

English Translations

Poetry by Gert J. van Spanjen
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1. Lenteland (Springtime)

Occasionally a person will enjoy
Some special event in life,
A feeling of contentment,
Of being free of strife,
To feel like dancing, jumping,
Doing silly things no less,
Not have a guilty feeling
About making a bit of a mess.

When spring arrives and nature
Goes through her renaissance,
There's nothing that can stop it,
Not even human hands.
Although it's barely starting,
And hardly can be seen,
There are the signs of summer
In the faintly shades of green.

Birds start strutting and singing
And looking for a mate,
Because they know by instinct
They cannot start too late.
For nature demands some order
In the path it has to use;
Delays can be rather costly
Because the species must produce.

In spring the adult world
Gives way to young and eager blood,
To keep this world turning
As it did and as it should.
Inevitably the fragile blossoms
Will turn into flowery blooms,
And life with all its promise
Praises love with joyful tunes.

2. De Vliegen (The Flies)

A fly tried to swim
In a glass full of wine.
When he became too tipsy
I saw him decline.
I just picked him up
Before he went down.
His legs were quite wobbly;
He walked like a drunk clown.

He hiccuped and staggered
And grinned with great cheer,
Sang oom-pah-pah folk songs
With an alcoholic sneer.
His friend did observe him
And thought, "This is fine...
I too would like to have
A belly full of wine!"

He quickly dove downward
Without looking up;
He did miss the wine glass
And hit a coffee cup.
I shook my head sadly
And asked, "Are you lucid?
How can you, as a fly,
Do something so stupid?"

3. Land van... (Country of...)

Raindrops dripping, dripping, dripping,
Raindrops tripping, tripping, tripping.
Raindrops sputter, sputter, sputter,
Flowing down into the gutter.

Raindrops ringing, ringing, ringing,
Raindrops clinging, clinging, clinging.
Raindrops quiver, quiver, quiver,
Going down into the river.

Locks are opened, pipes are flowing,
Dikes are built still higher yet.
Everywhere are flooded dwellings,
Water spouting like a jet.

Yes, this land is prone to water,
But the people stay and fight.
No one ever moved to elsewhere
Living stubborn with their plight.

They will dry their houses quickly
With the sunshine's helping hand,
Till the next rain is expected
And it will again be "water land."

4. Bij de Veerpont (At the Ferry)

She stood at the ferry,
This nicely tanned girl
With her red-rosy mouth, waiting for
him.
She walked with her doggy
Around in a circle,
Swinging her hips in the town of
Beusichem.

He came with the ferry
Across the Lek river
With his smile and long flying hair,
And without any question
Accepted the loving
She offered with a natural flair.

They always went quickly
Behind the Dutch dikes
To get themselves out of view.
Whatever they did there,
Kissed, talked or whatever,
It's not to be seen by me or you!

5. Altijd wat (Always Something)

O summer, lovely summer,
The farmers are going mad.
Their cattle are getting thirsty;
The earth so dry, it's cracked.
All greens are turning yellow,
And water is very scarce.
No wonder they are complaining;
Our job is just a farce.

Spring brought us lots of showers;
It caused us "growing" pains.
Too many heavenly blessings
Came down on earthly plains.
We needed sand to help us
Protect the flooding fields.
The harvest was almost lost;
Too meager were the yields.

Between the two main concepts:
Too little and too much,
Nature goes her own way
And leaves her natural touch.
It doesn't really matter
Whether it's this or that,
Because nature doesn't listen;
Henceforth, it's always what.

6. Stiltegebied (Quiet Space)

The shadows of the tree tops
Create a dream-like atmosphere,
And the colours of the sunrays
Are reflected everywhere.

Wide, spaced meadows, dotted
homesteads,
Red-black cattle in the field,
Waving crops to be collected,
That's the farmer's autumn yield

Close to the fisher on the shoreline
Stands a heron hoping for a catch,
While down the river a goose is busy
Putting her feathers in an orderly patch.

Butterflies, birds and insects
Disappear in a shimmering hue,
And slowly you come to realize
That nature is kept in balance too.

7. De Lijster Zong (The Singing Thrush)

In the branches of a Linden tree,
Softly waving in the wind,
Sings a thrush in early morning
While the sky turns a soft, blue tint.
Where the sunbeams freely wander
Across the country, green and fresh,
It's a sign that spring is coming
With the crocus, snowclock and narciss.

It's a sense of new beginnings
When you hear the songbird's voice
In the quiet of the morning,
Not disturbed by human noise,
And the world is full of wonder
For the new day to unfold,
And for a moment it is ours
To enjoy and to behold.

Spring is coming, you can feel it
Although we still wear our winter
clothes.
We will get some stormy weather
Like an April day will show,
But those storms will not erase
What the singing thrush has done,
Telling us that spring is coming
With his song at early dawn

8. Gezond (Health)

A lady with three kidneys -
It happens, no one knows why.
I know a lady who has two -
Plus a kidney pie...

9. Koninginnedag (Queen's Day)

Put on your party hat
And show a friendly smile.
We're gonna have a party
Which will last for quite a while.
We'll sing the national anthem
Because that's how it always starts,
And then we raise our glasses
To the Queen with all our heart.

We follow the local brass band
All through the streets of town.
This is a long tradition
And it never lets us down.
The drummers set the tempo,
The streets are a human mass,
But no one is complaining
And we won't run out of gas.

Everyone will find their circle
In this circus full of fun;
It's really quite a wonder,
This annual festive run.
Where young and old are willing
To raise their drinks and toast
"To the House of Orange always,
To the Queen, good health and Proost!!"

10. Grand Seigneur

A rooster had ten chicken
In his sunny, roomy pen,
And with his flock he went to bed
Before the clock struck ten.
He had such a lovely feathersuit
He thought himself a cutie,
And only filled his lazy life
By doing his rooster duty.

The nights were quiet in the pen,
That must be mentioned here,
And all the eggs that were conceived
Were treated with great care.
The chickens were not envious,
Yet kept their eyes on Grand Seigneur,
And as they picked around for food
They felt a tender stir.

No man in this whole wide world
Can live like this lover boy;
Such' worry-free and lazy life,
Who wouldn't like that ploy?
And when he's asked about his job,
"How did you get so lucky?"
His answer was, as usual,
A hearty ku-ku-lu-clucky.