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ISBN Number: 9789402148701

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AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

BY

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**BOOK I**

**1959 – 1977**

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As soon as I could write I began to write stories and poems, my first song I wrote when I was eight years old and on my tenth birthday my parents gave me a diary.

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## Chapter 1

### A little girl on the verge of womanhood

1959:

I got a new petticoat and I finished the blue bathing suit for my doll, I named her after my mother: Sietske. It came out darling. Now I'm working on a dress for her. My doll has got a couple of cloths now. It's easier with this knitting-book.

I won it with some wool in a competition. You had to knit a scarf. This is the poodle prize.

Tonight I'm going to the movie *Alone in the world* with mommy and my two sisters. She promised us last year already.

My first wish is a guitar or a ukulele, my second wish is that I become a little singer; my third wish is that I may have a long healthy and happy life. I hope my three wishes will be granted. On television you often see rock and roll, I love

that! I also value operetta music very much. I have a notebook with songs that I wrote myself. Perhaps they're not so good but I love them anyway. And I certainly like to write stories. I have notebooks in which I write stories.

These are my three wishes. And I have many more.

I want to be a movie-star.

1959

My best friend is Kita, her mother is English and her father is Polish and she has a little brother who has fifteen names. Her last name is too difficult so I call her Kita Football. I like her so much.

1961

All the children are teasing Frits and me, the other day some stupid guys put my scarf around me and him and they pulled us, screaming: Frits goes with Stella, Frits goes with Stella! I hate them, stupid idiots!



1961

Poor Frits, he was looking over his shoulder at me when we were walking to school and walked straight into the lantern post, now he has a big bump on his forehead. I feel sorry for him.

1961

The head master was very angry with Frits but it wasn't his fault, he was teaching those stupid boys a lesson. I like him very much. He is Indonesian and very handsome. Why are Jim's parents so mean? He and his little brother were tied to the washing line for punishment and Jim always gets beaten, he has a bold spot on his head and all the children are mean to him because they say he is dumb, I hate that!

1962

I wish something happened. Suppose I was kidnapped by a darling Romeo who only does this because although he doesn't have to kidnap me, he can't get to me. It should be Frans or Frits although Frits doesn't have to kidnap me; he can talk to me whenever he wants and Frans too. I'm in favor of Frits. Shit, school is so stupid, always sweating over exams; however, staying home isn't all that great either. Having to help my mother with everything, she said that as sweet as I used to be as horrid I am now. She said she expects kids hate me in school. Not so! I told her to leave me alone.

1962

There's no one here who understands me. Daddy wants me to cut off my witches' hair. He has no idea about what girls my age like. And mama doesn't either, she always says: 'You're too young for that.' And Lilly is often in a bad mood lately. She's always complaining, like now again. What a

drag! I wish I had pocket money. I guess I'm too young for that too.

Oh, I wish I was sixteen. Everything is so boring. I'm sitting in mama's room, watching myself in her mirror. How ugly I am! Lilly is the prettiest of the three of us I think though she's too skinny. Hell, I don't care that I'm ugly. Maybe I'm pretty, no, that's impossible. I guess I'm just plain. Dad says I shouldn't go on and on about boys.

April 1, 1962

For the first time in my life I have been very sad, that is to say, it is my first big sorrow. I'm over it a bit now but it has shocked me deeply. My closest and dearest friend, my great love Frits, died on March 19.

Monday morning at half past five he has passed away. Aunt Trijntje told us, she came in early through the backdoor and with her loud piercing voice, she said: 'Do you know who died? Fritsje Burggraeve!'

I was so shocked that I dropped the breakfast plates I was carrying from the kitchen to the dining table. I couldn't believe my ears. Frits dead, My Frits, dead? Mama was very shocked also. That dear Frits, handsome, sweet, darling Frits. He was my best friend and I always knew him so well, from first grade I knew him already. We were going steady then, well, that's what all the children said about us.

Oh, before, when he was still alive I was always so happy and in love with him. He always liked me too I think. We kissed once. And now he is dead. So suddenly that everyone who heard about it cannot believe it. Frits, Frits, Frits...I can't write anymore now.

April 23, 1962

We are always going to Fritsje's house these days, the whole gang, it's much fun, the other day we did a competition who could kiss longest, my sister Marjorie and Robbie won.

Fritsje's mother is a dancer from Java and she dances sometimes too.

It seems already long ago that he died, the burial was awful, and Estelle's father made photos, Fritsje's mother put them in an album. I don't like that at all but they are from Indonesia so different from us of course. It's hard to forget what he looked like when all the children came by the house to pay our respect, farewell...so strange, he didn't look like Frits anymore, his ears were too big and purple, he looked much older than fourteen. His father I saw for the first time, he is a tall white man, and they are divorced from table and bed. I don't quite understand what that means. Frits his brothers were so upset especially Harrie, the youngest one, now there are only three of them. Everyone in the neighborhood calls Harrie Troelifer, I don't know why. It's terrible because Frits could've been saved. On Saturday afternoon he was playing soccer here on the field, Bertje van Marwijk, Frank Everts, Bennie de Jong, Jopie, Freddie and well, all the boys...then Frits got pain in his abdomen and later that night his pain became worse and worse. His

mother and Jopie, the oldest son, went to Estelle's parents to use their phone to call the doctor. He refused to come because he said it was probably stomach flu and to give him an aspirin. But he didn't get any better, all through Sunday and then early Monday morning he passed away. How he must have suffered....I must stop now, it's too sad.

May 9, 1962

It's unbelievable but true! Estelle and I have found Frits his lookalike, he lives in Twello. We go there every day after school to observe him and we know that he plays judo, we saw him in a competition recently. We are so happy because now it is as if Frits has come back to us. His name is Frank van Wijk, we don't talk to him of course, and he doesn't even know that we are following him.

June 12, 1962

Estelle and I had a fight and now we don't speak anymore. I can't remember very well what our fight was about.

We already stopped going to Twello, that boy is not Frits, how could we think that he looked just like dear Frits, absurd, he is nothing like him, so stupid of us.

1963

Scheisse, I'm sure I'll never let myself be taken by someone's mother again. Just when Josje called me an attractive boy wanted to dance with me.

Jesus, it seems I'm always talking about boys!

1963

I'm in a rotten mood today. I grumble far too much, says mama. This afternoon I had to go to town to take the prescription for big Lilly (she's one of my mother's younger sisters who lives with us) to the pharmacist. Right off I was angry because I wanted to go skating.

I think it's obligatory to stay in training. I never forget how surprised and happy I was when daddy presented me with the beautiful new white skates, it wasn't even my birthday!

I can skate really fast already and I love it so much. I have to train every day after school, it's absolutely necessary!

I'm so angry, why do I always have to do these things? Why couldn't Marjorie do it? I told her she wasn't allowed to use my skates while I went for the drugs for big Lilly.

When I was in town after crossing that horrible bridge over the IJssel River, I noticed it wasn't so bad after all. I even liked it, a little trip to town. I observed the people with great interest and counted the fur coats I passed. I criticized all the conspicuous types and then I bought licorice for 5 cents for my trouble, I figured I deserved that.

But when I came home Marjorie had gone skating, with my skates! Why didn't mama stop her! I am so angry, grr!



I wrote a poem about my beautiful city, Deventer, the title is *My city on the river* and I really like it. I let Lilly read it and she likes it too.

1963

I'm in touch with Estelle again. For a while this winter she refused to greet me. My hair looks great, up with curls all over the place; this is a Bossa Nova hairdo. The Bossa Nova is a dance. There are many popular dances these days like for instance:

The Madison, The Twist, the Loop-the-loop, the Limbo, etcetera.

Walt Schenke left school. The boys that are left aren't up to much I think. Anna, whom I saw a lot lately, left school because she's pregnant. She's only sixteen. But Mandy is even younger, only fifteen and pregnant.

Just think - I see myself being pregnant. Just imagine! No, that's nothing for me.

1963

Recently there was a documentary on television about young people in America who still worship Hitler. Stark raving lunatics!

This morning my mother said she thinks it unnecessary that I'm already wearing a bra. 'I only started wearing one when I was seventeen,' she said. Something else again to die laughing.

Tonight mom and dad have a party of the factory my father works for. She made herself a marvelous emerald green dress. It's so beautiful, especially with mama's flaming red hair.

She made so many lovely things already for me and my sisters and everything perfect! I hope I can sew like that for myself and my children later on. I pity the children whose mother can't sew.

May 5, 1964

Today is Liberation Day. Yesterday it was the Remembrance Day for the dead. I forgot to watch it on television. Pity, I had hoped they would show the play The Diary of Anne Frank but instead it was The Last Train, disappointing.

Recently we went to an exhibition with class in the Munt Tower in Amsterdam. It was about the Resistance 1940-1945. I thought it very interesting.

I'm not speaking with Estelle. A few weeks ago two cousins of Frits were here. One of them, Erwin, often came my way and I sort of liked him. Later, when those boys had gone back to The Hague, Estelle was mad with me. Rainee had told her that I had something with Erwin. That was true. But how was I to know Estelle was going steady with him? Now all hell broke loose. I'm laughing my head off because she's making a fool of herself. She is so terribly jealous! Just when we had a good contact lately. Well, I suppose she'll be alright with me again some time. I don't give a damn!

I'm working on a story which I'm going to mail to a publisher.

I'm becoming quite nervous about it because the story is almost finished. Two chapters to go and then edit a few things. I dare not think they'll accept it which they probably won't anyway. Mandy is big as a house. Later I expect they'll pass off the baby as her mother's. For her it makes no difference whether she has ten or eleven children.

1964

Princess Irene is going to become engaged to a very unattractive man from Spain. There's been a lot of fussing about it and still but I don't want to get wrapped up in it because I don't give a damn.

I'd love to live in a cozy apartment, nicely decorated with pillows, stuffed animals, a record-player, many records and lots of tropical jungle plants. I will invite my mother over for tea in the afternoon and later, getting married, move into a small mansion and having babies, many lovely little mongrels.

Mama says the school years are the best. I believe her. I wish I never cross twenty. I'm only fourteen now, I'll be fifteen in May. Everyone thinks I'm older but I wish I could stay young forever.

As far as boys go, it's such a problem. Well, no, just inconvenient at times. Hans Kröner, Fidel, Harry, etcetera, etcetera.

I'm taking dance lessons. Antoinette and I are in all the classes, Julia too. It's allowed because there are not enough boys.

I adore dancing! But skating gets squeezed out a bit now and that's a deadly sin! So, I've decided to go skating on Sunday.

For your information: I'm wearing glasses now.

In dance-school they say I'm a French type and that I resemble Françoise Hardy. It's because of my long hair. Now they call me the Special Attraction in school because that's what is printed behind my name in the program of the school party.

I sang and it was great! Everyone loved it! First things first:  
Bob! Bob! Bob!

I always liked him. He's the drummer of the Dixie Pipers. I will never forget; it was such fun! Harry was also much nicer than at the rehearsals.

Nancy was a doll for me at first but in the meantime she stole Hans Kröner away from me. She threw herself at him. Hans and his friend Tom are in my dance class, Hans is so handsome. I've got to get him back but how?

Harry is in the hospital, he'll come home on Friday. Hans has a rock and roll band, The Ruffians. Marjorie also likes Bob. Bob is a student.

Hans forgot all about me. I have to tell you I sang a couple of times with the Dixie Pipers after the school party.

I never saw Bob again after that time. Tom went steady with Marjorie but she broke it off because she thought him very boring. Nothing happens these days. I think they all forgot about me. I'm walking barefoot.

1964

I don't think myself anything special with that thick red hair, all those freckles, blackheads, pimples, rods for legs, thin arms, elephant ears and my big hands. But I'm not ugly.

In my stories the funniest things happen but when I have to do something myself I'm dumbstruck, why can't I be like Kita van Dalen in my book? I want to be me again.

I'm so stupid! To please my mother I add that I am a fresh know-it-all. She's right. I'm a pain in the neck and I don't want to be such a louse! What happened to that sweet, honest, shy little chubby girl from Kindergarten and First Grade? I'm not me anymore, I'm all different now. Nobody likes me anymore. If you only knew how fresh I am towards mom and dad sometimes. I'm a rotten teenager!

May 29, 1964

I turned fifteen yesterday. In general I'm alright but I have few summer cloths, I grew out of everything. It's annoying but can't be helped. I've joined a folkdance group: Chaverim We Chaverot.

Friday, one of the last days in January 1965

It's been ages since I wrote but I've got so little time now that I have to do my very best to succeed. The thought of the final exam makes me shudder. Tonight I broke away, I did bookkeeping quickly, it was a balance columns so I didn't do the counting because if I do and then tomorrow I've got something wrong I have to make a mess of it, it's such a mess already! Well, then I quickly did two German exercises, the third one I'll do during the break. Now that it's so cold, Margot and I stay inside secretly, we first go to the WC until everyone's outside and the teachers behind their coffee and then we quickly sneak back into the classroom.



I've got to wash my hair; thank God it's a lot shorter; I had it cut in December.

March 18, 1965

How stupid I am! That's why I waited so long to write.

Mom and dad are fierce opponents of Italians, French, Spaniards and Negroes. I can understand. They are right; they are a different kind of people, habits, and etcetera. Much more high spirited than us. Mama says: 'You don't know those people. They are not educated; they come here out of need because they can't earn a thing down there.'

She said this when Marjorie put out a feeler by saying that there's always such a nice Spaniard in Extase whom she really likes. Mama was furious by which I can safely assume that I need not dare ever to start about Erminio. I'm not at all saying that I was planning to marry him; I'm also not saying that I wouldn't want to. Okay, I agree that there are many disadvantages but there is one big advantage.

Obviously I am far too young to judge this matter and if my parents are opposed to it nothing rests me but to break it off with him although that won't be easy for me. However, it can't go on like this. One day it will end. I'm too unsteady of character to restrain myself and won't go dancing anymore. Last Sunday we were early in De Buitensoos because it was incredibly crowded. Erminio didn't come until eight-thirty and I thought he wasn't coming and the night was already ruined for me. I came to life when I saw him. All the girls know it and also that my parents mustn't find out about it. I am so sick of it! It seems as if you live in a completely different world and I can't talk to them at all. I would like to yell! If only I could tell mama, nice and easy, that I'm going steady with an Italian and could talk about him to her.

Friday, June 4, 1965

I'm singing! I am singing, yes, it's true! With a famous band here in Deventer. This good fortune just fell into my lap. Marjorie's friend Mary used to sing with them and when

she heard me sing one time when Marjorie and I were at her house, the leader of the band, a guy named Hans, came by.

We talked and an audition date was set on Tuesday, May 25, and I went there. It was the house of the manager, Mister Flipse. They are nice boys: Max, Tony, Hans and Teddy, the son of the manager and his wife. He was very nice, his wife too. I sang *Tous Les Garçons* and *Pouppée De Cire* and he liked it immediately. He let me listen to two new songs on the tape-recorder: *Santo Domingo* and *Der Abendwind*, fine numbers that in the meantime I sang on stage already.

Saturday there was a party of the Playground Committee. We practiced four times of which the last rehearsal on Saturday morning was a total disaster.

It was alright at night but Mister Flipse said: 'Singing on stage for the first time in the open air is the most ungratifying there is because the sound dissipates.'

That's exactly what happened but even so it was great fun. The whole neighborhood was surprised to see me singing there. There were a lot of people but it was frightfully cold. There

was no tent and if you didn't jump up and down to stay warm, you froze to death. I danced crazy with Freek van de Wal.

I've got a terrible cold now. My mother called Mister Flipse to say I couldn't come to practice because of my sore throat.

Yesterday Mister Flipse came to see me. I half expected it already for it's like him to do something like that. He stayed and chatted a long time. Joke Damman\* who used to sing with them and is in ballet class with Marjorie (the school of Ymkje Bloema-de Jager) acted very arrogant when she went to see mister Flipse on Tuesday to give him a piece of her mind about what a dirty trick it is that they now have me as their singer.

She told Marjorie that mister Flipse has asked her to sing with them again but that she refused because she'll start as a professional ballet-teacher in September. Ha!

- Joke Damman became known all of over Holland in the nineties as Yomanda, the amazing faith healer. Later on she was on trial; she was held responsible for the

death of a Dutch television star, Sylvia Millecam, who refused to let herself be treated for cancer because Yomanda had convinced her she didn't have cancer and that she would recover. Sylvia Millecam had breast-cancer and died; Joke Damman lives somewhere in Canada these days I heard.

How ridiculous and what a blatant lie! She got her way though because Saturday the band will give her an official goodbye. Mister Flipse told me and mom that it became impossible to keep Joke. She sang dreadful, just awful, completely out of key and Mister Flipse had to swallow a lot of criticism from people because she was so terrible. He assures me all the time that he has a lot of confidence in me and that I certainly will become a valued member of the band because I have plenty of self-criticism.

I will take singing lessons because there is room for improvement in my voice. It still sounds too ordinary; it must become something beautiful, something special.

The band has their own club where there is dancing every Sunday afternoon and every Saturday night they perform by invitations in Deventer and surroundings. They even have a Fan Club. I'm going to become very busy: rehearsals, new repertoire and so on. I love it all! I want to do my utmost to be very good so that everyone is content about me. I'm still very unsure but that will change when I perform more I hope. What a pity I can't sing yet this Saturday, my throat hurts so much and I have a hacking cough.

I want to do great French songs like Dans La Neige of Guy Béart but also German and English and naturally not just slow songs.

We didn't talk about money but Marjorie says they put it into a pot and they save for better equipment. When Joke needed a dress or shoes she got them. I like that even more than money. Now and then we go out to dinner together also on Sundays.

July 14, 1965

You don't know how hard it is to get a job. Every time when I apply for a job I come back in a foul mood. I'm going to go to the Deventer News or the Deventer Post. Anyone who sees the marks on my diploma can see that I'm great in languages. It has got to be possible to do something with that. When I'm making money I'm going to save for a typewriter and then I'm going to write all night long. How wonderful that will be! Our manager is still on holiday, I guess they'll come back this weekend. I'll be glad when he is back, I miss him a little. As it so happens, I'm a bit in love with him. It sounds insane I know and it's not the same feeling as if you're in love with a handsome boy. Mister F acts as if I'm his daughter and he knows I like that. In a little while I have rehearsal with the band. Although Mister F ...oh, shit...Max, our lead-guitarist, keeps a tight schedule, we learned three new songs, perhaps four tonight; I must hurry.

Tuesday, July 20, 1965

I have to solve all my problems myself, no one to guide and help me. I don't know if that's right. Perhaps you grow strong and independent when you have to raise yourself. I made so many mistakes already. Thank God, no fatal ones! I'm thinking of Erminio. I'm proud of myself because I was really crazy about him but I withstood all the temptations. I will never forget him. He was so sweet and awfully handsome. Maybe it's because I don't have brothers that I fall in love too easily.

I...it's stupid I know but I am in love with Mister F but... I must be honest, I kissed him. It happened on the night he drove me home from the performance in Schalkhaar. I'm so ashamed of myself! I can't even put it into words! I don't know how it happened or why, it just did, suddenly....oh, it's awful! I am so ashamed! I can't understand myself, how could this have happened?

After that night he went on holiday so I didn't see him for three weeks.



Yesterday when I went to his business for rehearsal my knees were shaking, I was nervous as hell and thought I would burst into tears when I saw him again.

He opened the door himself and I amazed myself by saying, immediately: 'Hello, Sir, did you have a nice holiday? I passed the final exam.' He has said to me several times already to call him Theo but I can't do that.

He congratulated me and wanted to know my marks. Everything was normal as if the kiss never happened. I'm so relieved and glad because we go on vacation on Saturday so I won't see his wife for a while and don't have to make myself a nervous wreck about that. Mr. F must have pulled a joke on me that night of course. He thought I was in love with him but that's not true! It's ridiculous!

I just like him, that's all but I don't want to be in romantic involvements with him, that's logical I would say! He acts like a father to me, that's alright; he doesn't have a daughter so I can be his adopted daughter. Ha, that's funny! I must talk to him first chance I get. That night I was totally upset,

couldn't sleep, shaking in my bed. I wanted to leave the band. I told Mr. F so but he stressed that I must stay. Anyway, how was I going to explain my sudden departure to everyone? Furthermore I can't give up the band anymore. To be on stage and to sing is marvelous! I'm never as good at rehearsals as I am on stage. I just love to sing!

Mr. F thinks I'm special, he said so many times already. I'm glad I wrote about my false step and I will remember it forever. No matter how grave your mistakes are if you reveal everything honestly to yourself and everyone people will take a milder view of you. Even if they don't, you will be able to forgive yourself and the chance that you'll make the same mistake again will be smaller or gone altogether.

Tuesday, August 10, 1965

We're just back from our fortnight vacation. I've got a nice color on my back and my face and tummy too. I got a real nice bikini and daddy took 36 photos, imagine!

I've had the best holiday in three years. I never thought I could fall in love with Johnny, I always thought he was a sweet, nice, helpful boy. He's only fifteen. And he loves me. He said so.

He said: 'When you smile I could just eat you up.'

He's so sweet and protective and strong and smart. I don't feel that I'm a year older than him at all. I wouldn't mind marrying him, much later of course, when I'm older.

Somewhere in 1965

I didn't put a date on purpose. This is my last entry, I will never write in my diary anymore.

I'm different now. That's all I can say.

I would like to study psychology in University. I'm interested in what moves people, why do they act the way they do, what are their motives? Man, his thoughts, his feelings, that's what interests me!

I have a good life despite my many contradictions; I sing with a band. The boys in the band like me. I've got friends and always someone to talk to. I've got a good father and a sweet mother and my sisters. I have everything I could possibly want. I am happy! Later when I'm married and my children big, I want to write. Now I can't write anymore. It's all over.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Young, carefree and ambitious**

The manager of the band was short, about five feet two or thereabouts; he was chubby and his looks were that of the tired decrepit salesman. He owned a wholesale business in bicycles, motorbikes and their parts in the center of town. The forty-eight years old man had a flabby moon-face with slicked-down black graying hair and could by no stretch of the imagination be called a handsome devil, however, he had a certain charisma and my younger self was very much taken in by him.

Obviously it thrilled me that here was someone, a grown-up, who seemed to understand me, who recognized my singing talent, who believed in me.

After that first kiss more kissing followed, always on the sly so as not to alert the boys of the band and although I felt bad about it I also felt very grown-up and it excited me.

The Italian fellow, Erminio, who after four months had not gotten any further than first base with me, tried his luck one afternoon in the park. As if stung by a bee when I felt his hand sliding up between my thighs, I bit his other hand. His painful howl echoed through the whole park, however, before he had a chance to do something, I had already jumped up and got on my bike. That was the end of that harmless affair.

The manager of the band took advantage of my innocence and my adoration for him. One day he lured me into a nightly drive; parking his car in some secluded area, he

persuaded me to sit on the backseat with him to neck and kiss.

'Come sit on my lap, darling,' he said while pulling my pants down. Why did I not bite in his hand that time?

Before I knew what was happening he had stuck his hard dick into me and, panting like a pig, reached orgasm within seconds. I screamed when a flaming pain shot through me while he kept saying: 'Did you come? Are you coming?'

I had no idea what he was talking about. What did he mean? Coming? Where? I was completely in shock, full of guilt feelings and confusion.

I had to carry on as if nothing had happened but my attraction for him had vanished instantly after he had violated me like that and a week later when his son wanted to sing a Rolling Stones song I had set my sights on, all hell broke loose.

'Egotistical bastard!' I shouted, 'I want to sing *I Can't Get Satisfaction!* Why do you always give Teddy the best songs!

I'm sick and tired of it, you are such an asshole!'

I glared at him, mad with rage while the boys looked on stupefied. Without further ado I turned and stampeded out of the rehearsal room.

Still furious and terribly upset I ranted and raved inwardly while bicycling home and as soon as I burst into the house I gave my mother an accurate account of what had transpired at the rehearsal.

Instinctively my mother knew something had to be terribly wrong for me to be cursing the manager like that; she smelled a rat. Her grey-blue eyes widened, a strange look came over her face and almost simultaneously a veil of sadness shrouded her.

She quickly pulled herself together though; she sat me down and extracted the truth of what had happened out of me.



Our general physician examined me and quietly asked if I couldn't have kept my legs closed. I didn't answer, in fact from the time my mother alerted the authorities I withdrew into myself, only spoke when absolutely necessary and, as if I was in mourning, wore black garments for months.

The police were alerted and the officer told my parents that if I hadn't just turned sixteen they would have arrested the man immediately because they wouldn't have needed my parents to press charges.

The manager's wife and his brother-in-law came with sad and solemn faces to talk with my parents. Luckily for me the idea of a court-case was abandoned eventually. I shudder to think how awful it would've been for me had I been called to testify in court. My parents received the money due to me for my singing and put it into a savings-account. I felt stupid and guilty for a very long time, sad too, not only because of the shame of it all but also because my life in the spotlight had come to an abrupt standstill.

My glorious days of the pretty singer of the band - posters all over town, a Fan club, every weekend singing on stage, the club Sunday afternoons, articles with photos in the newspaper, being always the center of attention – it was all over now.

Resilience is one of the positive traits of the young and, in my case, falling in love easily, helped to ease the pain.

~

May 19, 1966

So much happened, I'd like to write a lot of things down but that's not possible. I have neuritis in my right arm. How did I get it? I don't know except that it's bothering me a long time already. It began two years ago. I'm such a fool for never wanting to go see a doctor. Now you see what happens!

Every day I have to go for an injection in my arm, now every other day. I can't type anymore; even playing the guitar is

difficult. It hurts. I do it anyway but only one song at the time, I mean I play a song then I wait for a long while before I can play another song. I have to stop now, my arm hurts a lot.

May 30, 1966

First off I have to tell you that I sang for almost a year with The Skybolts. In the middle of January or thereabouts it was all over. It's something I absolutely cannot talk about, maybe later.

Evidently I haven't stood on stage for about five months!

I miss it terribly!

Tuesday, June 14, 1966

I was on television! Yes, I was! I entered a competition to sing like a famous star. I would've liked to do a song of Marianne Faithful (I can sing just like her) but in the end I did the song of Sandy Shaw with which she won the

Eurovision Song festival. My parents and sisters encouraged me to enter; the pre-selection was in the Minerva Pavilion in Amsterdam. There were twenty contestants. I think I sang okay but my mom and sisters said I was the best. I won together with two other girls and two weeks later was the taping of the show.

It was nerve racking but it went very well. Mama bought me a new dress and I looked great if I say so myself. Everybody complimented me on my singing. What a wonderful experience.

August 17, 1966

I sang in Loosdrecht, the Cabaret Festival. I sang well, mama and Lilly confirmed it but unfortunately I didn't win.

I cried but later I thought that was quite silly of me, there will be other opportunities. That's what mama and Lilly said to me also.

September 4, 1966

The music season has started again. There was a big advertisement in the newspaper of the Skybolts. I thought about being back in the club, singing. It was all so wonderful then. Posters everywhere and everybody knew me and liked me. We had so much success! I was famous, not only in Deventer but all over the province. Everybody recognized me. And I always had so much fun with the boys, Tony, the drummer especially. When I think of all the misery that followed I shudder but I am not going to think about that anymore.

December 11, 1966

Mama says: 'It can't always be gloomy, fun times are coming again, you just wait and see.'

That cheers me up. Mama doesn't half know how sweet I think she is.

March 10, 1967

God, it's such a mess in the world. Just take that war in Vietnam for instance. When I see all the misery on television and read the paper I feel like crying. I feel so meaningless, small, and impotent. I wish the devil would abandon people.

Hey, I've got a motor-bike! I saved and saved and saved and now I'm só happy!

May 18, 1967

We moved. We live in Alkmaar now. Marjorie and I haven't found a job yet but we're trying.

Lilly stayed in Deventer to finish her last year of high school.

She lives with big Lilly and her husband Jacob. I miss my little sister so much. Big Lilly is about to give birth to her first baby.

I just practiced my guitar, now my fingertips hurt.

It's lovely here: the dunes, beaches and...the North Sea of course!

August 1, 1967

I'm still going steady with Johnny or should I say I am again going steady with him. I love him but sometimes I can't stand him when he acts like such a child. It's the fault of his stupid family. I love him but I also don't know what it is with me, I guess I'm just very fickle.

This Saturday I'll have my first singing lesson with Bep Ogterob in Amsterdam. I'm so curious about it. Will I become a real great singer?

I want to marry Johnny and have babies. My sister Marjorie broke off with Koos. I hate that stupid guy! I worried so much about it last night; I thought I could write him a letter and maybe he will come back to her. But then I thought it's not such a good idea.

December 3, 1967

Johnny and I are engaged, on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

My arm hurts so much. I will be operated on in January in the University Hospital in Leiden. Can't write more, arm hurts too much.

May 9, 1968

Today Johnny and I are going steady for one year. Unfortunately he's not allowed to come here anymore. We've had a lot of fights and problems. It's me I think but him too. At times I just can't stand him!

In March I was operated on my arm by Professor Luyendijk. It was alright. The pain slowly went away.

Last Monday, Frans Peters who has a sound-studio here in Alkmaar did a recording of me. I accompanied myself on guitar and he loved it. He said he will let someone of Philips Record Company listen to it.

Thursday, June 6, 1968



Today at one-fortyfour p.m. Robert Kennedy died. On Wednesday an Arab fired three shots at him. One bullet went into his brain. He was operated on immediately but alas, to no avail. He is dead.

Just like Dr. Martin Luther King, who was killed about two months ago and like his brother, President John F. Kennedy four and a half years ago. It's so shocking!

Society appears to be rotten to the core and not only in America. All around us it's nothing but misery! The war in Vietnam continues.

I felt like crying when I heard that Robert Kennedy got assassinated too. It is so awful!

What possesses people? He is dead; another senseless act of violence.

I'm cold; I'm sitting in a skimpy baby-doll on my bed.

Johnny is allowed into our home again. They don't like him very much around here I think; he's boisterous, he spends too

much money...anyway, who cares? I love him. My sisters hate him.

I hate him too sometimes.

Frans Peters says he really likes my songs but I don't trust him, he's windbag I think.

I have a teddy bear that I still take to bed with me; I'm a certified nut, eh?

July 29, 1969

Oh, I forgot to tell you, on July 20 1969, man set foot on the moon. Idiomatic, isn't it? Or should I say wondrous?

It was exciting and at the same time so touching to see Andrews and Armstrong walking around on the moon. I find it amazing. Thursday, tomorrow, they'll come back to earth. It's wonderful to experience something like this.

October 28, 1969

First, I've got to tell you that we've been there! Where?

Ibiza of course! Johnny and I went there on vacation, that amazing beautiful island in the Mediterranean Sea.

As soon as I got out of the plane the little island conquered me.

You could call it love at first sight.

I want to write a story about Ibiza, yes!

Nowadays you see many hippies! They dress queer and extreme and come from all over the world to Amsterdam.

Their vision of modern life and our society is new and they express themselves openly. Fascinating I think.

I'm not so happy because at night I'm too tired to do the things

I love doing most and in the daytime I'm doing office work that doesn't interest me in the least. It bores me to death in fact. I feel as if I'm not living the life I should be living. I'm becoming a person without substance.

October 8, 1970

I sang on the radio four times already, it's going well. I perform in Amsterdam in the Zodiac, the Cloppertje and I'm part of shows for old folks in homes.

I went to the Music Fair and met a lyricist with whom I made an appointment to visit him in Loosdrecht. I'm in contact with Ruud Jacobs (brother of the jazz pianist Pim Jacobs); I've been to his house several times already. He works for CBS Records. I'm also in touch with Nico Knapper who promised to come listen to me in the Zodiac.

Fashion is great these days: mini, maxi, midi, wigs, make-up. It's all fabulous! I long for Johnny. It won't be long now before we'll have our own place. That will be so nice.

June 1, 1971

Lilly and I went to Paris in May. It was great! Paris is a city to fall in love with at first sight.

We walked so much and saw everything and we had so much fun! I turned twenty-two on Friday.

December 10, 1971

Johnny has got his flying license. He always wanted to become a pilot but his eyesight isn't perfect.

Last year I went with him to Zestienhoven, he had a flying lesson and I was allowed aboard.

It was a Cessna and it was wonderful! We flew over Zeeland and I loved it.

Johnny has many hobbies like photography for instance. He built his own underwater camera and because I'm his favorite model I have to go with him to the swimming pool and swim under water all the time so he can take pictures. I have a lot of great photos of myself now. Last year he was into model planes; that was so much fun! Daddy really liked it too. And then the race-track of course and the trains, toys. Daddy has a whole train contraption set up in the attic. It's too bad for daddy that he doesn't have a son. He and Johnny get on so well; they are compatible, they love to tinker with

electronics and that sort of thing. And they both have a great sense of humor.

Daddy has always liked Johnny, much more than my mother who thinks Johnny is not the right man for me, she once told me that she thinks he is overpowering me too much. I think she has a point there because I always seem to go along with what he wants.

December 12, 1971

I'm going to move out of my parent's home. Perhaps when I have my own place I'll start writing again.

Johnny is in the army and doesn't come home much anymore.

He's stationed on the island Terschelling, the Air Force; he loves it.

I went there a couple of weekends ago; there was a big party.

We drank like swine.

I've got my driving-license. Lil is going to move also.

December 17, 1971

I met someone special. I was with Johnny the weekend and we didn't go out Saturday night which was okay but Sunday he was in his dark room all day and paid no attention to me whatsoever. I felt lonely. I asked him to go for a walk with me but he didn't hear me because he was totally preoccupied with his first color prints.

I got angry with him and left, slamming the door. I thought I'm going to sit on the terrace of the Victoria Hotel and if I see a nice looking guy I'm going to flirt.

I didn't but instead walked through the Kalverstraat looking at the shop windows. When I came to the Rembrandtplein a young man approached me. I saw that he was a hippie right away but he seemed sympathetic. He was Mexican and gave me a piece of hashish. He said I should heat it and crumble it into tobacco and roll a cigarette, a joint they call it. He said I really should try it because it was very nice. I accepted it, smiled at him and said goodbye.

I haven't smoked it yet but I put it in a little box. Maybe I will smoke it one day.

~

Not one diary entry in 1972 which is a pity because in that year I met a man who would become a major influence in my life.

Actually, before I met him Lilly and I met another man with whom I fell in love instantly. Piet Hein was his name and he never went anywhere without his Martin guitar that he played very well. He invited us to a farm in Brabant near the Belgium border one weekend and what a great time Lil and I had there. Aside from Piet Hein there were six other young men, musicians, artists and loafers, most of them with long hair and mustaches which was in vogue those days. We took a walk in the surrounding countryside, chased cows and later cooked a meal together. Afterwards someone chopped wood for the fireplace, guitars and flutes and recorders came out and one of them rolled a giant joint that went around. I sang



too but felt rather inadequate because my guitar playing wasn't as good as the other guitarists especially Piet Hein.

'Don't worry about it,' my sister told me later when we were in stitches because we were afraid to put our heads down on the dirty pillows on the bed, 'you sing better than anyone of those boys.' Piet Hein and I were an item for about two months, however, after the weekend in Brabant I never heard from him again except years later when he wrote me a very sweet letter in calligraphy which I always kept.

My sister Lilly and I moved out of my parents' home to Amsterdam at the same time, in the beginning of 1972. Lilly had rooms with an elderly couple and I with newly-weds.

After a few months we discovered it was possible for us to get an apartment in a newly developed suburb, the Bijlmermeer, for less money than we each paid to our landlords added up. It made a lot of sense to move especially since Lil was getting pretty fed up with the nosiness of the old people who didn't shrink back from showing her room to

visitors while my sister was lying in bed. I also had my stomach full of the lovebirds; every morning I had to sprint out of bed to beat the guy to the bathroom or else I'd be late for work again.

My sister Marjorie and her very nice, funny and attractive boyfriend Ben got married on December 27, 1971 and consequently my parents had to say goodbye to their three daughters within three months time. It was especially hard for my mother.

Lil and I now worked for a temporary agency in Amsterdam and were placed with the same company in Sloterdijk. I had first worked for the taxman in Alkmaar, then with a cranky, crazy dentist, then at the shipping office of Holland's largest steel mill in IJmuiden before I switched to taking various jobs via the temporary jobs agency.

Living together with Lilly in our cozy brand new apartment in the Bijlmer was great and remains in my memory as one of the happiest periods of my life.