



Poem: Dedicated to Andries G. van Aarde by Lina Spies

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Ontdaan

*Nee, dit was nie 'n heilige nag nie;
dit was 'n nag soos alle ander nagte.
Miskien was dit 'n sterligte nag
waarin dieselfde sterre
– soos die wette van die natuur bepaal –
geskyn het bo Galilea,
die oproerige provinsie
waaronter die Romeine altyd 'n wakende oog moes hou.*

*Nee, jy het nie – hoogswanger – die reis afgelê
saam met Josef, die fiktiewe vader van jou ongebore kind,
om jou te laat inskryf in die sensus
soos bepaal deur keiser Augustus nie;
vrouens het nie getel as inwoners van 'n land nie.*

*Nee, jy het nie gelyk soos die Italiaanse meesters
jou later geskilder het nie –
die nakomelinge van Pontius Pilatus
wat daardie kind wat jy in skande moes baar
toe hy èrens in sy dertigerjare was
veroordeel het tot die skanddood aan 'n kruis.*

*Nee, jy het nie 'n Fra Angelico-blou mantel gedra
en bo jou hoof het geen stralekrans geskyn
toe 'n sogenaamde engel jou die boodskap sou gebring het
dat die kind wat jy gedra het die Seun van God was nie.*

*Nee, jy moes donker gewees het van huid en haar
– eie aan die volk waartoe jy behoort het –
en aan die vrug van jou skoot
moes jy soos alle uitgeworpenes swaar gedra het;
of hy uit ongeoorloofde liefde verwek is
of uit geoorloofde misbruik van 'n vrou.*

*Vaderloos in Galilea, het God van hom besit geneem
sodat hy aan swakkes en geminagtes
die status van menswees kon gee;
sy hande op kinders kon lê
en vrouens na hom aan kon trek
onder wie hy jou nooit uitgesonder het
as die Moeder van God nie.*

*Ek was lank op reis na hom
maar eers toe die engelekorre stil geword het
en ek sy stem kon hoor;
eers toe die geur van wierook en mirre verdamp het
en ek die sweet en stof kon ruik
van sy tuistelose omswerwinge,
het ek my rug gedraai op die Kind van Bethlehem
en jou seun ontmoet, rabbi Jesjoea van Nasaret.*

Lina Spies, 17 Mei 2008
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Unsettled

*No, it was not a holy night;
it was a night like any other.
Maybe it was a starlit night
in which the same stars
– as the laws of nature decree –
shone over Galilee,
the unruly province
closely watched by the Romans.*

*No, you – heavily pregnant – did not travel the distance
with Joseph, the fictitious father of your unborn child,
to be registered in the census
as ordered by Emperor Augustus;
women did not count as citizens of the land.*

*No, you did not look like the portraits Italian masters
later painted of you –
the progeny of Pontius Pilate
who condemned the child you bore in shame
when he was in his thirties
to a shameful death on a cross.*

*No, you did not wear a Fra Angelico blue cloak,
no halo adorned your head
when a so-called angel brought you the message
that the child in your womb was the son of God.*

*No, you must have been dark of hue
– like the people to whom you belong –
and bearing the fruit of your womb
must have been hard like it is for outcasts;
whether he was conceived from illegitimate love
or from the legitimate abuse of a woman.*

*Fatherless in Galilee, God usurped him
so that he could give the weak and downtrodden
the status of humanity;
could lay his hands on children
and draw women to him
among whom he never favoured you
as the Mother of God.*

*My journey to him was long
but only when the angels' choirs were silent
and I could hear his voice;
only when the scent of incense and myrrh had faded away
and I could smell the sweat and dust
of his homeless wanderings,
could I turn my back on the Child of Bethlehem
and meet your son, rabbi Jeshua from Nazareth.*

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