenlaag van de grond werd afgestoken, het veen, turf, plaggen.

Bietsuiker, aardappelmeel en strokarton. Dat komt er uit Oost-Groningen.

Ben ik daar trots op. Daar ben ik niet trots op, nee. Wat zijn dat voor grondstoffen.

Aardappelzetmeel. Een bindmiddel. Een sociale grondstof, zou je kunnen zeggen, houdt zaken bij elkaar. Maar wel voor inferieure producten. Bietsuiker, verre van sociaal. Overbodig en opdringerig, maakt

afhankelijk, verpest onze smaak. Bietsuiker en aardappelzetmeel. Strokarton.

Het echte fortuin komt in Groningen van onder het land. Enorme gasbellen zijn er gevonden, in de tijd dat mijn vader als een van de eerste welzijnswerkers vanuit Den Haag naar Groningen vertrok. Toen naar het Noorden verhuizen nog emigratie was. Let op, hè, we hebben het over de tijd dat mijn oma haar schort afdeed en haar haar schikte op het moment dat de telefoon ging. Toen het drieënhalf uur met de trein van Den Haag naar Groningen was, en dan nog als bonus

met het meest aftandse materieel vanaf Groningen naar Winschoten. Grijsgerookte coupés. Een trein waar het geratel van de asbakjes met gemak boven het gebulder van de dieselmotoren uitkwam. Met suizende oren stapte je in Winschoten het rijtuig uit. Draaiërig en volkomen gedesoriënteerd.

Achtergebleven gebied was het.

Achtergebleven gebied zal het altijd blijven.

De Veenkoloniën. Land met een slecht karma. En als ik dat zeg weet ik dat ik daar geen vrienden mee maak, maar ik ga er toch niet meer naar terug, naar Groningen, dus

wat zou het. Groningen heeft voor mij  
afgedaan. Ik woon in het Westen, nu, ik ben  
een tweede generatie remigrant, ik ben terug  
op de grond waar mijn ouders elkaar ooit  
hebben ontmoet. Terug in Rotterdam, dat je  
vanaf mijn opa's boerderij aan de horizon kon  
zien liggen. En daar ligt het nog steeds,  
Rotterdam. Aan de horizon. Zag je vroeger  
enkel de Euromast en de verkeerstoren van  
vliegveld Zestienhoven, nu kijk je vanaf de  
boerderij tegen een imposante skyline aan.  
Een plaatje waar Amsterdam enkel van kan  
dromen, met haar verlegen kantoorflats langs

de ringweg. Rotterdam schreeuwt je vanuit de verte tegemoet.

Waar je vanuit de boerderij vroeger enkel de Euromast zag. Mijn oma in de erker tijdens het grote bombardement. Schort voor, handen in de zij. Vliegtuigen boven de stad. Moet een prachtig gezicht zijn geweest. Een stralende dag, ideaal weer voor een grote ramp. Mooier– nog fotogenieker dan de aanslag op de Twintowers. In formatie kwamen ze aanvliegen, een lucht vol kleine kruisjes, gebulder van de motoren. De enige keer dat mijn moeder mijn oma zag huilen,

schokkende schouders, in de erker, de stad in vlammen. Van de oorlog hebben ze verder weinig gemerkt op de boerderij, behalve in de hongerwinter, toen de stadsmensen kwamen. Moeders met kinderwagens, vaders met bundels geld. Mijn vader ondertussen in de stad, een lepel om zijn nek, een Haags straatschoffie dat de gamellen uitlepelde. Daar heeft hij zijn groeiachterstand opgelopen. Daarom draagt hij nu pantalonnen van Duits model, korte beentjes en een dikke buik.



Ik ben een man van de klei, vriend. Geboren op het veen, dat dan weer wel. Mijn vader was de eerste maatschappelijk werker in Hoogezand-Sappemeer. Lange naam voor een langgerekt dorp. Twee dorpen eigenlijk, het Hogezaand en het meer van Sappe. Nooit echt bij elkaar gekomen, die twee dorpen, het streepje in de naam is het bewijs. Hoogezand-Sappemeer. Lintbebouwing langs een kanaal, waar altijd een dikke stinkende laag op dreef. Afval van de strokartonindustrie, prut van de bietenindustrie, dat rechtstreeks in het kanaal werd gepompt. Armoede. Het grootste probleem in de jaren zestig, schulden bij de

Wehkamp, het postorderbedrijf dat onderaan de rekeningen schreef: u kunt nog voor 500 gulden krediet krijgen. Schuldsanering was de belangrijkste taak van de maatschappelijk werker in het ontwikkelingsgebied Oost-Groningen. Een stukje derde wereld, waar de mensen op een goudmijn leefden, de Gasbel. Een enkele boer werd van de een op de andere dag miljonair als de NAM zijn grond aankocht om een boortoren op te bouwen. Maar het gros van de mensen bleef arm, ondanks het fortuin dat er uit de grond werd gehaald.

Oost-Groningen. Land met een slecht karma.  
Dat was niets en word nooit wat. Ik kan je de  
grote boerenschuren laten zien. De  
heerboerderijen, uit de tijd voordat de  
arbeiders het niet meer pikten en de CPN  
een van de grootste partijen werd. Van dat  
land kom ik vandaan. Waar anarchisten  
achter schuttingen naakt door tuinen liepen  
en communisten elkaar in rokerige zaaltjes  
opstookten om het niet langer te pikken.

We zouden het over ons hebben en ik praat  
enkel over mezelf, ik weet het. Maar ik heb  
het over mij en over een andere ons. Het ons

dat voor familie staat. Een familiebedrijf op familiegrond, daar heb ik het over. Ik ben een tweede generatie boer. Een tweede generatie grondbezitter ben ik. En daar wil ik het over hebben.

Nooit eigen grond gehad. Vertrokken van de klei, losgescheurd, daarna maar wat rondgezweefd. Van huurhuis naar huurhuis. Van stad naar stad, van provincie naar provincie. Het ene appartement voor het andere ingeruild. Uiteindelijk in Rotterdam verzeild geraakt. Waarom Rotterdam? Waarom niet. Voor hetzelfde geld koop je er

twee keer zoveel ruimte als in Amsterdam.

Dat is reden genoeg, lijkt me.

Rotterdam.

Keek ik als jongen vanaf de boerderij mijn eigen toekomst in. De Euromast, in de verte, als het niet te bewolkt was, achter de toren van Zestienhoven. Een complete skyline er omheen nu. Zie ik nu vanaf mijn balkon de Euromast boven de huizen uittorenen, dichterbij dan ooit. Heb ik de toekomst bereikt, uiteindelijk. Ik ben terug bij mijn roots, vriend.

Nooit gerealiseerd toen we het huis kochten.  
Geen moment stilgestaan dat ik in het  
uitzicht van mijn kindertijd zou gaan wonen.  
In de stad waar mijn moeder naartoe fietste,  
iedere morgen kilometers lang, langs de  
Berkelse Zweth, omdat er geen katholieke  
school in de omgeving was. Ik ben terug bij  
mijn roots.

Twee verdiepingen eigen huis, zwevend  
bezit, de derde en de vierde etage, op  
erfpachtgrond, afgekocht tot ergens in 2040.  
Hadden we de grond moeten kopen, denk je.

Hadden we op het aanbod van de gemeente in moeten gaan en de ingewikkelde rekensom die de uitslag van de waarde van de grond bepaalde voor waarheid moeten aannemen. Wat is dat? De waarde van de grond. Wij hangen metershoog boven een perceel, dat je netjes uitgetekend kunt terugvinden in het kadaster. De onderbuurman heeft ooit voor een paar duizend gulden drievijfde van de grond gekocht. Tweevijfde van de grond is eigendom van de gemeente, de grond die hoort bij onze etages. Tweevijfde van de grond. Niet eens een tastbaar stukje van het

perceel. Tweevijfde van het totaal, kan je je voorstellen? Je kan het niet afbakenen, je kan er niets mee doen. Het is tweevijfde van de tuin van de buren waar je geen plant in mag zetten, geen groente kan verbouwen, omdat het feitelijk de tuin van de buren is. Het is niet meer dan een afspraak, grondwaarde, virtuele waarde is het.

Wat denk je, Ian. Hadden we het moeten doen? Hadden we op het aanbod van de gemeente moeten ingaan en tweevijfde grondeigenaar moeten worden. Het tweevijfde deel dat nu meer dan dubbel



zoveel moest opbrengen als de onderbuurman voor zijn drievijfde deel heeft betaald? Waardeloze grond. De gemeente kan er niets mee, ons huis staat erop. De grond er omheen is van andere particulieren. Hadden we daar bijna vijftienduizend euro aan moeten betalen. Om ons virtueel grondbezitter te kunnen noemen? Virtueel grondbezitter. Terwijl ik tweede generatie grondbezitter ben.

Tweede generatie grondbezitter, van ik weet niet hoeveel hectare weideland, rond mijn opa's boerderij. De geboortegrond van mijn

moeder. De Gerardushoeve, naar mij genoemd, de naam nog vaag zichtbaar in een steen op de gevel. Eén mevrouw woont er nu, in dat gigantische gebouw. Eén vrouw, waar er eerst een gezin van zestien was gehuisvest, plus koeien, een paard, eenden, schapen, kippen en een hond. De Gerardushoeve, een lege huls nu, een eenzaam gebouw met een eenzame eigenares. Die een week of wat geleden een hek om haar land heeft gezet. Omdat ik te nadrukkelijk naar binnen kijk, als ik op het schelpenpaadje langs de Zweth voorbij wandel? Probeer een glimp van mijn geschiedenis op te vangen, in het donker van

de voorkamer, waar nu vaak zomaar een televisie aanstaat, zonder dat er iemand kijkt. Het blauwe licht maakt het gebouw alleen maar leger, eenzamer, desolaat. Een hek is er geplaatst. Ik ben een tweede generatie boer. Een tweede generatie grondbezitter ben ik. Maar ik word er niet meer toegelaten, op onze familiegrond. De oprijlaan afgeschermd door Natuurbeheer, het erf door de nieuwe bewoner onbereikbaar gemaakt.

Als de boerderij niet verkocht was geweest. Als die in de familie was gebleven. Dan had ik aanspraak kunnen maken op een stukje.

Een heel bescheiden stukje, dat wel. Meer dan vijftig kleinkinderen had mijn oma. Een complete pannenkoekenboerderij vol, tijdens familiereünies. Een iel vrouwtje, veertien kinderen, is vanaf haar twintigste tot dik in de veertig vrijwel constant zwanger geweest. Kan je je dat voorstellen. Een gezin van zestien personen? Een familie van meer de honderd, kinderen, kleinkinderen, achterkleinkinderen. Vruchtbare grond, de grond rond de Gerardushoeve. Genoemd naar mijn opa. Naar wie ik weer ben genoemd. Zodat de boerderij naar mij is genoemd, kan je zeggen.

De Gerardushoeve. Langs de Berkelse Zweth.  
Onder de rook van Rotterdam. Daar staat -ie  
nog steeds. Waar het vroeger stil was, op het  
geroep van de kikkers in de sloten na, als het  
begon te schemeren klinkt nu bij verkeerde  
wind het geraas van de A16, dat over de  
geluidswal heen wordt geblazen. De  
zwaluwen scheren er nog steeds vlak over  
het land, bouwen hun nesten nog steeds in de  
stal. Maar er staan geen koeien meer, geen  
schapen meer in de deel en er wroeten geen  
varkens in het land. Een lege huls, de  
Gerardushoeve, een bedrijf buiten gebruik.

De moderne loopstal al weer lang en breed  
afgebroken, een boomgaard vol vermoeide  
appelbomen.

Mijn oom plantte als kleine jongen een  
kastanje, die hij meenam van een  
begraafplaats. De oom is gestorven, de boom  
torent nu hoog boven de boerderij uit. Die zal  
er vast nog staan, als de boerderij zal zijn  
verdwenen. Ingestort, omdat de grond eronder  
wegzakt, verdwijnt, langzamerhand, de bodem  
die inklinkt, het schijnt dat de vloer in de stal  
al een halve meter lager ligt dan toen die werd  
gebouwd.

Mettertijd zal de boerderij in de grond zijn verdwenen, in het veen, als er niet wordt gepompt en er wordt niet gepompt. Het water zal stijgen, en alles verzwelgen. De weilanden zijn wetlands geworden, weidevogels hebben plaatsgemaakt voor watervogels, bomen vol aalscholvers, ganzen.

Staatsbosbeheer heeft de strakgroene weiden tot moerasgebied gecultiveerd. De kleine blikken molens zijn verdwenen. 'Grasland en weidevogels is ook natuur', staat er op een bord, dat actievoerende buurtbewoners

hebben neergezet in de tachtiger jaren. En daar nog steeds staat, want de strijd is nog niet gestreden. Het gevecht met Natuurmonumenten, overal bordjes, paaltjes, hekjes zijn er geplaatst, die strijd gaat door. Want er wordt daar een stukje oernatuur gecreëerd. Het eeuwenoude moeraslandschap, dat mijn opa en zijn collega's met moeite hebben droog-gepompt, wordt teruggegeven aan de natuur. In de toch al drassige weilanden ontstonden poelen, meertjes, er vestigden zich nieuwe vogelsoorten. Wat nou oernatuur. Prik dan de dijken door en laat het hele gebied weer



onder water stromen, dan heb je je oernatuur.  
Ze hebben het land van onze familie onder  
water gezet. Dat hadden we nooit moeten  
laten gebeuren.

I.

GWYN The world, the landscape. Call it what you will. For the painters in the Renaissance, that wasn't just a background for a portrait, you know. Before then, the landscape in a painting was just a bit of scenery.

MAARTEN Een achtergrond voor een of andere hoogwaardigheidsbekleeder.

GWYN Exactly. But the painters in the Renaissance created 'surroundings' from the landscape. 'Space' which literally 'surrounded' a person. They made a distinction in their paintings between far and near. With the discovery of perspective, you know—

MAARTEN Ik weet wel wat lijnperspectief is.

GWYN Sure, I know you know what perspective is. That's what I mean. For us, that's normal, the line of the horizon. Every point in a painting which can be traced to two points on that line.

MAARTEN Waarmee je diepte creëert in het platte vlak.

GWYN But for the Renaissance painters it was a discovery which arose out of the need to depict space. That had probably never been important before.

MAARTEN Blijkbaar was er op dat moment bij de Renaissanceschilders de behoefte om de mens te onderscheiden van de omgeving. En daarmee dus een centrale plek in die ruimte te geven.

GWYN And in so doing, the Renaissance man depicted a new way of seeing himself in the world.

MAARTEN Een wereld die niet enkel God's  
schepping was.

GWYN Precisely. The world wasn't a unity  
anymore, created by God, in which  
everything had its place. The landscape  
became a space that existed in itself.

MAARTEN Met in het landschap de Mens, die  
ook op zichzelf stond.

GWYN And behind mankind, in the distance—

MAARTEN De horizon.

GWYN The vanishing point. And after that,  
the world goes on forever.

MAARTEN De mens op de voorgrond, omringd  
door een eindeloos landschap.

GWYN Mankind. Still focused on the past,  
you might say.

MAARTEN Wacht even–

GWYN He's at least focused on the painting at  
the moment it is being painted. At the place  
where the painter was standing when he was  
painting.

MAARTEN Op die manier. Alsof de figuur in  
het schilderij gefixeerd was op het moment  
dat het schilderij werd geschilderd.

GWYN As if he is fixated on the creation of  
his world. But at some point, the person in  
the painting turned round. And with his back

to the painter, he looks, at the landscape,  
with him. A revolution, you can imagine.

MAARTEN Een figuur op het doek, die samen  
met de schilder naar het landschap kijkt—

GWYN With his own creator. Do you realize  
that they're suddenly equal, the creator and  
his creation? Where's this going?

MAARTEN Hoe bedoel je?

GWYN That was the essential question.

MAARTEN Voor de schilder?

GWYN For the figure in the painting as well.  
And for us, the viewers. From the moment  
that the person in the painting turns around  
and becomes aware of the world, the horizon

in the distance and everything else that may be there beyond that. An ocean of opportunities. An unknown world, beyond the horizon. Land to discover. And from that moment, mankind became focused on the future.

MAARTEN Juist, ja.

GWYN And he went exploring.

MAARTEN En zonder die schilderijen was dat niet gebeurd, denk jij? Dan was de mens nooit op ontdekkingsreis gegaan?

GWYN Who knows? The fact is, we became explorers in that period. The Western man



went into the world. That's how it started.

With everything that entails.

*Gwyn starts' walking, Maarten follows him.*

MAARTEN En de schilder?

GWYN And the painter could only watch  
while his creation disappeared, beyond the  
horizon.

2.

MAARTEN En wat gebeurde er daarna?

GWYN After we turned round and wandered  
out of the world in the picture?

MAARTEN Waar staan we nou, zou je denken?

GWYN Where are we now?

MAARTEN Dat zeg ik...

GWYN We have taken riches from every nook and cranny in the world. We left in empty ships to return with them a few months later, filled with trophies. We have filled museums with fossils, stuffed animals, plants, herbs and artistic treasures we've collected. We shipped whole worlds here. To show the stay-at-homes what was going on yonder. Pictures were painted, maps drawn, everything unknown was described, illustrated and categorized. The whole world was made known, made public.

MAARTEN En daarmee werd de verte voor iedereen bereikbaar, dat snap ik. De ontdekkingsreizigers waren een soort van kwartiermakers. Voortrekkers, die de wereld gereed maakten voor het toerisme.

GWYN That's how it started. The world was made ready for the mass tourist. The person who goes in search of the view on the postcards which his friends sent him. Bits of abroad which fell into his life through his letterbox. Bits of abroad which he in turn sent to his friends. Who in turn also went into the world and sent postcards to their friends.

MAARTEN Totdat opeens iedereen fotograaf kon zijn.

GWYN And then the dam burst. We're talking about Eastman, mister Kodak, a man with an ideal. A camera for everyone!

MAARTEN Het uitzicht in den vreemde werd gevangen in snapshots.

GWYN A film roll of memories which you could take back home with you.

MAARTEN En daar dan kon inplakken. Dat was het begin van het vakantiefoto-album.

GWYN The holiday album.

MAARTEN De dia avond.

GWYN The slide show in the evening. Who sticks holiday snaps in an album now?

MAARTEN Gebeurt niet meer.

GWYN Most photos are glanced at just after they're taken and then they're left hidden away in a memory stick.

MAARTEN De Polaroid!

GWYN Fantastic. The Polaroid. The sound when you took a picture. The photo which came out ev-er-so-slow-ly.

MAARTEN Dat waren allemaal nieuwe dingen die een geweldige impact maakten.

GWYN I sometimes think that analogue inventions had more impact than digital.

MAARTEN Zou je denken?

GWYN I mean, you're not impressed anymore by anything digital technology does. You're not surprised by an even thinner phone or a robot that can build a car. But a photo which develops before your very eyes...

MAARTEN Dat is een ander verhaal. Blazen om het ontwikkelproces te versnellen.

GWYN Waving it about. *does as if he's waving a Polaroid about* And then seeing something slowly appear out of nothing.

MAARTEN Dat is magisch.

*Gwyn takes his mobile out of his pocket, checks his text messages.*

MAARTEN Waar zijn we, als we in de wereld  
zijn?

GWYN Where are we, when we're in the  
world?

MAARTEN Daar wil ik het over hebben.

GWYN Now, you mean? In this age?

MAARTEN Ja. In deze tijd. Waarin we waar we  
ook zijn altijd verbonden zijn met andere  
plekken, andere mensen. *takes Gwyn's  
iPhone*

GWYN Please—

MAARTEN *reads a name* Chantal Bilodeau.

GWYN How do you know my PIN number?

MAARTEN Wie is dat?



GWYN What do you mean?

MAARTEN Chantal Bilodeau.

GWYN She's my sister in law. Lives in  
Canada. *wants his mobile back* Please–

MAARTEN +354? Waar is dat?

GWYN Iceland.

MAARTEN Ari Matthíasson.

GWYN Artistic leader of the National Theatre  
Reykjavic. Oh, come on–

MAARTEN Wat?

GWYN Give me my phone. Please–

MAARTEN Alsof ik door je dagboek blader...

GWYN Come on.

MAARTEN Wie is Fergus?

GWYN A friend.

MAARTEN +353.

GWYN Used to live in Ireland.

MAARTEN Is hij verhuisd?

GWYN I'm not sure... He's dead.

MAARTEN Ah...

GWYN I still haven't found the courage to  
erase him from my address book.

MAARTEN Je durfde de verbinding niet  
voorgoed te verbreken.

GWYN No.

MAARTEN Dat bedoel ik. Al die lijnen, hier,  
vanaf jouw telefoon naar mensen op andere

plekken, in andere steden, in andere werelden.

GWYN Even unto death!

MAARTEN Zelfs naar de doden. *gives back the phone* Dat is uniek, snap je. Ik bedoel. Als we bijvoorbeeld vroeger op fietsvakantie gingen–

GWYN Have you ever been on a cycling holiday?

MAARTEN Wat is daar mis mee?

GWYN I can't see you on a bike.

MAARTEN Hoezo niet?

GWYN I don't know.

MAARTEN Ik bedoel, als je vroeger dus op die manier op vakantie was. Dan belde je een keer per week naar huis.

GWYN Reverse charges.

MAARTEN Precies. Je moest op zoek naar een postkantoor om daar travellercheques in te wisselen.

GWYN All those different currencies, lira, pesetas, marks, francs... In the supermarket, you were always doing sums, divided by three, times two.

MAARTEN Je probeerde je te oriënteren met een landkaart, of met een kompas, als je dat

bij de padvinderij had geleerd en nog  
verdwaalde je voortdurend.

GWYN The arguments, because you had no  
idea where you were.

MAARTEN En dan was je dus nog maar in  
Frankrijk hè.

GWYN Just a couple of hundred kilometres  
from home and you were already lost.

MAARTEN Totaal verdwaald!

GWYN Now, you've already walked around  
everywhere before you've been there. You've  
already traced the route from the station to  
your hotel from home via Google Earth. You  
know where to find the nearest restaurant.

MAARTEN Je weet dat volslagen vreemden er heerlijk hebben gegeten.

GWYN But that you'd better avoid the bass because they tend to overcook it.

MAARTEN Je hoeft niets meer aan het toeval over te laten. Dat bedoel ik.

GWYN I wouldn't even know how to drive without my SatNav!

MAARTEN Je voert commando's uit, slaat af wanneer je dat gezegd wordt.

*Gwyn impersonates the voice of a SatNav.*

MAARTEN Maar je heb geen idee waar je bent.

GWYN That's why you're furious if you don't have a signal somewhere. After all, you're

hopelessly lost if you're not connected  
anymore.

MAARTEN Precies!

GWYN You're on your way somewhere, but  
you have no idea where you are, because you  
have no idea how you got there, is that what  
you mean?

MAARTEN Dat bedoel ik. We hoeven ons  
nooit meer verloren te voelen omdat we  
voortdurend op allerlei manieren met de hele  
wereld verbonden zijn. Maar ik vraag me af  
of je echt kan weten waar je je bevindt, als je  
geen idee meer hebt hoe je ergens terecht  
bent gekomen.

GWYN We never have to feel lost again in the world. Because we're constantly connected in all kinds of ways. But you wonder if we really know where we are, if we don't know how we've got there...

MAARTEN Dat zeg ik!

*music*



3.

GWYN Moscow. January 1990.

MAARTEN Wat is daarmee?

GWYN The first time that I stepped out of the  
aeroplane.

MAARTEN Sheremetyevo Airport.

GWYN That made an impression on me.

MAARTEN Hoezo?

GWYN A soldier in full regalia waited for me at the end of the gangway. An enormous cap. Kalashnikov at the ready. 'This is serious', I said to myself. 'Now you're really in the East Block. In enemy territory'.

MAARTEN Moskou 1990. Dat was een grijze stad, vol plaatstalen wagens.

GWYN A city full of clapped-out buses and empty shops. 31st January 1990. The day that the first McDonalds opened in Moscow.

MAARTEN Op het Pushkin-plein.

GWYN Exactly. The manager had had a nightmare the night before: The first day was a disaster. The doors opened and there wasn't a single customer. Not a single one the whole day. Can you imagine? What that would have meant?

MAARTEN Als de Russen niet geïnteresseerd waren geweest in de Big Mac of the McFlurry?

GWYN That's what I'm saying.

MAARTEN Dan had de wereld er nu heel anders uitgezien.

GWYN I'm sure of it. But even before the doors opened there was a queue of people.

And by the end of the day they'd had customers.

MAARTEN Ik heb ze in de rij zien staan, rond het Pushkin-plein, honderden meters.

GWYN And you saw people with McDonalds bags everywhere. They were used over and over again.

MAARTEN Een statussymbool. We hadden het toen al kunnen weten. Toch?

GWYN What?

MAARTEN Hoe de stad zou gaan veranderen.

GWYN We should have known how the city was about to change. But we had no idea.

When I came back six years later, it was a

shock. The same streets, the same squares and statues. But the heavy, metal cars had been replaced by a huge number of dark Mercedes'.

MAARTEN Dat zeg ik!

GWYN People looked differently, their eyes. How can I describe it?

MAARTEN Ze keken je aan.

GWYN Something like that. And shops everywhere. People with bags full of new clothes. Shoes. Computers. Watches.

MAARTEN Zo snel kan het gaan, soms.

GWYN Would you say it was an improvement?

MAARTEN Of het een verbetering was?

GWYN With hindsight?

MAARTEN Geen idee. Voor de mensen in Moskou was het waarschijnlijk een beter Moskou.

GWYN For the people in Moscow it probably was a better Moscow. But for me... I mean... In 1990 if there was a queue anywhere, everyone just joined it, automatically.

MAARTEN Voor de zekerheid.

GWYN You didn't know if they were selling something which you might need. And then it turned out that the shop was just full of sausages, or briefcases, or glasses.

MAARTEN Accordeons, stofzuigerzakken.

GWYN Often there was just one thing. But you only knew that after you had been standing in the queue for ages.

MAARTEN Of in dat enorme warenhuis–

GWYN Which department store?

MAARTEN Tegenover het Kremlin.

GWYN Oh. The Gum.

MAARTEN De Gum, ja. Fantastisch gebouw.

GWYN Covered streets of shops and marble staircases.

MAARTEN En dan, etage na etage, vrijwel lege winkels.

GWYN A palace of empty shops. And in the middle of one of those shops, there'd be just one clothes rack, with a row of identical coats.

MAARTEN Of een tafel met stapels dezelfde zakdoeken.

GWYN One shop was full of people.

MAARTEN Dat kan ik me niet zo een twee drie herinneren.

GWYN They sold uniforms there.

MAARTEN Oh, ja– Van die veel te grote petten. Gouden knopen en epauletten. Een winkel vol mannen–



GWYN Boys. With their mothers, or their girlfriends. To buy their military uniform.

MAARTEN Dat was natuurlijk allemaal verschrikkelijk.

GWYN But it was more, more like Moscow, in my opinion. I mean... I was in Prague. Just after the Velvet Revolution. In the UK, it was a disaster. It was when Thatcher was in power. Privatisation, cuts—

MAARTEN 'There's no such thing as society!'

GWYN And she meant it as well, hey, Thatcher. If your life isn't going right, then tough. Society won't help you, sorry, because there's no such thing as society. It was every

man for himself, a terrible time. I seriously considered writing Gorbachev a letter. It's a disaster here. You can offer an alternative. The real socialism, we've been longing for it.

MAARTEN En, wat antwoordde Gorbatsjov?

GWYN I didn't write to him, actually.

MAARTEN Man—

GWYN But, you know, I really regret that I didn't.

MAARTEN Je had de geschiedenis een andere draai kunnen geven!

GWYN No, but seriously. I just wanted to get away, you understand, far away from that neo-liberalism, far away from Wales, far

away from Margaret Thatcher. And I went to  
Czechoslovakia.

MAARTEN Het voormalig socialistisch utopia!

GWYN I travelled all over the country. And  
then at a given moment, I wanted to buy  
better walking shoes, because I did  
everything on foot there and I just had  
brogues—

MAARTEN Dat heeft me altijd gefascineerd.

GWYN What?

MAARTEN Hoe jij door de wereld reist. Strak  
in pak, op veel te dure schoenen.

GWYN Quality. It lasts twice as long as off-  
the-peg. Anyway. I was looking for walking

shoes in Prague and that was hopeless then.

There were enough shoes, the shops were full of them. But they were all identical, all of the same make, Obuv.

MAARTEN Obuv is Slowaaks voor schoenen.

GWYN Really?

MAARTEN Als je maar een soort schoenen verkoopt heb je geen merk nodig. Dan heet een schoen gewoon schoen.

GWYN I spoke to a man who said that his size came on the market once every three years. The bloke would then take a loan at the right time to buy shoes that fitted, otherwise he would have to wait another three years. Can

you imagine? That really happened, you know.

MAARTEN En dan hebben we het over nog geen dertig jaar geleden.

GWYN So, I'm standing there in my brogues, in Prague, in the middle of that big square, with the clock with that skeleton– Have you ever been to Prague?

MAARTEN Staroměstské náměstí. Het plein in de oude stad.

GWYN Exactly, yes.

MAARTEN Pražský orloj. Een van de eerste astrononische uurwerken. Dat skelet slaat letterlijk de uren. Dat je maar niet vergeet

waar we met zijn allen onontkoombaar  
naartoe op weg zijn.

GWYN I didn't know that then. But anyway, I  
was standing on the square looking at the  
clock, when suddenly, they started putting  
up barriers everywhere and people started  
coming from all over the place. I wondered,  
'Has something terrible happened, now, so  
soon after the revolution. So I asked a  
woman who came rushing by, 'What's going  
on?' 'It's an important visit', she said.

'Margaret Thatcher will be here any  
moment. She has come to teach the Czech

how to become capitalists. I mean, Margaret Thatcher. She fucking followed me!

MAARTEN Dat meen je niet.

GWYN Six motorcycle policemen ride onto the square, with flashing blue lights and sirens, and then an armoured black car. And she's driven right in front of me. She saw me, I'm certain. There was eye contact for a moment, she rolled down her window. I've never been so close to Thatcher as there, in Prague, in the square under the clock with the skeleton. And believe it or not, I saw something triumphant in those eyes.

MAARTEN Kom op!

GWYN I swear it. 'You won't get away from me, Mr. Roberts!' Something like that.

MAARTEN 'I'm here to teach you capitalism!'

GWYN Precisely. Anyway. The same night, I go to a theatre somewhere. No tickets, Sir.

While I can see that there's practically no audience. I said, can't you have another look, it doesn't look as if it's sold out. But it's difficult, very difficult—

MAARTEN 'I'll see if I can do something for you'—

GWYN Precisely. And the man dives under the counter, and after a while he re-emerges, face completely red, triumphant, with a tiny,



tiny ticket. 'You're lucky, Sir, I found special ticket. If you want I could sell you for 40 Deutsche-Marks'. 40 Deutsche Marks, that was a fortune there then.

MAARTEN '40 Deutsche Marks, Sir. Special ticket!'

GWYN Oh, come on, 40 Deutsche Marks. You don't need Thatcher to teach you how capitalism works.

MAARTEN Ben je gek! Zo was het overal, in het voormalige Oostblok. Ik was bij de Branderburger Tor, net nadat de muur was gevallen—

GWYN I was there as well, in Berlin. I went straight there when I saw the pictures. Lines of East Germans crossing the border, hacking holes in the wall.

MAARTEN Ik maakte een tussenstop op Berlin Tempelhof in Oost-Berlijn–

GWYN That's been closed down now, Berlin Tempelhof, did you know that?

MAARTEN O, ja?

GWYN Wasn't profitable. They held a referendum about it. More than sixty percent of the voters were against the closure.

MAARTEN Waarom is het dan toch gesloten?

GWYN Because not enough people voted to make it binding. But hey, that's democracy. You take the trouble to vote, you're in the majority and you still haven't won, because the rest can't be bothered to get off their arses.

MAARTEN Dat bedoel ik. Maar goed. Vanuit Tempelhof nam ik de metro naar Berlijn. Door het donkere Oosten. Doodstil was het. Begin van de avond. Ik was een van de weinige reizigers, kan je je voorstellen? Je zit in een soort van spooktrein.

GWYN The metro was terrible, then, in East Berlin. It was so... sombre in the carriages.

You could smell the oppression, the totalitarian regime. It was clear that you had to keep a low profile.

MAARTEN En dan opeens sta je op Pariser Platz.

GWYN Ah. Pariser Platz!

MAARTEN In een compleet andere wereld. Het plein verlicht met bouwlampen.

GWYN People were constantly partying there, the first weeks after the fall. The wall, already demolished, partly. People all over the place.

MAARTEN Stalletjes met Bratwurst, bier, muziek. Kraampjes, waar je stukjes van de

muur kon kopen. Insignes, petten, complete uniformen.

GWYN All the symbols of the socialist utopia were being sold off. It was precisely the same in Prague. You saw Americans walking all over the place in Russian uniforms. Isn't that wonderfully symbolic? They didn't see the irony, the Czechoslovakians.

MAARTEN 'Dit moet ik goed onthouden. Hier is iets groots aan de hand'.

GWYN All the excited people. The relief on their faces. The hope.

MAARTEN Als je toen van Oost-Berlijn richting het Westen liep, door de grauwe

straten, zag je vanuit de plekken waar er gaten in de muur waren geslagen, dwars door die muur heen, de neon-verlichte etalages richting het Oosten komen.

GWYN I know precisely what you mean. As if the wall was broken down by the shops.

Unbelievable, the speed with which capitalism broke through the border.

MAARTEN Dat bedoel ik.

GWYN Where people would be shot if they tried it themselves only days before. I was at Potsdammer Platz. No mans land. Just one big sand dune. And a abandoned watch tower next to a café, an Imbiss. Potsdammer Platz.

It was a desolate emptiness in the middle of a city that had just been reunified. The Platz to be. That's what they call it now, you know.

MAARTEN The Platz to be.

GWYN In four years, the place was covered in buildings. A logistical miracle.

MAARTEN Ach man, dat was een geweldig gezicht! Die gigantische bouwput.

GWYN You're right. It did look fantastic. Dozens of cranes, cement mixer lorries which came and went the whole time.

MAARTEN Een stad in beweging, wat een potentie. Bouwen aan de stad van de eenentwintigste eeuw!

GWYN If I was in charge, the cranes could have stayed.

MAARTEN Dat zou geweldig zijn geweest!

GWYN Potsdammerplatz. A hole in permanent development! That's what it could have been. But that's not what happened.

MAARTEN Nee, zo is het niet gegaan.

GWYN The work was finished a long time ago. And what has the city gained by it? I was there again not so long ago. It's a brand new district now. So ugly that it makes you sad.

MAARTEN Der Platz to be.



GWYN Pizzahut. Subway. Yoghurt Company.  
Häagen Dasz. That's what you've got there  
now. A stand with the latest BMW. You're  
constantly bothered by girls in coloured  
jackets who want to sell you a new  
smartphone contract or a ticket to a musical.

MAARTEN Die wachttore, staat die er nog?

GWYN Which tower?

MAARTEN Die toren op Potsdamerplatz.

GWYN It's a tiny little tower now, between  
the high-rise buildings. Looks good,  
thoroughly renovated.

MAARTEN Alsof die er gisteren is neergezet.

GWYN And then the hotels, shopping centres and cinemas all around it. The Platz to be. It was a piece of no-man's-land between the East and the West. A windy strip of sand. Desolate. But you feel just as out of place now as when it was empty. I mean it, you know.

MAARTEN Die lege ruimte had meer betekenis dan die volgebouwde wijk die het nu is geworden?

GWYN Definitely. However full Potsdammerplatz is now, it feels more empty than ever before.

*pause*

Wouldn't it have been much better if they had been able to control themselves?

MAARTEN Hadden ze de muur niet helemaal weg moeten halen?

GWYN If the holes in the city had been allowed to stay. That wonderful, useless, sand drift. The atmosphere just before the fall of the wall. The view. Literally. The hope, the expectation and the happy faces. All gone.

The former no-man's-land has become a part of the world. Where the European Poker Championships are organized in the biggest casino in Germany. I just mean.

MAARTEN Ik vraag me af waarom verandering er altijd en overal hetzelfde uitziet.

GWYN What do you mean: you wonder why change looks the same everywhere?

MAARTEN Waarom zou dat zo zijn, denk je?

GWYN I don't know. The thing is, you suddenly see the global person in the street, in trainers, with the same phrases on his t-shirt.

MAARTEN I love NY. Dezelfde mobiele telefoons, dezelfde tassen, zonnebrillen. Hoe komt het toch dat je overal altijd diezelfde winkels ziet?

GWYN The Platz to be. If you hear that,  
you've already heard enough. The Platz to be.  
*silence*

MAARTEN Wat hebben we nou eigenlijk  
meegemaakt?

GWYN What do you mean, what have we  
experienced now?

MAARTEN Op alle plekken waar we zijn  
geweest. Waar achteraf iets heel anders aan  
de hand was dan dat we dachten toen we er  
waren.

GWYN Where, with hindsight, something else  
was going on than what we thought was  
going on when we were there?

MAARTEN Ja.

GWYN When we were there, what was going on, was going on.

MAARTEN Dat vraag ik me af.

*He walks away.*

GWYN Where're you going?

MAARTEN Even kijken.

GWYN At what?

MAARTEN Gewoon even kijken.

*He walks up the dunes, Gwyn is alarmed, Maarten vanishes behind the dune, Gwyn runs after him. Maarten suddenly comes back, Gwyn tries to hide that he just run after him, turns around.*

4.

*Maarten stands on top of the dunes, Gwyn  
below him, in the sand bowl.*

MAARTEN Voor de zoveelste keer de zon in de  
zee zien zakken. Je weet hoe het is, je weet  
hoe het gaat, maar wat weet je ervan. Wat  
weet je er echt van.

GWYN That the earth turns and the sun  
doesn't really go down. You know that.

MAARTEN Maar wat heb ik er aan, aan die  
kennis?

GWYN You know that what you see is a trick  
of the eye.



MAARTEN Wat schiet ik daar mee op.

GWYN I don't know.

MAARTEN Precies.

GWYN Nobody knows.

MAARTEN Dat is precies mijn punt! Wat heeft het ons gebracht. Het lezen, de kennis, het zitten. Het verzamelen, het denken, de discussies? We hadden moeten meebewegen! Ons vol in het leven moeten storten.

GWYN We did move with the times.

MAARTEN Waar haal je dat vandaan?

GWYN We did invest ourselves in life.

We did it in our own way. We have travelled.

MAARTEN We zijn door de wereld getrokken.

GWYN That's what I'm saying.

MAARTEN Als beschouwers. Buitenstaanders.

GWYN What's wrong with being spectators, outsiders?

MAARTEN We hebben gereisd om inspiratie op te doen. We hebben voortdurend rondgekeken. Zaken op waarde proberen te schatten.

GWYN We've studied human behaviour. We've admired landscapes.

MAARTEN Maar wat hebben we werkelijk meegemaakt. Snap je wat ik bedoel? Méeé Gemáákt.

GWYN What do you mean, meegemaakt?

MAARTEN God man. Hoe vaak ik niet ergens door een bos loop en mezelf constant moet dwingen te realiseren dat ik daadwerkelijk door een bos loop. Kijk nou toch rond man! Zie nou toch wat er te zien is! Kijk nou! Realiseer je waar je nu bent! *als een echo* Waar je bent, waar je bent... Boven op een berg staan, zonder dat het tot je doordringt dat je daar echt staat.

GWYN You're on top of a mountain, without being aware that you're really there.

MAARTEN Dat moet je toch herkennen!

GWYN Okay. Okay.

MAARTEN Onderweg naar boven heb je door dat je klimt. Je struikelt, je zweet, je hijgt. Je bent onmiskenbaar onderweg. Maar als je dan eenmaal boven bent, dan sta je daar. Dit is het dan blijkbaar, denk je dan.

GWYN You stand there precisely like the man in the painting. With his back to the viewer looking at the landscape below.

MAARTEN En je ziet de diepte, het dal met piepklein de huizen. De straten, de bruggen. Het zegt me helemaal niets.

GWYN Look it up on the map. Try to see the relationship between the village below with the villages around it. Try to find the names

of the other villages, the peaks in the distance. Try to pronounce the names of the mountains. Out loud.

MAARTEN Wat helpt dat? Als je ze al kán uitspreken. Zeker bij jullie in Wales. Jullie hebben de dorpen en de bergen namen gegeven die enkel voor jullie uit te spreken zijn.

GWYN We didn't call them that. They already had those names.

MAARTEN Ik ben een buitenstaander, daar bij jullie in de bergen. Zoals jij bij ons een outsider bent. In het polderlandschap. Al die ruimte om je heen. Een wereld zonder kader,

je hebt het zo vaak gezegd. Je hebt geen houvast. Je valt iedere keer bijna om als je ergens uit de auto stapt.

GWYN Okay, okay.

MAARTEN Je voelt je verloren in het lege vlakke land, dat overal min of meer hetzelfde is. Dus maak je je eigen kader, heuvels, bergen van weetjes, herinneringen, observaties. Jij omringt je met theorie. Je loopt hier rond met je blik naar binnen. Je praat maar een eind weg over landschap, schilderijen, horizons. Maar waar je werkelijk bent, je hebt geen idee.

GWYN Okay, okay–

MAARTEN Net als ik in de bergen van Wales.

Alles om me heen is niet meer dan een kaart  
in drie dimensies.

GWYN What do you mean, a map in three  
dimensions?

MAARTEN Dat landschap dat me omringt, hoe  
noemde jij dat nu?

GWYN Surrounds.

MAARTEN Het landschap dat me omgeeft.  
Mijn omgeving. Ik kan er op geen enkele  
manier een connectie mee maken. Ik zie  
diepte, maar ik zie vooral heel veel leegte. De  
ongekende mogelijkheden. Revolutionair!

Het zegt me helemaal niets, begrijp je. Die onbekende verten van je.

GWYN The ocean of opportunities, land to discover, it's all there!

MAARTEN In theorie is het prachtig. Kan ik er geen speld tussen krijgen. Maar in de praktijk, in mijn leven, kan ik er niets van maken.



5.

GWYN I wonder what happened to the  
painter?

MAARTEN Welke schilder?

GWYN The one whose creation wandered out of the landscape, out of the picture. Leaving the painter alone in front of his painting looking at an empty landscape.

MAARTEN Verbijsterd.

GWYN Paralysed. Why?

MAARTEN Natuurlijk. Die was totaal de weg kwijt. Hij heeft gewacht, de schilder, hij heeft gehoopt dat de mens op een gegeven moment weer als een stipje aan de horizon zou verschijnen.

GWYN That he would wander back into the painting as a matter of course. Until he

finally had to accept that there would never be a return.

MAARTEN Hij heeft gezocht, de schilder, in het landschap. Hopend dat dat hem misschien een richting zou geven om verder te werken.

GWYN Because you think that he started to paint again, anyway?

MAARTEN Ik denk het wel. Hij bleef tenslotte een schilder.

GWYN You're right. He was a painter, after all. But his painting had changed, I guess.

MAARTEN Hoezo?

GWYN With every careful brush-stroke, he saw that the landscape he was painting wasn't the same as the landscape in front of him. That what he felt affected how he depicted the landscape.

MAARTEN En omgekeerd, dat hij aan zijn schilderij kon aflezen wat er binnenin hem omging. Zaken waar hij zich soms maar half bewust van was.

GWYN Could you say that the landscape became the mirror of his soul?

MAARTEN Wat mij betreft. Eerst voelde hij zich er ongemakkelijk over.

GWYN What do you mean, 'uneasy'?

MAARTEN Omdat hij tot dan toe altijd had gevonden dat hij het landschap moest afbeelden zoals het was.

GWYN Because the people expected him to paint the landscape as he saw it, as it was.

MAARTEN Maar met de uitvinding van de fotografie was hij definitief verlost van die plicht.

GWYN Photography again. Photography allowed him the freedom to paint the landscape as he saw it. Or maybe, as he felt it.

MAARTEN Zoals hij zich voelde. Schilderen werd een soort van zelfonderzoek.

GWYN Self-examination. Not through introspection, but by looking for yourself in your surroundings – what’s the opposite of introspection?

MAARTEN Daar hebben we in het Nederlands geen woord voor.

GWYN Extrospection – don’t you have that word?

MAARTEN Nee. En jullie, in het Welsh?

GWYN No. But I can make one up. *beat* A strange co-incidence of circumstances.

Mankind disappears from the landscape, searching for himself beyond the horizon.

And because his subject has disappeared, the

painter is looking for himself in his  
landscape.

MAARTEN Vermoeiend.

GWYN Why exhausting?

MAARTEN Ik krijg toch het idee dat er iets  
rigourees overhoop is gegooid doordat de  
mens het schilderij is uitgelopen.

GWYN That's the way things are. Once you  
become aware of the landscape, the horizon,  
there's no way back. You can't take the  
world for granted anymore. You can't keep  
going around in circles and keep doing the  
same things, day in day out. The search has  
started.

MAARTEN The search has started.

*Maarten checks his phone, he can't get a signal, walks up the dunes.*

GWYN Where are you going?

MAARTEN Ik heb geen bereik.

GWYN What do you mean, no?

MAARTEN Ik heb hier gewoon geen bereik.

*Maarten walks up, but there's still no reception, he's annoyed.*



6.

MAARTEN In India heb ik meegemaakt hoe  
het is om je totaal verloren te voelen.

GWYN How do you mean?

MAARTEN Zoveel mensen als er daar

rondlopen in Mumbai. Dat is gewoon akelig.

Je wordt er aangestaard, nageroepen.

'Welcome to India! Welcome to India! You've got beautiful hairstyle!' Nergens ben je

alleen. Dharavi. De grootste sloppenwijk van de stad. Een kind dat midden op straat zit te poepen. Je wilt het niet zien. Maar je ziet het.

GWYN Welcome to India!

MAARTEN De slager die denkt jou een plezier te doen. En de koeienkop, die voor hem staat te pronken, als bewijs dat er echt rundvlees wordt verkocht, die met vliegen bedekte kop húp, naar je toedraait. Koeienogen die je

wezenloos aanstaren: 'wat heb je hier te zoeken, jij veel te grote man'. Een slinger joelende kinderen achter je aan. 'Welcome to India!' Een pas overleden man, die op een kar vol bloemen langs je heen wordt geduwd. Dwars door het verkeer, open en bloot op straat. Je moet twee keer kijken voor je beseft wat je ziet. Straten vol slapende mensen, zo, op de stoep, of in lege etalages, op een stukje karton. Wat is dit voor wereld. Wat moet je ermee. Heilige koeien. Tempels, waar je bloemblaadjes strooit, onder een laken tuurt naar een of andere vage heilige, een wens fluistert, een stokje wierook brandt, geen

idee bij welke godsdienst je over de vloer bent. Je doet je schoenen uit, laat een watje in je oor proppen, met iets dat heel warm wordt na een tijdje. Je laat met je sollen, glimlacht, probeert te volgen wat er tegen je wordt gezegd, probeert overeind te blijven in de tuktuk, die in vliegende vaart op nog geen centimeter achter een bus aan scheurt, van links naar rechts wordt je gesmeten—

GWYN They drive like mad, those Asian people.

MAARTEN Gloeiend hete vogelstront die op je hoofd landt—

GWYN Oh, come on—

MAARTEN Serieus waar. Dat is Mumbai. De stad die je constant laat voelen dat je een slappe zak bent. Je wordt al ziek van een slokje water uit de kraan, van het eten op straat. Ik ben op een dag in mijn eentje door de stad gaan lopen. In de brandende hitte. Je hebt er niets aan een kaart, omdat er nergens straatnaambordjes te bekennen zijn. Geen bereik, niks 3G. Dat gevoel. Van totaal verloren zijn. Ik heb ergens minutenlang op een stoeprand gezeten, onder de brandende zon. Geen idee meer waar ik was. In die hitte kan je niet meer denken. Ik kon me opeens zo goed voorstellen hoe het is. Zonder

bezittingen, zonder perspectief in die stad te moeten leven. In dat klimaat. Je wordt er totaal apathisch van. Hebt geen enkele zin om iets meer te doen dan enkel te zitten. Op een stukje karton. Net als de mensen om je heen. Enkel te zitten. Voor je uit te staren. En wachten tot er misschien iets verandert. *beat* Ik heb drie jochies achter me aan gehad. Hoe oud zullen ze zijn geweest. Vijf, zeven jaar, tien jaar misschien. Als vliegen bleven ze om me heen zwermen. Drie van die roepende gastjes. 'Mister. Mister!' Eerst probeer je ze te ontkennen, niet op reageren, ze verdwijnen vanzelf. Maar ze houden aan, pakken je hand

vast, tikken op je arm. En als ze je blik  
eenmaal gevangen hebben laten ze niet meer  
los. Wijzen naar hun mond. 'Please mister.  
Hungry! Hungry!' Hoe kun je zo harteloos  
zijn. Drie van die kleine jochies. Lange man  
uit het Westen. Je probeert ze van je af te  
schudden, door plotseling van richting te  
veranderen. Net iets harder te gaan lopen.  
Alsof hen dat wat uitmaakt. Joelend rennen ze  
achter je aan. 'Mister, mister!' En het maakt  
geen enkel verschil als je ten einde raad tegen  
ze schreeuwt dat ze op moeten hoepelen. Fuck  
off! Verdomme!

GWYN Just don't react. The children are all being used.

MAARTEN Ik weet het, ze worden allemaal geëxploiteerd. Hun botten worden gebroken, ze worden blind gemaakt. Die kinderen krijgen zelf net genoeg om in leven te blijven.

GWYN Don't make contact, just walk on, calmly.

MAARTEN Geen oogcontact maken, gewoon rustig doorlopen.

GWYN They have to hand over everything you give them.

MAARTEN Ik heb ze niets gegeven!

GWYN Okay–



MAARTEN Een kwartier lang, twintig minuten, hebben ze het volgehouden. Totaal in paniek was ik. En ik zag in hun ogen dat ze wisten dat ik me geen raad wist. Lange man uit het Westen. Laffe man uit het Westen. Laat zich door drie kleine jongens op de kast jagen. Wat is dat voor man! Maar ik gaf ze niets. Geen rupee hebben ze van me gekregen! Moet ik daar trots op zijn? Heb ik het goed gedaan? Heb ik mijn rol daar goed gespeeld, denk je?

GWYN I think you did the right thing.

MAARTEN Het blijft maar bij me terugkomen dat ik daar niets te zoeken had.

GWYN Why not?

MAARTEN Zonder geld had ik het nog geen dag uit gehouden. Wij kunnen enkel als toeristen functioneren in Mumbai. We mogen de stad even gebruiken, als achtergrond voor onze vakantiefoto's. Vanuit een busje trekken we aan de armoede voorbij. We zien dat een mensenleven helemaal niets voorstelt. Maar we hebben genoeg geld om ons daar niet druk over te hoeven maken. Is dat misschien waar we goed voor zijn? Dat we kunnen uitgeven daar. Dat ze ons kunnen afzetten, uitzuigen, bedriegen, bestellen. Daar zijn we goed genoeg voor. Om totaal te

worden uitgeknepen. Maar zouden we daar net zo berooid rondlopen als het gros van de bewoners van Mumbai, dan waren we niks. Van geen belang. Niet eens de moeite waard om naar om te kijken.

7.

MAARTEN En dan te bedenken hoe ik ooit ben begonnen. Ik geloofde in mezelf. Omdat ik ergens naartoe op weg was.

GWYN But where precisely, you didn't have a clue.

MAARTEN Daar zou ik vanzelf wel achter komen, onderweg. God man. De huizen die ik kraakte. Met een koevoet forceerde ik de deur en zette er gewoon een nieuw slot op.

GWYN The only way to claim space.

MAARTEN Brutaal ergens gaan zitten en dan  
maar zien wanneer je eruit werd gemeept.

Ik trok me nergens iets van aan.

Verkeersboetes betaalde ik uit principe niet.

Niemand die erachter kwam. Ik verkocht  
mijn auto om de maand aan m'n vriendin.

GWYN Why would you sell your car to your  
girlfriend every month?

MAARTEN En dan kocht ik hem de volgende  
maand weer terug. Zo omzeilde je de wegen-  
belasting.

GWYN Excellent!

MAARTEN Iedereen had een uitkering en niemand had er moeite mee. Ik had niet gedacht dat ik ooit zelfstandig mijn geld zou verdienen.

GWYN Are you mad? Nobody expected that. We were educated to be on benefits.

MAARTEN Het stond letterlijk in de krant. Een hele generatie groeit op voor de bijstand.

GWYN And so they let us just do our own thing. As long as we didn't go too far.

MAARTEN Maar op een gegeven moment zijn we ons gaan gedragen. *beat* Weet jij nog waar dat veranderde? Plotseling gingen we netjes huur betalen. We reden niet meer in oude

bakken rond, maar kochten een tweedehands gezinsauto. We hielden ons netjes aan de verkeersregels, gaven voorrang wanneer dat van ons werd verwacht, begonnen allerlei premies te betalen. Alles waar we vroeger tegen waren namen we plotseling voor waar aan.

*silence*

GWYN Do you know what it is? There's a moment in every life when you know for sure, that a great many things you wanted to do are never going to happen.

MAARTEN Is dat zo?

GWYN Really. And that is precisely the moment that you have to start setting your priorities: 'I'm going to focus on this'.

MAARTEN Ik ben bang dat dat moment al lang geleden is gepasseerd.

GWYN Oh, that's rubbish—

MAARTEN Serieus. We hebben zitten slapen, met z'n tweeën. We zijn niet alert geweest.

We hebben de kans gemist om echt de diepte in te gaan.

GWYN What do you mean, to go into something deeply?

MAARTEN Ons ergens op te focussen. Iets teweeg te brengen. Ik meen het serieus, hè.



Ik heb bij God geen idee hoe het moet,  
straks, als er helemaal niets van belang meer  
in me opkomt.

GWYN Who says that that's going to happen?

MAARTEN Natuurlijk gebeurt dat. Op een  
gegeven moment zullen we uitgepraat zijn.  
Dan hebben we alles wat we gedaan hebben  
behandeld. Alles wat we hebben meegemaakt  
een plek gegeven. En alles wat we gezien  
hebben is aan de orde geweest. En misschien  
heb ik het mis. Maar ik heb het idee dat we  
dan zullen moeten concluderen dat we geen  
stap verder zijn geraakt.

GWYN I don't want to be getting ahead of myself there.

MAARTEN Terug bij af zullen we zijn. Let maar op. We zullen geen centimeter zijn opgeschoten. Omdat we generalisten zijn geworden. We hebben ons veel te breed georiënteerd. En daarom weten we van heel veel een heel klein beetje. En van niets genoeg om er iets van belang over te kunnen melden. Ik vind het niet leuk, hè, maar zo staan we ervoor, momenteel.

GWYN But what good is that sort of pessimism?

MAARTEN Totale paniek zal er hier toeslaan.

Als we op een dag opeens zwijgend tegenover elkaar zullen zitten. Geen impulsen meer, geen enkele inval, geen uitweg meer. Als verlamd zullen we naar elkaar zitten te staren. Die dag komt eraan. Natuurlijk komt die eraan!

*silence*

MAARTEN God. Zou het niet geweldig zijn om echt verschrikkelijk dom te zijn, in plaats van net iets slimmer dan gemiddeld. Want ik denk dat ik dat ben, net ietsje slimmer dan gemiddeld. Maar als het er op aankomt kan ik echt verschrikkelijk stom zijn. Dus ben ik

net niet idioot genoeg om er gewoon maar een beetje op los te leven, maar ook bij lange na niet intelligent genoeg om te bedenken wat ik in plaats daarvan zou kunnen doen. Daarom heb ik als een gek zitten lezen. Ik heb geprobeerd te begrijpen wat echt intelligente mensen hebben begrepen. Aantekeningen heb ik gemaakt. Hier. Notitieblokken vol. Ik heb geprobeerd me te laten doordringen. In iedere nieuwe theorie, iedere frisse observatie heb ik de waarheid gezocht. Maar ik heb nog niet eens het topje van de ijsberg gesnapt, een flintertje van wat er werkelijk aan de hand is.

*Maarten walks away.*

GWYN Where are you going.

MAARTEN Even kijken.

GWYN At what?

MAARTEN Gewoon even kijken.

*Maarten disappears. Gwyn finds a pair of binoculars that were hidden in the sand. He watches Maarten, who vanishes in the distance. Gwyn doesn't know what to do. After a while Maarten comes back.*

8.

GWYN A new perspective

MAARTEN Wat is daarmee?

GWYN That's what we need. I think that we have something to say. We wrote our first essays with a typewriter!

MAARTEN Dat is niet echt iets om trots op te zijn.

GWYN It took a totally different way of thinking. Otherwise you had to go back to the beginning and start all over again.

MAARTEN We waren ons meer bewust van het schrijfproces, bedoel je dat?

GWYN Exactly! But what's frustrating. I can recall somewhere what it was like, the rattle of the machine. The sound of the margin

bell, the sound when you pulled the paper  
out–

MAARTEN Rats!

GWYN Rats, yeah! But, you know. What's  
different about writing on a typewriter and  
writing on a computer now–

MAARTEN De weg er naartoe. Je bewust zijn  
hoe je ergens gekomen bent. Dat lijkt  
verloren te zijn. Is dat wat je bedoelt?

GWYN That's exactly what I mean. Crossing a  
strange landscape with a SatNav is  
completely different than navigating with a  
map. Writing with a fountain pen is totally  
different than writing on a computer. Starting



with a empty sheet. Seeing your thoughts appear on paper in curly lines.

MAARTEN Als een Polaroid die zich voor je ogen ontwikkelt.

GWYN Exactly! We mustn't stop thinking. Looking everything up, allowing our mistakes to be corrected automatically, putting our sentences through a translation machine. We have to stay alert. That's what it's about for me. We have to keep thinking ourselves. *suddenly* What happens on a Sunday in the cities, for example?

MAARTEN Wat bedoel je, wat gebeurt er op een zondag in de steden?

GWYN In de P.C. Hoofdstraat in Amsterdam,  
Istiklal Avenue in Istanbul, in Oxford Street  
London, Tverskaya Street Moscow, what do  
you see happening in all those streets on a  
Sunday?

MAARTEN Hoe moet ik dat weten?

GWYN Come on, you've been there.

MAARTEN Dan wordt er geshopt?

GWYN People go shopping. Very good. But  
what is that, exactly, shopping?

MAARTEN Shopping?

GWYN Is—

MAARTEN Geld uitgeven?

GWYN Spending money— Correct.

MAARTEN Geld uitgeven, door de straat  
slenteren, pinnen.

GWYN Precisely. But look at that picture  
again.

MAARTEN Okay.

GWYN Can you see it?

MAARTEN Ik denk het, ja.

GWYN Then you can't deny that shopping is,  
in fact, a deeply religious act.

MAARTEN Wacht even—

GWYN A procession. A ritual.

MAARTEN Ik—

GWYN I'm just trying to think it through.

MAARTEN Okay, okay.

GWYN I mean, it's not something I want to get into an argument about.

MAARTEN Ik zei toch niet, ga door–

GWYN Look at how your Bijenkorf department store in Amsterdam is laid out. What does it look like?

MAARTEN De Bijenkorf in Amsterdam–

GWYN Oh, come on. Can you see it? The enormous space, the instore shops around it–

MAARTEN Geen idee, een kerk, misschien–

GWYN Precisely, a church! You know very well it is! A church. And each saint has their own chapel. Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Prada–

MAARTEN Luister–

GWYN And the comparison between saints and designers isn't as crazy as it might seem at first, because, weren't the saints seen as role models as well? Weren't we supposed to try and mirror them?

MAARTEN Dat klopt, ja, als je het zo bekijkt–

GWYN And what is that 'mirroring'?

MAARTEN Spiegelen, spiegelen–

Het vormen van een identiteit.

GWYN Just as design the creation of an identity is, the representation of a life-style. And you can see that this is a serious matter because of the way all those chapels in the Bijenkorf are guarded. Men with earpieces

amongst all the bags and accessoires– like religious relics.

The smell of perfume, equivalent to incense–

MAARTEN Zou er daarom zo'n weerstand zijn vanuit de Christelijk hoek voor de koopzondag?

GWYN Precisely!

MAARTEN Omdat daar haarfijn wordt aangevoeld dat we met de koopzondag te maken hebben met een diep religieuze uiting.

GWYN Exactly! And then, just for fun, you can compare the monasteries and cloisters of earlier times with the modern banking

world. The enormous buildings which delineate the skylines of metropolises, aren't they the cathedrals of the modern age?

MAARTEN Mensen uit de bankwereld de moderne geestelijken?

GWYN Very good! Once you see the similarity between a suit and the vestments of a priest, spending money suddenly becomes the modern version of the indulgence.

MAARTEN Door te shoppen koop je een plek in het hiernamaals.

GWYN The only difference now is that heaven has descended to the earth, proving in fact that we have all become more or less godlike.

MAARTEN Ho, wacht even, wacht even–

GWYN The evidence is everywhere. Look at what we eat now, for instance.

MAARTEN Nu sla je even een vreemde zijweg in–

GWYN Products from all over the world.

Compare that to the sixties and seventies, what you could get in the vegetable section then.

MAARTEN Doperwten uit blik, bedoel je, appelmoes–

GWYN Precisely. In Wales, everything came from the UK, and here, it only came from as far away as the Benelux. But if you look at



what you can get in an average supermarket today, the products. You eat bits of things from all over the world, and that food unites in your body, gets digested. That's wonderfully symbolic, isn't it: we incorporate, just as we are here, entire worlds.

MAARTEN Maar daarmee zeg je dus eigenlijk—  
GWYN That we are a sum of locations in the form of genetic material, bacteria and viruses which you take with you from one side of the world to the other, which you absorb, which you attract. A collector of coordinates, is how I see the modern man or

woman. The whole world is brought together in every one of us. And with the world, history. And with history, time. And at the same time we travel with those world-encompassing, time-encompassing bodies through the physical world as well. That is godlike, do you understand? We have become the location where everything comes together, the starting point, the end point and the vanishing point, all at the same time. We have become our own destination! Our own horizon.

MAARTEN Fa-sci-ne-rende theorie.

GWYN It's not a theory, Maarten. I's the truth.

Do you want proof?

MAARTEN Als dat zou kunnen–

GWYN Then I'll give it to you. We are now used to looking at ourselves from above the world with Google Earth.

MAARTEN Dat zeg ik ja, dat zeg ik daarstraks precies

GWYN And it won't be long before you can see yourself walking around in real-time when you zoom in with Google Earth.

MAARTEN Dat gaat natuurlijk gebeuren.

GWYN Then the circle is complete. Do you understand what that means? We have truly become gods.

MAARTEN Maar—

GWYN *holds his hand up so as not to be interrupted* And where God needed a son to see himself walking around on earth, we don't even need that anymore. We will be able to be simultaneously the observer and the observed, creator and created. The circle will be complete. That point is approaching, mark my words! And what will that mean for how we see the world, if we can see

ourselves walking around from above,  
imagine.

MAARTEN Als je jezelf van bovenaf zal zien  
rondlopen.

GWYN Where will heaven and earth touch  
each other then?

MAARTEN Er zal geen horizon meer zijn.

GWYN Precisely. Do you see what I'm getting  
at? We will have become our own horizon.

Do you understand what that means?

Wherever we are, we have the entire world at  
our disposal. Everything belongs to everyone.

Everyone belongs to everything. If we go  
exploring, it will be a journey within. We

will slowly become aware of that.  
Contradictions will disappear. Patents.  
Property. Copyright. These will become  
outdated concepts, every one of them. Mark  
my words—

9.

MAARTEN Voor de zoveelste keer de zon in de zee zien zakken. Je weet hoe het is, je weet hoe het gaat, maar wat weet je ervan. Wat weet je er echt van.

GWYN That the earth turns and the sun doesn't really go down. You know that.

MAARTEN Maar wat heb ik er aan, aan die kennis?

GWYN You know that what you see is a trick  
of the eye.

MAARTEN Wat schiet ik daar mee op.

GWYN I don't know.

MAARTEN Precies.

GWYN Nobody knows.

MAARTEN Dat is precies mijn punt! Wat heeft  
het ons gebracht. Het lezen, de kennis, het  
zitten. Het verzamelen, het denken, de  
discussies? De stilte. De concentratie.  
Terwijl rondom ons heen voortdurend  
geschiedenis werd geschreven. Alles is  
veranderd. En wij? Wat denk je, zijn wij  
veranderd?



GWYN I don't know.

MAARTEN Misschien zijn we meer bescheiden  
geworden dan we waren?

GWYN More modest than we were.

MAARTEN Wellicht.

GWYN Wellicht.



THE UNDETECTABLE EVENT – CANDIDATE  
FOR A NON-BINARY MODEL OF THEATRE

Theatre has always existed in a binary relationship between performer and spectator. At it's simplest, it was a shaman's dance before a primitive tribe; a ritual carried out on behalf of a people who, having achieved a certain level of sophistication, elevated one amongst them to the role of 'priest actor'. A shaman's role was to assuage

the gods through performance; to self-sacrifice, if needs be, for the communal good. Given the non-manual nature of a occupation, hunting and gathering being merely manual specialisations not executive positions, one could say that the 'priest actor' was the first professional to emerge out of primitive society; pre-dating the prostitute, who is ordinarily granted the dubious honour.

The ritual performances of 'priest actors' formed an integral part in the lives of all primitive societies. To appropriate Foucault,

they were a commentary upon life as perceived by those living it; simultaneously doing and seeing. There was no distancing or alienation at work in such commentaries.

Ritualised performances were the unselfconscious acts of primitive peoples where the communal was more important than the self. For life, was the gift of the gods, and only by appeasing them, through sacred acts of theatre, could primitive societies ensure the continuation of their Gods' largesse (see *The Golden Bough*, Frazer). Theatre was life, and the shaman's

dance, rather than being a diversion from life, was the living of it.

The evolution of ritual performance into classical theatre is well documented.

However, following the decline of the Roman Empire, theatre, in Europe all but disappeared (due in part to the rise of the Christian church). Ironically, theatre was to rise again in Medieval Europe in the very church that ensured its demise; used as a means to illustrate moral tales to an illiterate mass. Later it was to leave the confines of the holy ground and be released into the

commons. However, though liberated from the sacred space and the control, morality theatre was still sacred theatre. It took the Renaissance for theatre to free itself from its sacred function to become a secular proto-metaphysical thing.

In that shift, it ceased to be an expression of the social, and evolved into a critique upon it.

In that act of re-positioning, theatre turned from the living into the representational. In

Marlowe's

*Dr Faustus*, one can sense the shifting dynamic.

I would suggest that the play sits on a cusp. It straddles the morality of *Everyman* (based upon the Dutch text *Elkerlyc*) and the proto-metaphysics of *Hamlet*. It is theatre in the process of distancing itself from both its classical and ritualistic functions, or rather, in the process of re-defining it for a humanistic age.

This process was accelerated with Enlightenment. As Jacques Rancière notes in *Dissensus*, 'In classical times it was supposed that theatre, or stage, functioned as a magnifying glass, inviting spectators to view the behaviour, virtues and vices of



their fellow men and women in the form of a fiction'; a way of re-imagining the real.

Post-Enlightenment, theatre became 'a set of signs formed according to an artist's intention. By recognising these signs the spectator is supposedly induced into a specific reading of the world... leading in turn to the feeling of a certain proximity or distance, and ultimately to the spectator's intervening into the situation staged by the author.'

Theatre was no longer a moral expression of unifying fiction (an archi-ethical form, where 'all living bodies directly embody the

sense of the common' (ibid, Rancière), it became a series of subjective truths as perceived by individuals, presented to the mass.

Despite the evolving egocentric model of the Western theatre, its binary nature remained constant; the relationship between performer and spectator as strong as ever; both continuing to define each other by their binary opposition (see *Bubbles: Spheres* Vol 1, Peter Sloterdijk). The rational scientific may have replaced the irrational magical in society, but the elemental grammar of

theatre (spectatorship) persisted, and had to persist, otherwise, there was no theatre.

Certain theatre makers in the past century have tried to question the rules of that grammar, but they invariably end up having to use the very grammar they criticise in order to form their critique both upon it and the world it reflects. Let us consider a recent Icelandic example. The director Jon Pall Eyolfsson created the *Theatre Machine* in an attempt to re-define the given ‘norms’ of both theatre and the social structures that perpetuate the ‘norms’ within his society.

The 'norms', for Eyeolfsson, being the strictures imposed by historic feudalism. In theatre, these 'norms' have manifested themselves in an hierarchical practice.

Whilst in society, the 'norms' are the values of the patriarchal system that brought the country to the brink of financial disaster in 2008 and have, after a brief flirtation with open democracy, re-asserted their dominion over the nation.

Note, as I write, following the release of the *Mossak Fonseca* papers which led to the resignation of the Icelandic Prime Minister,

Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson, the ‘norms’ are once again being challenged as thousands protest outside the Alþingishús, seat of the Icelandic parliament, demanding meaningful change.

In Mindgroup’s manifesto, the company that works the Machine, (<http://theatremachine.mindgroup.me>), it states that the Machine is ‘an ongoing experiment in creative freedom and collective work. The objective is to achieve creative freedom by not using the titles or hierarchical structures of the performing arts and by using different

syntax and terminology in our creative process as artists'. The Machine operates in camera, unwitnessed by non participants. However, it has, at some point, to present its outcomes before spectators. In so doing, it's non grammar becomes grammar. The Machine cannot negate the one factor that dictates its form, partly as Eyeolfsson's funders would presumably not allow this, and partly because he is a theatre maker with a desire to communicate a vision. That is the paradox of theatre, it struggles to exist outside the Sloterdijkian binary model.

Even within contemporary immersive models of performance, where the audience and the performers shape shift in an attempt to re-define the form and its relevance to post post-modernist spectators, the roles swap but the binary remains constant – there is surveillance and there is the surveyed – the spectatorship of the audience.

The immersive is therefore no departure from the primitive model, it is merely a fetish; the perversion of primitive roles in a God dead society where all claim the role of ‘shaman’.

Some theatrical expressions position themselves between the binary oppositions in a 'no-space space'. For, in that intra-liminal space, some argue, freedom lies (see the work of the performance artist The Famous Lauren Barri Holstein, who claims that space both as a theatre maker and as a feminist). But, even if freedom lies within that no-space space, it lies there purely because such a space can only exist within the oscillation between liminal nodes.

However, having stated that all theatre is binary, conforming to Sloterdijk's model (I



exist only in relation to another existence), can a purely, shall we say, Cartesian model of theatre; a theatre that thinks it exists, so it exists whether it exists or not, exist? Such a theatre could not be a re-definition of the relationship between spectator and 'priest actor,' for that would be merely a perpetuation of the binary model. Such a theatre would have to lie outside the given model in a true re-negotiation of form.

I reference the above as *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* did not begin its life as a text destined for the binary model

of theatre. True, it was written in part for an audience but, not for a general audience. It was written for an audience of one, and to be read, not experienced by that individual, the Dutch theatre maker, Jeroen van den Berg.

...we first met; in a fuck me landscape with fah-bulous horizons. The light that night was pure Hopper, remember; the music pure Heggarty, misty, diffused, redeeming.

*Fragments of Journeys Towards the  
Horizon*

N.B. all quotes from *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* are taken from the text included in this volume, not from the edited audio version.

May 2006. I'd newly arrived in New York, Van den Berg had been there for some weeks. We were both International Associates of The Lark Theatre – a theatre development company located at the time on 56th and 8th (see [www.larktheatre.org](http://www.larktheatre.org) )

A friend hooked us up. You're both European, you'll get on. Thank God we

weren't both from Belgium... Belfast...  
the bastard Balkans; New world  
kindness, unchecked prejudice. I  
remember you floated towards me from  
Broadway. My first impression of you?  
Negative; a kind of 'through the looking  
glass' impression, you know. After all,  
we were... we are each other's negative  
reflection. You're tall. I'm short. You're  
slight, I'm broad. You're popular, I'm  
prickly. You knew  
the territory, I'd only just arrived. (ibid)

Twice our residencies with that company coincided. We became comrades in exile. Over late night beers, and with growing cynicism (it was the time of the Palin nomination, the gun control debate and the setting up of a national health service), we placed American 'exceptionalism', and the unique theatre ecology that arises out of it and reflects it, into Old World perspective (see *Historia*, NoPassport Press, NY [www.nopassport.org](http://www.nopassport.org) ). Back in Europe we maintained our friendship and at some point, why or when I cannot say, one of us uttered the word 'collaboration.'

On the promise of that word, I applied for, and received an Arts Council Wales development grant to explore the potential of a collaborative venture. Our intention was admirable. However, three years after receiving the grant, we had yet to realise an iota of collaborative activity. Yes, we had met on several occasions, in both Wales and the Netherlands, but our meetings were never more than tête-à-têtes tagged on to the premiere of a new production or other. Finally, Arts Council Wales pressed for outcomes. Being the recipient of public

money (Okay, Van den Berg's commitment at the time was largely self-financing with some assistance from TIN),

I needed to initiate a process in order to justify the grant; not that our intention needed justifying, merely its realisation.

The pressure to generate an outcome coincided with two incidents, both unrelated to the collaboration and yet, both informed its development. In Galway, Michael Diskin (Fergus within the text), a good friend and theatre producer with whom I had collaborated many times, died of cancer.

Then, some weeks after that in Cardiff, I happened to meet Dafydd Wyn Roberts, a colleague with whom I had also collaborated (both Diskin and Roberts had known each other). He is identified in the text as ‘another friend – another cancer victim, but that’s another story; another turn and walk, to my shame.’ Roberts had just come from the doctor, who, barely an hour before, had diagnosed him with prostate cancer. I felt surrounded by decay; decay of life, decay of friendship – a middle age concern. An account of that meeting with Roberts appeared in the first draft of *Fragments of*



*Journeys Towards the Horizon* (see  
Appendix):

His name was Iago Hywel. Hywel not  
Howl! He was not one of life's Lear's,  
more of an eternal Gloucester. Neither  
was he the archetypical Iago! Okay, he  
was from farming stock, but, as far as I  
know, he'd never driven a tractor.

In these few lines, there are allusions to  
Robert's father (Hywel), to our first ever  
meeting in a production of *King Lear* (I  
played Edmund alongside his Gloucester) and

also to our respective admiration of the firebrand poet, RS Thomas. The tractor driving Iago Prydderch was Thomas' archetypal Welsh farmer – a Welsh Bjartur; the Icelandic Bjartur being the embodiment of a farmer's defiant stand against the malevolence of both God and the elements (see *Independent People* (Sjálfstætt fólk) Haldor Laxness).

On a tangential note, Diskin once booked R.S.Thomas to read at *Cuirt – the Galway* poetry festival. Diskin contacted Thomas to confirm the poet's travel arrangements.

Thomas was to take a train from North West

Wales to Manchester, then a flight from Manchester to Galway. 'My dear boy' Thomas interrupted him 'I never cross the border.' (as in, Offa's Dyke, the border between Wales and England). Diskin had to cancel the flight and book passage for Thomas on the Holyhead / Dublin ferry – a direct Wales / Ireland route.

The whole Iago Hywel episode was deleted from subsequent drafts. A secondary Welsh character proved superfluous to the tripartite thesis. Whilst Fergus represented the traditional Celtic axis around which our non

English world was meant to revolve (it was towards Ireland that we, as young Welsh patriots were told to direct our loving gaze. A one sided relationship, I was to discover, as the Irish have little love for us, the Scots even less), friendship with the un-named Dutch character, represented the potential to leap frog the historic oppressor (in relation to whom we still define ourselves, and always in the negative – we are Welsh, as in, not English) and place the Welsh habitus in European relief; a leap frogging that has become more poignant since the writing of *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon*.

It is ironic that Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland seem destined to be pulled out of Europe by England in the very month of October 2016!

Based upon true events, *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* is a chronicle of friendship, an exploration of personal loss and a desire for new political contexts, whilst simultaneously fearing them. In the essay *Elliot Forgot the Reluctant Vampires* (*Innovation in 5 Acts*, Pub. TCG, NY. Ed. Caridad Svich), I wrote:

Three lives collide in *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* – the lives of Van den Berg, the Irish friend and my own. I took the facts of our journeys together – actual journeys. (In the case of Van den Berg, a walk around the island of Terschelling, NL. In the case of my Irish friend, the last walk we made together, as I carried him to his grave in Galway, Ireland) and though the events (journeys) are placed in mythic relief, the core dramatic narrative is a true account.

Play as document / testimony.

Note that I used the terms ‘dramatic narrative’ and ‘play’ to describe the text. The essay was written in a period between its first public reading and its subsequent reinvention as an undetectable event – a possible candidate for a Cartesian model of theatre.

A year after Diskin’s death, in Easter 2013, I agreed to expose the private text to a public reading. The reading was held at the Town Hall Theatre, Galway (the theatre Diskin had once ran).

The text was presented partly as an attempt to initiate Van den Berg's reciprocity but primarily as a ritualistic act of remembrance for a dear friend. In my naïvety, I had hoped that the reading would, in some way, help to heal the wounds of loss that we, Diskin's friends and family, felt. However, intention and effect are rarely mirrored.

In my mind, enough time had elapsed between the event of his death and its documentation. However, it became obvious post facto, that the loss was still raw in the minds of both family and



close friends. After the reading, there was silence. The close friends and family were not angry – rather they were in shock. It was not that I had betrayed his memory (the play is dedicated to my dear dead friend), it was, that I had chronicled the truth rather than written a fictitious account of the man and our experiences of him. In their minds, I had stolen not only the deceased's soul, but their collective souls' (*Innovation in 5 Acts* ibid)

Bemused and saddened, I left Galway and  
have found it impossible to return to the city  
where my one time cartographer lived:

You know, in life, we walked all over;  
Banks of the Clyde, down the Falls Road,  
Through Trinity 'This is the last shop  
standing from Joyce's *Ulysses*' he'd say  
'Really... C'mon, I want to show you  
Moore, Een' He was my guide, he drew  
the maps I needed... (*Fragments of  
Journeys Towards the Horizon*)

N.B. Moore Sreet was where the 1916 Irish Revolution effectively ended.

Back in Wales, the text was to receive three further readings. Having directed the Galway reading, I allowed Van den Berg to re-direct the actor, Russell Gomer prior to its subsequent readings. The consequences of that ceding of the rehearsal space were to prove both enlightening and frustrating. By allowing Van den Berg into the process, differences of approach and esthetic, which had always been there, but, prior to the transference of agency had lacked a focus,

were now thrown into relief. It became apparent that our respective senses of theatre were polar opposite. However, having ceded the space, I could not reclaim it. Our differences were possibly reflections of our positions within our respective theatres ecologies and our relationship with the form itself.

By 2007 I had stepped out of theatre production and into television production. Though I still wrote theatre texts, they lay dormant on hard drives – and deliberately so. Following several questionable productions

of my work by other directors, I had developed a problematic relationship with theatre. Though I continued to write what other would term, by virtue of their form, 'plays', I had ceased to write text for production, fearing all production. My texts had become, and continue to be, more like testimonies that, though set to record, prefer to remain unvoiced. I do not now consider a text as a performance blueprint waiting to be realised, as I once did. Text has become essentially a reflexive document turning in on itself, reflecting my fear that the it will be misinterpreted? I believe it is Eco that

outlines the problematic nature of communication; an impulse generates a thought, that, in turn is shaped by an organ and conveyed through a medium (e.g. air). The signifier generated is received by a recipient's organ (an ear or an an eye) and turned back into thought which generates an impulse. At each stage of this process a breakdown in communication or rather 'misinterpretation' of the signifier can occur. Why attempt communication if one's signs are destined to be misinterpreted? As a writer, and, in light of experience, I prefer silence and isolation; my thoughts are my

own. And so, as a manifestation of that isolationism, soliloquy drives my work. As a form, it is a reflection of my innate pessimism, both regarding general miscommunication and of theatre's inability, through experience, to realise intention.

In comparison, Van den Berg continues to be an active and optimistic theatre maker; not only as a writer, but a theatre practitioner where writing is merely one part of his practice. In her introduction to *Dutch & Flemish Plays*, Petra de Kock elaborates upon this tendency in Dutch theatre. She cites the

Tomato Revolt as a pivotal moment in the development of Dutch theatre. After a performance of *The Tempest* at the Amsterdam Stadsschowburg (October 9th 1969), two directing students, showered the stage with tomatoes as an expression of their dissatisfaction with the reactionary Dutch theatre scene. It was, at the time, driven by stagings of translated classics, there was no room for the new. She posits that after that event, Dutch theatre became primarily a director's theatre. Kock writes, 'the (Dutch) director has more or less become the performance's author'. I hope he will excuse



my presumption if I suggest that he, Van den Berg, lies in this tradition. In conversation, he has cast doubt over the importance of the Tomato Revolt as the inciting incident – ‘There was a broader movement behind the call for change.’ However change came, Van den Berg was trained as a ‘performance author’ in the tradition that evolved post ’69. To him, the craft of theatre is the craft of communication; of negotiation. Once, in conversation, Van den Berg stated ‘We, Dutch are a mercantile nation; our history is a history of negotiation.’ Monologue in his work, as I have perceived it, tends towards

direct speech. I am unaware of a single soliloquy within it. Indeed, when he came to write his initial response to *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon*, he commented upon how unnatural it felt to write monologue in soliloquy form. This possibly coloured his eventual decision to diverge from our original intention.

In 2002, I published the volume, *Llais un yn Llefain, Gwasg Carreg Gwalch* (*A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, Carreg Gwalch Press). It is a collection of Welsh language monologues I have directed. In the foreword I outlined three basic forms of monologue; the

internalised, the mediated and the externalised. Let us consider three Shakespearian speeches; Hamlet's great question 'To be, or not to be...', Edmund's cry for justice 'Thou nature art my goddess...' and the opening lines of *Romeo and Juliet* 'Two houses both alike in dignity...' Hamlet's monologue is an internalised monologue, a soliloquy; voiced thought. However, Edmund's cry is mediated as it reaches the audience via a third and absent party; nature. The prologue from *Romeo and Juliet* is unmediated monologue

as it is directed at the audience, as any stand up performance would be.

Much of my work has been written as unmediated internalisations even within multi-cast action. My intention is (when plays are staged) that the unmediated thoughts are experienced in a sympathetic (objective) rather than empathetic (subjective) way; testimony theatre, to be witnessed as opposed to a drama to be absorbed. Such testimonies do not demand emotional investment, they lie purely in the dispassionate realm. Performing my work is

therefore a challenge both to actors and directors as, on the one hand, theatre convention dictates that a performance has to cross the apron and create a binary oscillation, however, in my work, it has to remain 'objective' – restrained by a fourth wall. This has been a fundamental misunderstanding of my work and has been made by many to the detriment of several productions. I do not consider the audience as audience in the traditional active sense. To me they are passive voyeurs, glimpsing acts placed behind glass; the binary is still present, but it is a non-oscillating one, not in

opposition. The 'no-space space' cannot be inhabited by either opposition as the focus does not shift position; for the duration of the event, it remains one way traffic – theatre as pornography.

Having ceded the initiative to Van den Berg, he immediately set about placing the monologue on the externalised side of the continuum. In Van den Berg's direction, the audience had a part to part within the living text; a theatre of empathy in direct opposition to my sympathetic objective.

Though we did discuss this shift, I let it pass

as my supra-objective was to initiate the collaborative process, and this I achieved.

Following the readings of *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* (April 2014), the plan was for Van den Berg to set about writing a parallel text, one inspired by, and centered around his grandparent's experiences of the bombing of Rotterdam in WW2. Its opening line 'Ik kom van de klei' (I come from the clay) might therefore seem incongruous to a Dutch reader, as the lands around Rotterdam are not clay lands. Know that Van den Berg was brought up, away from

his family farm, in the clay lands around Groningen. The inclusion of this fossil line within *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* was made prior to the subsequent divergence from our original intention – interweaving texts creating a juxtapositional narrative; two men walking towards the far horizon, each thinking separate yet, at times convergent thoughts. This merged draft was to be read at Oerol in 2014.

June 2014. In a borrowed house in Baaiduinen (on the island of Terschelling), we set about merging *Fragments of Journeys*



*Towards the Horizon* with Van den Berg's nascent text. We were to read our own words and the reading would have a live soundtrack mixed by Jaap van Keulen, a soundscape artist with whom Van den Berg had frequently collaborated.

The reading was barely a binary event.

However, audience / spectators numbers were of no importance. What was important was the existence, at last of Van den Berg's juxtaposing narrative and the beginnings of an interwoven draft. At that point in time I could envisage, following further

development, a truly collaborative production, one that would lie neatly within my unmediated model of theatre. It would also reflect the nature of cross cultural dialogue which is problematic at the best of times. This is primarily due to its very cross cultural nature; in negotiation there is always compromise.

...can we ever be friends, my friend? Can we ever collaborate if I can't glimpse the hidden geography? How can we ever journey together if we're not even on the same bastard map?

*(Fragments of Journeys Towards the  
Horizon, ibid)*

I left Terschelling that June convinced that we would eventually stage this irony. In the end, the irony was to prove even greater than I imagined. For, in the subsequent disconnect between intentions, an unexpected opportunity arose.

Harlech, August 2015. Siri Wigdel (the director of Theatr Harlech) had secured money from Arts Council Wales to stage a workshop production of, what I still believed

would be, our merged texts. It was only a short time prior to our residency at that theatre that I became aware of the fact that Van den Berg had diverged from the initial vision in favour of a wholly new one; a dialogue inspired by the emergence of perspective in Renaissance art. Though it had echoes of my proto-text, it aspired to be an homogenous incarnation and therefore, impossible to merge with mine. From that point on, *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* became redundant, or rather it returned to its initial function; a text written

to inspire, which, having inspired, ceased to function.

I must confess to a certain frustration when it became apparent that we were indeed, 'not even on the same bastard map'.

Collaboration would be replaced, from that point on, either with whither and bloom or with parallel flowering. Out of expediency, I chose the latter path, hardly suspecting, at the time, the opportunity such a path would offer. Freed from collaboration, *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* could now take on new forms; one of which would

shape it into an undetectable event; an unexpected means to challenge the Sloterdijkian binary model of theatre.

Alongside Van den Berg's workshop-production of his dialogue, I presented 2 manifestations of *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* at the Harlech residency. The first, traditional in form, was a filmed version of an extract of the text adapted into Welsh. It ran from 'I remember a pass in the dunes...' to 'That's all I found in the sands, was fear... that cockroach emotion again; survives everything, even a fucking

vacuum!'

(for the subtitled version see <https://vimeo.com/159799912>). The second, was an edited version of the original text stripped of its expletives. This, I recorded and presented as a dramatic audio walk.

Splitting the text into twelve sections, I mapped a journey on to the Harlech landscape which mirrored the journey Van den Berg and I had previously made on the Friesian island of Terschelling. Starting in the beach car park (in the shadow of the rock upon which Harlech castle stands), it then followed the

path to the beach. Turning left, and keeping the dunes on the left hand side, it proceeded along the sands for circa 800m. At a certain point it left the beach, climbed the dunes and dropped into a natural sand bowl. Leaving the sand bowl, the path then wound back towards the castle, finishing at the point the path bisects the railway line. Along the journey, natural markers indicated when specific audio tracks should be played. The recorded text was also interspersed with directions in order to clarify the journey for the person making it



I use the term person, however, I hesitate before committing to it. Initially I considered the term participant, but this would have suggested participation in an organised event. The 'dramatic audio walk' created in Harlech, though mapped on the landscape, was an undetectable event, in that it was neither organised nor surveyed. Persons were expected to download details and experience the event in isolation. As a consequence, a person experiencing the event would be simultaneously seen (as a body walking through space) and unseen, or rather undetected (as bystanders would be unaware

of the inner event); a state of being akin to the paradoxical state of Schrödinger's cat.

The person (if a person has indeed experienced the event, for there is no way of knowing whether anyone has), experienced the event as a journey through an invisible thought-scape, enclosed within a living moving box, located within a visible landscape.

'We will build our stage here. In this no-place, we'll create our own context' you said as you crushed the exoskeletons of small dead animals

underfoot. 'We should erect a massive plastic cube – ten by ten by ten – here, and now.'

'A cube? Ok...' I thought 'but couldn't we work with the fluidity of the landscape and create a more organic form? Just a suggestion,' I suggested, bending in the wind; though there wasn't a wind to fucking bend against. We, Welsh bend against anything – mostly the imagined. 'No, I think a cube would be best' You were insistent 'and it should be black.' 'Black?' 'Yeah, we will erect a black plastic cube; a

black hole in time, and space!’ Fuck!  
Such clarity of vision controlled the  
Spice trade, played beautiful football,  
fucked tulips!

‘And on the interior walls we’ll project  
reality’ you said ‘that way, we’ll keep  
the perverse and the natural in a  
constant state of flux. And within that  
fertile no-space space, we will create  
belief and then suspend it...’

Thus thought the apotheosis of  
Mondrian as Steve McQueen as God!  
(ibid)

Note – at one point, we discussed staging the merged texts both within and then without a large black plastic cube. This cube was to be placed in the dunes of Terschelling (or other dunes). This we considered not in the quantum sense rather in the theatrical sense re. the ‘suspension of disbelief’ within the performance ‘no-space space’ – a term coined in the writing.

Whether persons experienced the event or not, once mapped, one could argue that the event was ever present within that landscape regardless of whether it was experienced or

not; a truly undetectable event.

Nomenclature surrounding the undetectable event is problematic as will be the nomenclature needed to define the relationship between person and recorded text as we attempt to ascertain whether a binary (consensual form, i.e. between performer and spectator) is in play or whether the undetectable event is potentially a candidate for a Cartesian form of theatre.

At this point, I would posit that radio drama or pod casts heard in random locations, and audio tours are not undetectable events.

Though such experiences isolate a person within his / her audio environment, they are absorbed passively – non actively. Theatre is an ‘active’ event, and a spectator is an active agent within that event, even if it’s witnessing of the event is a passive act – the spectator is still active.

It is true, that a person listening to a radio drama or a pod cast on a tram might be experiencing an invisible event. However, such an event is an undetectable non-event in the sense that even though a person’s journey might be eventful and the audio

might convey a dramatic narrative, it is unmapped, unintentional and as stated, absorbed passively. It is true that *Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* can also be experienced passively (downloaded and listened to as an audio narrative outside of its mapped environment). But, to be experienced as an undetectable event, it needs to be experienced actively as a journey simultaneously made both through thought and space. An undetectable event is the active event of an undetected thought-scape moving through a physical landscape.



I must confess, my only experience of a dramatic audio walk prior to mapping out the Harlech event was one choreographed by the Berlin based theatre company, Rimini Protocol. *Outdoors* took place in Aberystwyth as part of National Theatre Wales' inaugural season. Having been kitted out and made aware of certain Health and Safety issues, participants were allocated an audio narrative. Each narrative was an interview conducted with a different member of the Aberystwyth based, Heartsong community choir. The interviews documented choir members' individual's

perspectives upon life, their impressions of the town etc. As we, the participants walked our separate paths around the town (guided by our respective narratives), we would occasionally come across our co-participants. There would be a knowing nod of recognition as we would pass each other. After an hour or so, each participant found his / her way to the rehearsal room of the community choir. The event culminated in a short recital by the choir. It was an interesting, if undramatic experience which ended in an uninspiring climax. A physical journey had been made, but the dramatic journey (and I only speak

from a personal experience) lacked drive. The interviews were 'real' enough (Rimini Protocol are praised for their '*Reality Trend*' theatre), but personally, I find quotidian reality rarely moving.

During the walk my overriding feeling was one of manipulation and of being constantly under surveillance; not in a deliberate perversion of the binary, as noted above, though that was also at play (as walkers 'performed' in the eyes of other walkers in the sense that they animated each other's scene; simultaneously surveyed and

surveyor), but rather for logistic reasons. Though the form of the event was, without doubt a feat of organisational ability, the conceit was questionable. As a consequence, and from my experience of it, the event was a case of form triumphing over content. Had I been given another narrative, I might have felt differently. But the narrative allocated to me was a melange of anodyne observations and ill-informed impressions. It was an incomer's narrative, at times, factually incorrect. This might not have registered with the originators of the event. Being non-Welsh themselves, they were probably, and

understandably unaware of the politics of immigration at play in the Welsh language heartlands. Of course, one could argue that an incomer's false perception is nevertheless, a valid perception. However, as a prickly Welshman, I find the appropriation and devaluation of my cultural landscape troubling. I also find the argument that a Welsh person's reluctance to accept that appropriation and devaluation is a personal weakness, insulting. Regardless of the lackluster and misinformed narrative, had the event itself surprised me, I would have forgiven it. But there was no element of

surprise beyond the chance meetings with people I would rather not have met. And yet, however pedestrian the execution, I was inspired by the potential of the form.

I thought, at the time, if the surveillance, the coordinated nature of the activity and the time specific elements were stripped away, it would leave a more random and raw experience. If one then framed that experience within a truly dramatic narrative then the event could potentially be more vital. Only when preparing the Harlech walk did I realise the true potential of the form;

not only to excite, but to ask questions of the binary model of theatre itself.

The Harlech event was / is an undetectable event as it takes place in camera. The participant is both his / her own audience and actor, for he / she is the only person in whose reality the event is in play. There is no exterior surveillance; no binary opposition. As a consequence, neither can it exist in that 'no-space space' which demands binary oscillation in order to exist. It would therefore seem to exist outside the binary between surveyor and surveyed. If one

accepts this, the question then arises, does it take place in a Cartesian topography isolated from all other points of triangulation? If so, can the undetectable event be a break from the binary model?

One key element is the relationship between the person and the audio narrative. As stated above, an audio narrative can be a simple podcast or audio guide – passively absorbed.

However the undetectable event differs from such audio narratives in that the person is active, has agency and experiences the event undetected by external agencies (providing a



person walks without a smart phone – an instrument that turns each and every moment of life into a binary moment).

The text is also a soliloquy, voiced thought; it neither demands nor receives response. It is true that throughout the play, the voice searches for a means to place itself in opposition with absent agencies i.e. in the opening lines, it asks ‘Where are you now my friend, mon ami, mi amigo?’ (see below).

However, the voice (and I shall call it voice as opposed to character, as a voice is a more transferable entity), located at ‘0 degrees

North 0 degrees West' (ontological coordinates not physical ones) is resigned to its own isolation. Its only true binary is with its own memory not with another person.

The event, experienced from the perspective of the voice is, I would suggest, thought, unwitnessed, un-coordinated and un-Sloterdijkian.

Now let us consider the state of the person.

Is the person who experiences the event located within the traditional binary (in opposition) or un-located and unopposed as a Cartesian point? May I suggest that it

depends whether a person chooses to position itself in opposition to the voice, thereby experiencing it from an alienated perspective, and, in so doing, compromising its non-binary potential (see below).

However, I suspect, from a layman's perspective, that it can be argued that any person experiencing an undetectable event simultaneously 'experiences' the voice and 'is' the voice (irrespective of a person's cynicism). Such a state is a 'cat state' – the state of being in both states simultaneously (according to the paradox), as long as the event remains undetectable.

Next. In its undetectable state, is it still theatre? Though unseen, it is a choreographed event framed by a narrative, set within scenery. According to feedback, the event is both 'dramatic and theatrical.' Considering this, if one concedes that it could indeed be theatre, the question then arises, does it, as a theatrical event exist outside the historic binary? I would suggest that potentially it does, though the potential constantly collapses in on itself. That is its paradox, it both is and isn't binary as long as

it remains an isolated and undetectable event.

Finally, if we accept the event as a Cartesian form of theatre, that is, a non-binary isolated system, can we also consider it is as a quantum event; as in, a system in superposition i.e. an unobserved quantum system where the theoretical Schrödinger's cat (the event) both exists and does not exist simultaneously? As the event is undetectable, then, there is no way of knowing if a person is experiencing the event at any one point in time, or not. Is it

therefore fair to assume that once mapped, the event is both constantly in and out of play, that is, in superposition according to the Copenhagen definition?

If so, is the undetectable event truly a non-binary quantum event of theatre? In the end, I guess, it comes down to perception. To paraphrase Descartes, think, and it could be. I concede that my reasoning could be construed as fanciful sophistry. Whether it is or not, it is nevertheless a testimony – a record of process and impression.

Following the Harlech event, I was then asked to map out an urban equivalent in Aberystwyth; around the same streets I had walked under the surveillance of Rimini Protocol. As I set about mapping an undetectable event there, serendipitous coincidences presented themselves.

Beginning in the train station seemed a natural starting point, as the sound of a distant train is, in certain ways, ever present within the text. As I walked the streets, I inadvertently came across a Spar, a war memorial, a brass direction finder pointing me towards Galway, a square path around a

series of black boxes (graves), a clock tower. It was as if the urban landscape was claiming the narrative in the way that the landscape of Harlech had previously claimed it, in the way that Terschelling was to re-claim it. You will see in the filmed extract accessible on Vimeo that the short film begins with a drone camera sweeping across the dunes around *Heartbreak Hotel* at the Northern end of the beach in Terschelling. It then cuts to an image of the dunes in Harlech. Places seem interchangeable only the thought remains constant as it moves undetected through space.



As a juxtaposing companion to Van den Berg's text, which will receive its full staging at Oerol 2016, I was invited to return to the island of Terschelling and plan a third undetectable event. It felt like a homecoming. My initial intention was to map the event along the path both Van den Berg and I had originally taken. Beginning outside Loods in West-Terschelling, I turned to my right and walked in the direction of the Groene Strand. There, I headed for the dunes and the sea beyond. Five hours later, I had yet to reach the beach beyond the high

dunes. I had been thwarted by the swollen marshes of mid March. Once I got lost and had to retrace my steps. I listened to the voice, recounting my previous panic, whilst living it anew:

Leaving you, I'd wade off on a tangent, thinking for a while I'd found a way through, only to be checked by a deep channel of water and mocking ducks! So I'd wade back to you, then head off in a different direction. I lost count of the times I did this, getting more and more frantic whilst you just made a B line for

the clock tower which never got any closer, however far you walked. The fury was disorientating! Marsh birds strafed our faces with shit, leeches sucked our resolve, eels bit, coiled and ripped flesh as we advanced; if you can advance towards an ever-receding point. (ibid)

Eventually I reached the beach around pole 3. Turning left I kept the dunes to my left and headed South. A few hundred meters before rounding the Southern tip of the dunes, I reached the pass in the dunes that had once contained unexploded bombs (and

occasionally does so depending upon the action of waves and wind upon the dunes).

At the far end of the sand bowl, the dune dropped down to the lake.

...mise en scene, Czech animation circa 1960! Thankfully, there were no trees to sing – though singing wasn't an option in a fucking vacuum! I half expected a demon dwarf and a big, fuck off flying goldfish.

It was a childhood 'terror-scape' sans pareille! (ibid)

Originally, Van den Berg and I headed back to West-Terschelling by making a beeline across the marsh towards, what I misremembered as, a clock tower. Given the conditions underfoot, I did not take that path, neither did I skirt the lake Northwards. Instead, I turned right and followed the sands across the mouth of the lake walking the Noordsvaarder back to West-Terschelling.

Ideally, I would have located the undetectable event in Noordsvaarder.

However, two reasons forced my hand...

Firstly, the length of the walk would have

made it unsustainable. Secondly, due to the fragile nature of the environment there and the fact that Oerol coincides with the seabird nesting season, the area is a no go area for festival events. I therefore re-located it to Kaap Hoorn – a parallel landscape.

As part of the mapping process, the undetectable event was trialed by a few Dutch persons. Two specific issues were identified. Firstly, the lyrical and foreign language text proved alienating to the Dutch ear; or at least, until it became attuned to it. Without body language and facial expression,

it was a struggle to absorb the initial passages of the text. This resulted in a battle between text, senses and landscape and had the potential to frustrate and alienate a person. It was felt that this could lead a person to abandon the event before a point of understanding or symbiosis is achieved. That symbiotic point was identified as the point when the actual walk of the person coincides geographically with the walk recounted in the text. This takes place as both voice and person approach the high dunes that run along the Northern coast of the island. Only

then, it was generally agreed, could a person relax into the event.

Simplifying the text was an easy issue to address. The second issue was more challenging; one I had not anticipated. It was generally agreed that the initial speech of the text was the most problematic. It created an uncertainty in the audience from the outset. The issue being, with whom was the voice conversing. 'Where are you now, my friend; mon ami, mi amigo?'

Who was the friend? A person? An other?



The general impression was that the voice, in the first speech, was felt to be addressing the person directly. Immediately a false binary came into play which proved disorientating especially upon realising five minutes into the event, that the person was not the one actually being addressed. This resulted in a sense of having been falsely led.

In discussion, it was felt that this issue, especially when combined with the lyricism of the foreign language text, had the potential to undermine the readiness of a person to

journey beyond the symbiotic point and submit to the event.

Additionally, and most importantly, it totally undermined the theoretical potential of the undetectable event. As it accidentally the binary in play from the outset, it compromised the intention, i.e. to create a symbiosis between voice and person to the point where the person is voice; simultaneously both spectator and actor – a self-observing cat.

Following discussion, the text was simplified, the first speech was dropped and a new voice recording made. The simplified narrative of the undetectable event mapped on Terschelling now begins with 'I remember an island...'; the island simultaneously experienced both as voiced memory and in reality, by the person as it walks the shared geography.

Due to the presence of nesting sea birds at Kaap Hoorn, the number of persons able to experience the event there, will be limited. Persons will need to register their intention

to experience the event. Only then will they be able to download the voice. This, in some ways negates the undetectable element as there is a chance, during the busy festival period, that a person will be viewed knowingly by another person mid-event. Having registered, a person will also be 'known' to the organisers and potentially observed. Personally, I would register, download, then return at some other point in the Summer when the marsh is dry and the strand is devoid of observers and nesting sea birds.

You are also free to re-trace the actual walk which commences the town side of the dunes (circa 1,000m in front of them) on the path leading to pole 3. Though the path has open access, I cannot guide you there. But if, at some point you happen to find yourself walking that path and listening to the voice, the event you will experience will truly be undetectable. You may walk there as pure thought moving unseen through space.

The undetectable event is all our lives lived out as clouds of thoughts traversing emptiness. We search for binary opposition

in order to qualify our being as we are Sloterdijkian by desire. However, we are Cartesian by design. The undetectable event is an event experienced from a point of undetectable isolation. As such, it is both theatre and beyond theatre. For it is life as lived in a Shaman-less world where no one dances for us, we dance only for ourselves.

## APPENDIX

Deleted scene from *Fragments of Journeys*  
*Towards the Horizon*

His name was Iago Hywel. Hywel not Howl! He was not one of life's Lear's, more of an eternal Gloucester. Neither was he the archetypical Iago! Okay, he was from farming stock, but, as far as I know, he'd never driven a tractor. When I first knew him, he drove a Toyota without break pads – he'd handbrake at each traffic light whilst eating chips from a polystyrene tray resting on his lap. He was a true athlete; a man born to drive, he couldn't run. He barely walked, partly because his feet had evolved into pedal

extensions: there was an ungainliness about his gait. But behind a wheel he was balletic; a Diaghilev of the road! The closest we ever got to a walk together was a walk by proxy. One day he came to visit me when I lived out West. It was the day Mandela walked to freedom, and in spirit, we walked with him! That was the closest we ever got... the closest; we were the closest of friends, my friend; closer than we are!

Together, we mapped the whole of our nation; each bar and cafe from Holyhead to Tiger Bay. We were driven, driven...



well, he did all the driving, I just drew the maps... we were driven by the need to chart the sacred places. It was a Welsh Odyssey. The Rock was a different place back then, It was a more magical place – almost Icelandic; a country of giants dancing on mountaintops and fairies dancing rings around the god-fearing. Do not be deceived by a chapel on every street corner, my friend, the ‘deep culture’, the real ‘deep culture’ lies deeper than the roots of any hanging tree. We Welsh are still pagan at heart, and our true heart beats deep within the rock.

Hywel and I traveled, listening for its pulse; boom, boom... boom, boom... boom, boom... but the pulse was weak. It needed context; we were the ones who needed context.

And so we journeyed all over the rock, North, South, East, West, and on the slightest pretense. His partner dreaded the sight of my face, my partner dreaded the sight of his! There were shouts... recriminations. But we never baulked because our quest was the true quest and we endured; though, in the end, the relationships did not; the sacrifices you

make. What sacrifice will you make for me, my friend? Will you compromise your integrity, your gezellige life? Mm? *half beat* Fuck off! He was a true friend and we traveled all over listening for a pulse, searching for a context to strengthen it. We headed West across the sea – towards Avalon (because that's, we were taught, where the Celtic connection lay). But though we crisscrossed from Donegal to Cork / Dublin to Kerry, context, eluded us. Even when we widened the search across the Fringe – from Glasgow to Brest / Belfast to Penzance – nothing. Not

one person had heard of Branwen, our ancient creation myths – no one! From birth, we'd been brought up to believe in universal Halstadt. That lie was 'suckled from our Mam's breasts in the pews of Capelfuckingsalem'. That's tmesis and a half for you! We searched for our Celtic brotherhood, but we found no kin, no common ground, no truth, nothing... except that shit turns black after Guinness, that is the only universal truth, my friend! In the end, we were left, lacking not just a 'context' but the hope that we would ever find one! We

wondered lost, as we wondered, searching for days, months, years; lost without a map in Tir na nOg. Then one day, en route from somewhere to nowhere, we turned up at Galway. We drove down Shop Street, over the bridge that spans the Corrib, left into Dominic Street, and there... we found Fergus; the faint pulse grew stronger, boom, boom... boom, boom... boom, boom...

Anyway, time passes and Iago Hywel and I remain friends, but increasingly more distant – life does that, I guess. I journeyed mostly alone seeking wider and

wider contexts. Secretly, I think we hated the look of each other's faces, they betrayed the gravity of years passed. Yeah, we traveled to Galway that final time to see Fergus before he died – two Proustian tourists paying homage at the court of the Firkin Crane – but that was just memory lane – the exception.

So one day, a few months after Galway, I was in Cardiff for a meeting; some café and I'd offered to buy the coffees. And I was standing waiting to order, when I saw Iago Hywel approach me... looking older, damn him; him and his dry, sticky uppy,

when you pinched it, skin! 'Hywel' I said  
'how are things?' 'Fine' he said, and I took  
fine at face value! 'Great' and glancing  
over his shoulder, I saw his long-suffering  
ex who endured so much during our  
questing days. I always said despite  
everything, they'd end up together. 'And,  
Morag! Great to see you too' kiss, kiss.  
'And what brings you here?' 'You should  
tell him Hywel' she said 'you're old  
friends, you should tell him. It's fate, to  
meet him now' and the smile slipped off  
her face. 'Tell me, what?' 'Tell him,  
Hywel.' And I turned to my old friend and

he paused... though not for effect... 'I've just come from the doctors he said, I've got cancer...' And I thought of all the roads we'd traveled, to come to this, all the maps we'd drawn.... 'You're the first one to know.' 'Oh, I'm sorry.' 'It's ok' he said. What else could he say? So, I listened to the detail and take his advice 'Eat three brazil nuts a day... the selenium's good for you.' 'I will' but though life has stopped in that corner, in the opposite corner, life was carrying on and I had a meeting. I made my excuses. 'Sure,' he said 'I understand.' 'I'll keep in touch.' 'Please...'



And there was fear in his eyes when I laid my hand on his shoulder, turned and walked away from him, I walked away, as I've always... I hate friends. I hate Fergus. I hate you Hywel. I hate all the friends I have ever known, but most of all, I hate you! I hate you, do you understand? I hate you because, one day, you'll put your hand on my shoulder and turn! And you will turn! You will turn, because if you don't, I will... and I don't want to turn again.

Ian Rowlands

# Easter Friday 2016 (Centenary of Revolution)



FRAGMENTS, EEN ZOEKTOCHT NAAR  
SAMENWERKING

Schrijver/regisseur Ian Rowlands en ik ontmoetten elkaar in New York, waar we beiden writer in residence waren bij The Lark Theatre. We raakten bevriend en begonnen elkaars werk te volgen.

Het is eigenaardig met vriendschappen tussen mensen uit verschillende landen.

Vaak ontmoet je elkaar ergens 'in den vreemde'. Je gaat bij elkaar op bezoek, blijft bij elkaar logeren. Je laat de interessante plekken van je land zien, reist van hot naar her. Tijdens die bezoeken zie je je eigen cultuur door de ogen van de ander. Je bent geneigd te spreken over wat 'typisch Nederlands' is, en 'typisch Welsh'. Alsof er in elk land enkel identieke mensen wonen.

Maar de clichés komen niet zomaar uit de lucht vallen. Want of we dat nou willen of niet, Ian en ik belichamen de prototypes van de Welshman en de Nederlander. Ian, de

gedrongen man uit Wales, die zijn land als een last op zijn schouders met zich meedraagt. Zijn uitzicht altijd beperkt door bergen, dus van nature is hij naar binnen gericht. Naast hem ben ik een typisch omhoog geschoten Nederlander die, niet gehinderd door zaken als bergen en rotsen, maar gewend aan het oneindig perspectief van het polderland, gericht is op de buitenwereld. Vanuit dat cliché starten we onze zoektocht naar samenwerking. Zou het werkelijk zo zijn dat het landschap waar je vandaan komt een zodanige invloed op je psyche heeft?

We bezochten elkaar regelmatig, gingen naar elkaars producties kijken en spraken over samenwerken. Maar het bleek niet eenvoudig een startpunt te vinden voor ons project. We hadden inspirerende gesprekken, maar daarna gingen we ieder terug naar onze eigen wereld en verdween het project weer naar de achtergrond.

In 2013 verbleven we een aantal dagen op Terschelling, vast van plan een definitieve start, een helder uitgangspunt te formuleren. De ochtend voor we zouden vertrekken,

maakten we een wandeling over het Groene Strand en de Noordsvaarder. Omdat we op de terugweg steeds weer op water stuitten waar we niet doorheen konden, dreigden we onze boot naar het vasteland te missen.

Die wandeling, en het gesprek dat we voerden, beschreef Ian later in zijn monoloog *Fragments of Journeys towards the Horizon*. Daarmee zette hij de eerste concrete stap en was de naam van het project geboren. De titel sprak me aan, maar ik vond hem ook wat pompeus. Maar gaandeweg onze samenwerking ben ik hem steeds beter gaan snappen.



## Vriendschap

(...) can we ever be friends, my friend?

Can we ever collaborate if I can't

glimpse the hidden geography? How can

we ever journey together if we're not

even on the same bastard map?

Ian's verhaal gaat over landschap, identiteit, over onze beider landen, over hoe verschillend we in het leven staan. Maar zijn monoloog gaat vooral over vriendschap. Hij

beschrijft hoe hij zijn Ierse vriend Fergus verloor, die aan een ongeneselijke vorm van kanker leed. Hun onhandige pogingen om om te gaan met Fergus' naderende dood. Het onbevredigende laatste afscheid en Ian's ongemak tijdens Fergus uitvaart. *Fragments of Journeys towards the Horizon* is een persoonlijke vertelling, over de angst om vrienden kwijt te raken, over de angst om te verdwalen, in de wereld, in je leven.

Het stuk gaat over doodsangst, uiteindelijk, die tastbaar wordt door de blik die Ian in zijn eigen ogen ziet, als hij in de spiegel kijkt

tijdens zijn eerste aanval van tinnitus (een aandoening die hij oploopt na een griepaanval en die een constante ruis in zijn oren veroorzaakt). Hij ziet dezelfde angst als hij zag in de ogen van Fergus, vlak voordat ze voor de laatste keer afscheid van elkaar namen. Een angst die hem doet omdraaien en vertrekken, iedere keer als hij die in iemands ogen ziet.

Ian zet in zijn monoloog onze vriendschap tegenover zijn vriendschap met Fergus. Hij stelt zich zijn eigen dood voor en vraagt zich af of ik zijn as zal verstrooien, in het bijzijn

van zijn zoon. Al met al een confronterend vraag, waar ik zo een twee drie geen antwoord op had.

De monoloog neemt een surrealistische wending als we tijdens onze wandeling verzeild raken in een moeras, met slangen en bommen. Een nachtmerrieachtige omgeving, waarin we vast komen te zitten. Alles stil staat er stil. Een plek zonder tinnitus. Een vacuüm. We zitten letterlijk vast, zoals we ook figuurlijk vast zitten in onze gesprekken over samenwerking. Al wandelend is ons de moed in de schoenen gezakt en zien we

weinig perspectief meer hoe we verder moeten. Tot opeens het idee van de Zwarte Kubus ontstaat:

‘We should erect a massive plastic cube – ten by ten by ten – here, and now.’ ‘A cube? Ok...’ I thought ‘but couldn’t we work with the fluidity of the landscape and create a more organic form? Just a suggestion,’ I suggested, bending in the wind; though there wasn’t a wind to fucking bend against. We, Welsh bend against anything – mostly the imagined. ‘No, I think a cube would be best’ You

were insistent 'and it should be black.'  
'Black!' 'Yeah, we will erect a black  
plastic cube; a black hole in time, and  
space!' Fuck! Such clarity of vision  
controlled the Spice trade, played  
beautiful football, fucked tulips! 'And on  
the interior walls we'll project reality'  
you said 'that way, we'll keep the  
perverse and the natural in a constant  
state of flux. And within that fertile no-  
space space, we will create belief and  
then suspend it...' Thus thought the  
apotheosis of Mondriaan as Steve  
McQueen as God!

Zoals Ian het beschrijft, zo is ons gesprek ongeveer gegaan. Ik was werkelijk blij met het idee om een Grote Zwarte Kubus op te richten, een statement in het duinlandschap van Terschelling. Een gigantische vorm, met een religieuze uitstraling, die doet denken aan de zwarte monoliet, waarmee de film *2001: A Space Odysee* begint. Of aan de Kaäba, de zwarte tent-achtige kubus, waar omheen de pelgrims in Mekka hun omgang maken tijdens de Hadj.

Ik stelde me voor dat binnenin de Kubus een schrijversruimte zou zijn. Het Domein van

het Woord. Een soort bibliotheek, of een laboratorium, waar we teksten zouden verzamelen, die we geschreven hadden, of gevonden. Tekst die thematisch met het project te maken had. En die teksten zouden we tijdens de voorstellingen presenteren. We konden op de wanden van de box projecteren, en door de wanden te openen een gekaderd beeld van het landschap presenteren. Door de Kubus op verschillende plekken in de wereld neer te zetten zouden we die plaatsen met elkaar verbinden. Ik stelde me een verzameling foto's voor van uiteenlopende landschappen, verspreid over Europa, met



telkens weer die strakke, donkere vorm van de Kubus.

Tot nog toe is de Grote Zwarte Kubus niet daadwerkelijk uitgevoerd, deels vanuit praktische en financiële overwegingen, deels omdat het project een andere kant op ontwikkelde. Maar ik hoop dat het in een volgende fase toch nog gaat gebeuren.

## Lezingen Ierland en Wales

Ons gevoel voor theater en de manier waarop we thematiek vertalen in uitgangspunten bleek meer uiteen te lopen dan ik van tevoren hadden gedacht. Ik voelde ik me geïmponeerd door Ian's werk, de combinatie van gewapende taal en kwetsbare inhoud. Het lef om van het eigen leven een grote dramatische gebeurtenis te maken. Ian was gefocused op het persoonlijke. Terwijl ik de thematiek juist breder, algemener wilde benaderen. Tegelijkertijd zocht ik aansluiting bij zijn benadering, ons werk zouden we immers op een gegeven moment moeten samenvoegen. We gedroegen ons voorbeeldig

naar het cliché van de naar binnen gerichte Welshman en de Nederlander met het brede perspectief.

Toen Ian me in het voorjaar van 2013 uitnodigde voor een serie theatrale lezingen van zijn monoloog, had ik nog steeds geen antwoord geformuleerd op zijn tekst. We startten de reeks lezingen in Galway, Ierland, in het theater waar Ian's vriend Michael Diskin (die model stond voor Fergus in de monoloog) jarenlang artistiek leider was geweest. Acteur Russel Gomer reisde met ons mee en werd door Ian geregisseerd. Het

was een vreemde avond. Het persoonlijke verhaal over de man, die nog niet zo lang geleden in de zaal rondliep waar de lezing werd gegeven, leek het publiek een beetje rauw op het dak te vallen. De enscenering van Ian was strak, serieus, confronterend, hermetisch. Er was weinig ruimte voor relativering. Na de lezing gingen we uit eten met wat vrienden en de weduwe van Michael. Ik kon niet peilen wat ze van het verhaal hadden gevonden. Daarna vlogen we naar Wales, waar we nog drie presentaties van de monoloog gaven. Ian vroeg mij die lezingen te regisseren, en ik greep de kans

aan om Russel meer direct met het publiek te laten communiceren. Er kwam meer 'adem' in de lezing, de acteur hoefde het publiek niet te ontkennen, waardoor hij het beter in zijn verhaal kon meenemen. Het drama in de monoloog werd niet benadrukt, maar op een lichte manier aangeraakt. Ik had het idee dat het verhaal beter over het voetlicht kwam. Dat Ian zelf minder gelukkig was met mijn regie werd me eigenlijk pas duidelijk toen ik het essay las dat hij voor dit boekje schreef.

Met terugwerkende kracht snap ik nu beter waarom hij in een later stadium suggereerde dat ik de regie van de uiteindelijke versie van *Fragments* voor mijn rekening zou nemen.

Mijn benadering van zijn werk had hem erin bevestigd dat we totaal verschillende ideeën hebben over ensceneren. Het was hem bij de voorstellingen die hij van me zag in

Nederland ook al vaak opgevallen: 'Het lijkt net alsof jullie Nederlanders het drama uit de weg gaan.' Misschien is dat typisch

Nederlands, maar ik denk dat het eerder typisch is voor wat ik mooi vind. Ik houd er van als het drama niet wordt 'uitgeserveerd'.

Ik kijk graag naar personages die zoeken naar uitwegen en vol goede moed hun ondergang tegemoet treden. En ik houd er niet van als acteurs pretenderen ergens anders te zijn dan op de plek waar ze op dat moment spelen.

Inmiddels hadden we een uitnodiging ontvangen van Kees Lesuis, artistiek leider van Oerol, om een eerste versie van het *Fragments* als theatrale lezing te presenteren tijdens Oerol 2013. En ik had nog geen letter op papier.

## Grondbezit

I stood, corner of Fifty-sixth and Eighth, outside the Vitamin Shop waiting for you. Yes, I waited for you! I am more empirical in time and place. You float through life like... like fucking Denver, outwards from a virtual centre! What? Yeah, you float. Okay, that's how I imagine you. I said, I imagine; choose to imagine, maybe.

In zijn monoloog beschrijft Ian hoe we elkaar voor het eerst ontmoetten, in New York. Hij schrijft dat ik door het leven lijk te zweven,



terwijl hij voortdurend naar de aarde wordt gedrukt. Dat 'door het leven zweven' zou je kunnen zien als een vorm van ontworteld zijn, geen vaste grond onder de voeten hebben, niet verankerd zijn aan de plek waar je woont. Wat misschien niet zo gek is, als het land waar je woont nog niet zo lang geleden zee was, een landschap met een relatief korte geschiedenis.

Wales is bezaaid met ruïnes van kastelen en burchten. Je wordt er voortdurend herinnerd aan de generaties die er voor je hebben geleefd. Als ik met Ian door Wales reis weet hij overal verhalen te vertellen over

Noormannen, over Engelse bezetters, Franse overheersers, mythes en sagen. Onze Drentse hunebedden vallen in het niet bij de overblijfselen van nederzettingen uit de steentijd, die je in het eeuwenoude berglandschap van Wales tegenkomt. En het Groningse polderland, waar ik vandaan kom, refereert veel minder aan vroegere tijden. Het oude berglandschap tegenover het betrekkelijk nieuwe polderland. 'Vastgeklonken zitten aan het land waar je vandaan komt' tegenover 'door het leven zweven', omdat je niet echt diep geworteld bent in het landschap waar je leeft. Ik

herkende het beeld dat Ian schetste en ik besloot daarover te gaan schrijven.

Ik realiseerde me dat ik nooit eigen grond had gehad. Terwijl mijn moeder van de boerderij kwam, dus we van oorsprong als familie wel degelijk eigen grond hadden gehad. Was dat misschien de reden voor mijn 'zweven door het leven'? Als reactie op Ian's verhaal besloot te vertellen over het verloren raken van onze familiegrond. Over de boerderij waar mijn moeder is geboren, die in de jaren '80 verkocht werd. Over het Groningse land, waar ik vandaan kom. Over mijn verhuizing naar Rotterdam, waar de

kans om daadwerkelijk grondbezitter te worden voorbijging, omdat we niet op het aanbod van de gemeente ingingen om de erfpachtgrond onder ons huis te kopen.

Oerol 2013

We presenteerden de beide monologen tijdens Oerol 2013. Daar werkten we een aantal dagen aan het combineren van beide teksten. Componist Jaap van Keulen mixte

tijdens de lezing live een underscore. De lezing dwong ons om ons materiaal met elkaar te confronteren waardoor we konden inschatten hoe de beide monologen zich tot elkaar verhielden. Naar mijn idee lagen stijl en sfeer vrij ver uit elkaar. Mijn monoloog is net als die van Ian een persoonlijk verhaal, maar in vergelijking met zijn werk afstandelijker, eerder analytisch dan emotioneel. En het verhaal dat ik vertel gaat vooral over 'mij', veel minder over 'ons', zoals dat bij Ian het geval is. Het was vrij lastig de werking van het Engels en het Nederlands in te schatten, omdat Ian en ik

zelf lezen. Maar ik had het gevoel dat de combinatie van beide talen nogal geforceerd en 'kunstmatig' overkwam. Maar ondanks dat hadden we een stap gezet. We hadden ons werk laten zien en waren dichterbij een gezamenlijke voorstelling geraakt.

## Filosofie van het landschap

De volgende stap leek het combineren en uitwerken van de twee monologen, waarmee we voor de lezing tijdens Oerol een aanzet

hadden gedaan. Op uitnodiging van Siri Widgel, artistiek leider van Theatr Ardudwy, het theater in Harlech, werkten Ian en ik een week aan het versnijden van de twee monologen.

Dat monteren van onze teksten had iets onbevredigends. Ik moest mijn werk eerst vertalen, om het voor Ian toegankelijk te maken. Waarna hij van mijn ruwe vertaling fatsoenlijk Engels maakte. Dat kostte veel tijd en qua stijl raakte er veel verloren en het trok mijn werk naar het zijne toe. Ik vond het lastig een uitgangspunt te vinden over

hoe de twee verschillende verhalen met elkaar te verweven. Ook vond ik de monologen te veel gefocust op onszelf. Het resultaat dat we in die paar dagen behaalden bevestigde mijn idee dat in een montage van deze twee monologen niet de oplossing lag. Ik wilde nieuw werk schrijven, dieper ingaan op de thematiek en een verhaal over nu in plaats van over ons vertellen. Ik probeerde Ian te overtuigen van de richting waarin ik dacht dat het project zich zou moeten ontwikkelen. Maar Ian voelde er meer voor om verder te gaan met het werk dat we al geschreven hadden.



Ondertussen hadden we zowel in Nederland en in Wales subsidie ontvangen voor de volgende stappen in ons project. Harlech zou onze volgende tussenstop worden. Daar zouden we in de zomer van 2015 een volgende fase van ons project presenteren.

We besloten dat het productiever was als onze wegen een tijdje zouden scheidden. In Harlech zouden onze paden weer kruisen. Ian zou in de tussentijd zijn monoloog bewerken tot een audio-tour. Ik ging verder

in de richting die ik was ingeslagen en zou  
nieuw werk schrijven.

Harlech 2015

In de winter van 2014 schreef ik een week in  
Theatr Ardudwy in Harlech. Een  
inspirerende omgeving, die direct invloed had  
op mijn teksten:

Harlech is een plek waar de tijd aan voorbij is  
geraasd. Vooral in de winter, als er geen

badgasten zijn is het een desolate plek. Het theater dateert uit de jaren '70. Het is een sciencefiction-achtig gebouw, een soort van ruimteschip dat aan de rand van de duinen is geland. Het gebouw verkeert in slechte staat. Er is al jaren geen budget meer om het pand te onderhouden. De verwarming werkt niet en het internet is gebrekkig. (In 2016 is er verandering gekomen in die situatie. Het theater heeft een nieuwe filmprojector aan kunnen schaffen en als bioscoop loopt het nu goed. Met de inkomsten daarvan kan het theater nieuw leven worden ingeblazen)

Naast het theater staat het verlaten Saint David's Hotel. Een hotel van Amstelhotelachtige proporties. Het moet er in zijn glorie-dagen een chique bedoening zijn geweest. Maar nu is het dak deels ingestort en wapperen er gescheurde vitrages uit gebroken ramen. De brug naar Harlech was toen ik er werkte al anderhalf jaar onder constructie, en de treinrails waren in de winter ervoor weggespoeld door de zee. Het aanleggen van een moestuin was voor veel mensen een serieuze optie, nadat tijdens de overstromingen van de winter ervoor het gebied vrijwel onbereikbaar was geweest en de

winkels geen nieuwe aanleveringen kregen.  
Kortom, Harlech ligt in een achtergesteld gebied, niet rendabel genoeg om in te investeren.

De omgeving van Harlech lijkt in alles op het duingebied van Terschelling. Maar het verschil met Terschelling is treffend. Terwijl Harlech in verval is, wordt in Terschelling het landschap te gelde gemaakt. Het eiland is door de jaren heen het decor geworden voor toeristen en festivalbezoekers. Het wordt bewoond door miljonairs, want vastgoed is er

onbetaalbaar, dus als huizenbezitter ben je al snel een vermogend mens.

Ik raakte gefascineerd door wat economie met een landschap kan doen. Ik begon te schrijven over de val van de Berlijnse muur, het einde van de Koude Oorlog, de gebeurtenissen die het startpunt van de opmars van het kapitalistisch economische systeem inluidden, waarvan het floreren van Terschelling en het creperen van Harlech een direct gevolg leek.

Ik was ondertussen ook op het boek *Filosofie van het landschap* gestuit, van Ton Lemaire. Lemaire beschrijft daarin hoe vanaf de Renaissance de verhouding van de mens met het landschap dat hem omringd verandert. Hoe de schilders in de Renaissance, door middel van lijnperspectief, de mens voor het eerst in het landschap konden afbeelden. De mens kreeg op hun schilderijen een centrale plek. Hij beschrijft hoe de verhouding van de mens tot het landschap op schilderijen door de eeuwen heen verandert. Van de tijd van de romantici, waarin de mens wordt afgebeeld in de overweldigende pracht en kracht van de

natuur. Richting de impressionisten, die de mens weergaven, comfortabel omringd door zomerse natuur, of in het zonnige landschap van de stad. Naar de expressionisten, met hun verweesde individuen in een dreigend en vijandig landschap. Door de eeuwen heen zie je de mens op schilderijen steeds meer vervreemden van zijn omgeving, loskomen van het landschap waarin hij wordt afgebeeld. Lemaire schrijft ook over de betekenis van de horizon, de lijn waarachter de wereld verder gaat. Symbool voor alles wat er nog zou kunnen gebeuren, alles wat nog kan worden. De horizon als 'uitgestelde



identiteit', terrein dat er om vraagt ontdekt te worden.

Door wat ik in *Filosofie van het landschap* las kreeg de titel van ons project steeds meer betekenis. *Fragments* was onze ontdekkingsstocht, waar nooit een eind aan komt, omdat bij iedere stap die we zetten de horizon een stapje van ons af beweegt. Wat wij in het project toonden waren tussenfases, fragmenten van een langere tocht. We maakten even pas op de plaats om daarna weer verder te trekken.

Ik begon naar aanleiding van *Filosofie van het landschap* na te denken over hoe we de plek in het landschap van de hedendaagse mens zouden kunnen verbeelden. In onze tijd lijken we minder 'verloren in het landschap' dan ooit. De komst van mobiele netwerken heeft een revolutionaire draai gegeven aan hoe we ons door de wereld begeven. Dankzij GPS weten we altijd waar we zijn. En doordat we overal door digitale netwerken zijn verbonden met andere mensen en andere plekken, komen bij ieder van ons complete werelden bij elkaar. Tegelijk lijkt het dat we door al die

verbindingen steeds minder daadwerkelijk in het landschap zijn.

Opeens kon ik het beeld van de Zwarte Plastic Kubus betekenis geven, als symbolisering van de plek van de hedendaagse mens in het landschap. Geen lichaam in het landschap, maar een verdwijnpunt. Een punt waar de hele wereld bij elkaar komt, een zwart gat, waarin alles verdwijnt. Ik leek eindelijk vat te krijgen op wat ik graag met *Fragments* wilde vertellen!

Waar ben je, als je in de wereld bent, terwijl je overal waar je bent door mobiele netwerken verbonden bent met andere plekken? Dat werd voor mij de centrale vraag. Ik schreef een aantal monologen die aan de basis lagen van de schets die we in 2015 presenteerden in de duinen van Harlech, in combinatie met Ian's audio tour.

Ian bracht me in contact met Welsh acteur Gwyn Vaughan Jones. In de zomer van 2015 bezocht Gwyn een voorstelling van onze productie Mansholt. Ik had ondertussen de monologen bewerkt tot dialogen, omdat de

monoloog-vorm doet denken aan een lezing of een preek. Ik zocht naar een manier waarop er in *Fragments* 'hardop gedacht' kon worden, waardoor theorie kon ontstaan. Ik ging er nog steeds vanuit dat de voorstelling in Harlech in het Engels of Welsh zou worden gespeeld en dat we in Nederland een Nederlandse variant van de dialoog zouden spelen. Ondertussen had vertaler Terry Ezra een eerste vertaling van de tekst gemaakt. We maakten gebruik van het feit dat Gwyn in Nederland was om een lezing met hem te organiseren. Helmert Woudenberg las de andere rol.

Tijdens de lezing bleek dat juist de combinatie van het Engels en Nederlands in de dialoog totaal onverwacht heel goed werkte. Anders dan in de monologen was er sprake van communicatie in plaats van dat twee aparte 'denklijnen' door elkaar werden gesneden. Het feit dat beide acteurs in hun eigen taal communiceerde maakte de dialoog surrealistisch en licht. Naar aanleiding van de lezing besloot ik de hele dialoog tweetalig te maken.

In de zomer van 2015 werkten we drie weken in de duinen van Harlech. Maarten Wansink nam het Nederlandse deel voor zijn rekening. Focus lag op het geven van genoeg informatie aan het Welshe publiek, zodat ze de grove lijn konden volgen van de Nederlandse tekst. Dat uitgangspunt veroorzaakte een verhouding tussen de twee personages, waarin Gwyn de man van de theorie werd, terwijl Maarten probeerde Gwyn's gedachten te volgen. Gaandeweg de voorstelling plaatste Maarten steeds meer kanttekeningen, die Gwyn uit zijn evenwicht brachten.

De mannen filosoferen met elkaar over de Renaissance schilderkunst, over de reizen die ze hebben gemaakt. Over hoe het reizen is verandert door zaken als GPS en geldautomaten. Over hoe sinds de jaren '80 het kapitalisme de winkelstraten in heel Europa een identieke uitstraling heeft gegeven. Ze verhalen over grote gebeurtenissen waarvan ze getuige waren, zoals de val van de Berlijnse Muur. Gebeurtenissen die achteraf gezien een totaal andere betekenis hebben dan ze destijds leken te hebben.



Tegenover het gesprek tussen de twee mannen in de duinen plaatste Ian zijn audio-tour. Een wandeling door de duinen van Harlech, waarop je naar een bewerkte versie van zijn monoloog luisterde. Ook maakte hij een korte film, over het deel van de monoloog waarin we vast zitten in het moeras, voorafgaand aan de presentatie in de foyer van het theater getoond.

Fragments 2016

Je zou kunnen zeggen dat de Renaissance-schilders door het afbeelden van de mens in het landschap, met achter hem de horizon, de onbekende verte, terrein om te ontdekken, de mens inspireerde om daadwerkelijk op ontdekkingsreis te gaan. Met *Fragments* doe ik een poging een richting te schetsen waarin er voor ons iets te ontdekken valt.

Wij hoeven vandaag de dag niet eens meer ons huis uit om door straten in een ander werelddeel rond te lopen. En als we werkelijk de deur uitgaan, weten we dankzij GPS altijd en overal waar we zijn. Onze realiteit en de

virtuele wereld gaan steeds meer door elkaar lopen, vullen elkaar aan. Wat betekent dit nieuwe perspectief voor onze plek in het landschap? Hoe ziet onze horizon eruit? En wat valt daar achter voor ons te ontdekken?

Met die vragen in mijn achterhoofd heb ik de afgelopen maanden de tekst herschreven.

Met die dialoog en de audio-tour van Ian keren we terug naar het eiland, waar we vier jaar geleden aan het project begonnen en hebben we een cirkeltje rond gemaakt. We zijn terug bij af, een stukje wijzer misschien,

wat bescheidener wellicht dan we waren aan het begin van de samenwerking.

De afgelopen jaren hebben Ian en ik een inspirerende tocht afgelegd. De twee mannen die Ian in zijn monoloog tot leven wekte zijn sinds hun wandeling op Terschelling blijven doorlopen, ze hebben doorgesproken en doorgedacht. Wij zijn ze gevolgd en tijdens het project kwamen we ze steeds weer even tegen, in 2013 op Oerol, in 2015 in de duinen van Harlech. Dit jaar doen ze Terschelling aan en aan het eind van de zomer de stad Rotterdam. Daarna lopen ze verder, praten

ze verder, denken ze verder. En met iedere  
stap die ze zetten schuift de horizon weer een  
stapje bij  
ze vandaan.

Jeroen van den Berg, 2016

*Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon*

is een productie van Stichting Jan Vos en ging op 10 juni 2016 in première tijdens Oerol op Terschelling.

Spel: Maarten Wansink en Dyfan Roberts

Regie: Jeroen van den Berg

Vertaling: Terry Ezra

[www.toneelgroepjanvos.nl](http://www.toneelgroepjanvos.nl)



De voorstelling is een co-productie met  
Theatr Ardudwy, Harlech en kwam tot stand  
dankzij bijdragen van het Fonds  
Podiumkunsten, Arts Council Wales en the  
Welsh Government.



In 1993 rondde Jeroen van den Berg (1966) de regieopleiding aan de Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten af. In datzelfde jaar verkreeg hij een eervolle onderscheiding van de Top Naeff Prijs en ontving hij de aanmoedigings-prijs van het Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst. Na zijn studie richtte hij samen met regisseur Ivar van Urk en dramaturge Maaïke Bleeker het Oranjehotel op, waaraan hij tot de opheffing in 2001 verbonden was als regisseur en schrijver. Daarnaast werkte hij onder meer voor Theater van het Oosten, Het Zuidelijk Toneel en

Orkater. Jeroen van den Berg is sinds 1995  
regelmatig gastdocent op de Amsterdamse  
Theaterschool, De Utrechtse Hogeschool voor  
de Kunsten en de Toneelacademie Maastricht.

[www.jeroenvandenbergh.com](http://www.jeroenvandenbergh.com)

Toneelwerk

*Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon –*

2016

*Bestemming\** – 2015

*De Val\** – 2012

*Dracula – 2011*

*Don Q (at your service) – 2010*

*Innenschau – 2010*

*'s Heerskinderen – 2009*

*DesiLucy – 2007*

*Zoeken naar M. – 2006*

*SHOW – 2004*

*Blowing\* – 2003*

*Blessuretijd\* – 2003*

*Caravaggio – 2002*

*Polaroid – 2000*

*Sailors on a Bus – 1999*

*De Nieuwe Tijd – 1998*

*De vrouw van Schopenhauer – 1996*

*Barkhorst - een campingdrama in 11 scenes –*

1995

*The best of ‘I did it my way’ – 1994*

*Moord – 1994*

\*Deze teksten verschenen eerder in de reeks  
van

De Nieuwe Toneelbibliotheek (# 22, 27, 136  
en 302).

Ian Rowlands (born in 1964) trained as an actor at The Welsh College of Music and Drama. As a young practitioner he formed his own company, Theatr y Byd, for which his first plays were written. This he led until 2000, when he was appointed the Artistic Leader of Bara Caws – a national community touring Welsh language theatre company. In 2003 he moved on to become the Artistic Director of Cwmni Theatr Gwynedd, a building based production company and in 2005 the Artistic Director of Llwyfan Gogledd

Cymru, the northern theatre company. In 2008, he left theatre and began directing for television. Currently he juggles directing for the BBC soap opera, *Pobol y Cwm* with lecturing, and writing, both for radio and theatre. His plays are published by Drama Association of Wales, Parthian Books, Gwasg Carreg Gwalch and NoPassport Press (NY).

Plays include:

*Fragments of Journeys Towards the Horizon* –  
2016 *Water Wars* – 2015

*Biography of a Thing – 2010*

*Troyanne – 2008*

*Blink – 2006*

*Butterfly – 2002*

*Pacific / Môr Tawel – 2000*

*New South Wales – 1999*

*Blue Heron in the Womb – 1998*

*Marriage of Convenience – 1996*

*Love in Plastic – 1994*

*The Ogpu Men 1992*

*Glissando on an Empty Harp – 1991*

*The Sin Eaters – 1990*

*Solomon's Glory – 1989*

