

Puzzled

letters on being and times
in
the Netherlands and Sweden

2012 – 2021

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by

Han Hak

&

Ulf Westin

We can only understand life backwards, but have to live our lives forward.

- attributed to Kierkegaard

I want to know how it was, not supposed to have been.

- Georgy Konrad

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thanks to Huug v. Ooijen for text editing, Ernst Boswinkel for technical work,
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photos from here there and everywhere
but mostly Han Hak, Ulf Westin & their friends

look-alikes in names, pictures or circumstances & situations are strictly coincidental
although Voltaire said that there exists no such thing

The old man and the young man

Grand and compelling I want to live!
do you hear that, father, mother, world, charnel house!
(...)

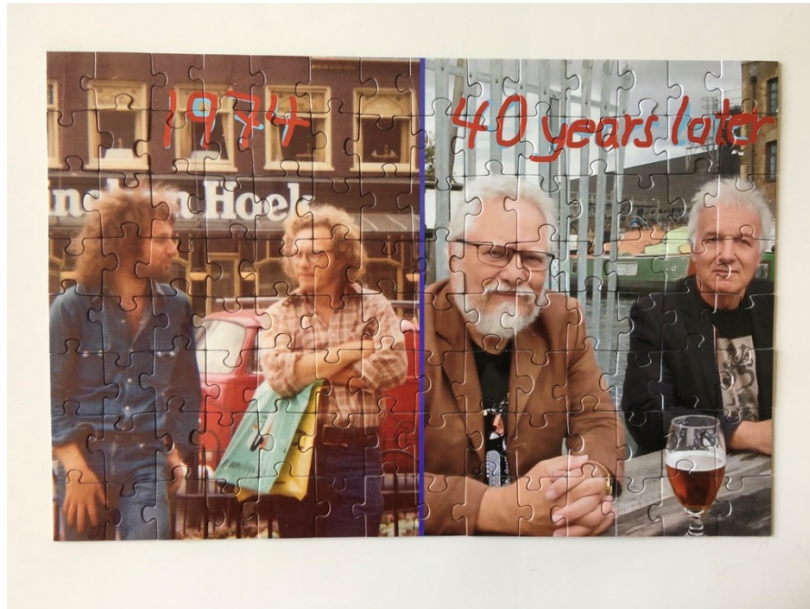
Look at myself.
I have in my youth
my life addicted to a thousand things
of fierce and fiery names, riots, loves...
(...)

The boy looks through the open windows
by which the world beats; without hesitation
he steps out the door, clear and fearless. –

part of a poem by Hendrik Marsman (1899-1940)
'De grijsaard en de jongeling' / 'The old man and the young man', from: Porto Nigra (1934)

Introduction

Who are these guys? What do they have in common? What has happened to them or became of them during more than 40 years? How did they become the way they are today? And: have they got something in common with you? Aren't they characteristic signboards of their times? Aren't they a bit like you and me? All puzzles, it seems.



Ulf and Han: 1974: Amsterdam – 2014: London

The correspondence of two men for some ten years, youngsters who met each other in the sixties, remained friends up to the age of founding families and now at an old age, create an image of them and their growing up to getting-older-times.

Han and Ulf, products of their time 'The Sixties', met in 1969 in London in a bluesclub; The 100 Club in Oxford Street. And became friends for life. They are visiting London every 5 years together ever since. In between they meet here, there or anywhere; Amsterdam, Gavle, Valbo, Stockholm, Lonstrup, Goteborg, Nås and Berlin.

All their letters, from handwritten mail to email later, span in total more than six decades. Lots of these are saved, 'though not all. Here are the letters for one decade from 2012 to somewhere 2021. It starts with their meeting in 1969, recorded by memory and diary, and then jumps to a continuation of email-stream as presented here, which starts in 2012. It was a time of books, music, politic instabilities, loves, families, losses, more or less serious health problems, publishing their own works, and the corona pandemic. It was a turbulent decade in time. As well private as in social happenings.

Two different and yet alike men; in their times, situations, personal and public. External situations of place and time as well as inner emotions and experiences shape these men and their actions as sedimented in their letters; like sun, wind, rain and time shape rocks in a landscape.

Friendship in this history touches topics, like love and death - most present in the 'Han-letters', family and ties, health or vulnerability - mostly in the 'Ulf-letters'. Political situations, read books & listened-to music, sports actualities from the moment (ice-hockey, motorbiking, football), holidays, children and nearby-home situations are passing by.

Sometimes small talk, banalities, sometimes insight and self-knowledge. Philosophically, cocky or pedantic, boasting, sometimes just sighing and simple. The world as background; the stage where it all happens - as it were.

Where to stop was the question, because principally it all will remain unfinished as long as one of the two keeps on writing. To continue up to some decade of letters, which includes the start of the corona-time and the influence of it on daily life until first vaccinations in two countries, was the aim here. There's never a 'proper ending or moment to stop' – nor as is in life.

Do remember while reading that none of them is a native English speaker.

The writers:

pictures: London 17th of April 2009, Museum Docklands - Canary Wharf, First of May – Amsterdam 1976 & Vietnam-support singing-group - City Hall Gävle +/-1974

Han Hak (Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1950)



Born and raised in Amsterdam in a working-class environment; father was sailor, harbor- and construction worker. Went to primary and high school in working-class neighborhoods, studied to become social worker, later sociologist at the University of Amsterdam, later on also post-academical study public administration. Always wanted to become a primatologist. And may have succeeded so in an informal way.

Worked for several local governments in the Netherlands as researcher and adviser for various politicians in different fields. Published research- and benchmark reports also official advices. Earlier also active as school teacher at vocational level.

Was singer in rock 'n' roll- and blues-band 'Juke Joint' from Amsterdam, with which he recorded one EP ('Rock 'n' Roll & Rhythm 'n' Blues', JJ Records 1986), two CD's ('Drop the coin right into the slot', JJ Records 2001, and 'Time to quit' JJ Records 2015) and one DVD ('Juke Joint Light – Live at the Silodam', 2009).

Achieved black belt martial arts (tae-kwon do, 1979 - 1987) and taught it (Chung-mu, Amsterdam).

Wrote two books on the Sixties: 'The Sixties – the great desire' (in Dutch: The Sixties: het grote verlangen, Brave new books, 2018) and 'The Sixties: revisited' (in Dutch, Brave new books, 2022). Now retired but still interested in literature, music and politics.

Lives in Amsterdam, smallest of big cities, and wouldn't be living elsewhere by choice.

Ulf Westin (Valbo/Gävle, Sweden, 1949)



Born and raised in a family in which the father was a grader-driver, workshop worker, clerk and more, a man who build his own two wooden houses with help from his father and friends; one of which is the wooden house in which Ulf & his family still live.

Ulf was worker at candy- and paper factories. He was in the management for the trade union of a paper factory north of Stockholm, later head of the employees' shop.

Active motor biker, folk-blues guitar playing. Played in left winged music-groups in the beginning of the 70'ies.

Local historian on the history of Valbo and the paper factory and trade union there.

Wrote two books connected to the history of the paper factory: 'Korsnäs AB's Sociala Fond 1951 – 2011' - a factory social fund (Sociala Fonden, 2011) and 'Papperstrea 100 År 1913-2013' - the factory trade union story (Korsnäs AB, 2013).

Also contributed on topics of local history such as on motocross. Editor for the local history paper.

Still lives in Valbo, middle Sweden near Gävle, in quickly urbanizing surroundings. Married for 40 years, two grown up children. Reading books, watching sports, both live and on TV. He's a die-hard detective-man.



sometimes letters are puzzles, just like people

Puzzled

two lives in letters

How do you justify your existence?

- Isaac Asimov in his Black Widowers

I'd rather be honest than honorable.

- attributed to Georgy Konrad

1969

Prelude: London

Meeting in 1969

Somewhere in London

Han (*by memory*): The dormitory of the sleep-in in the Court of Inn Drury Lane, a cantina-like sports-hall with bunkbeds, was after cleaning after the morning breakfast – three old ladies serving poached eggs, marmalade or beans on toast and weak tea: “anything else, love?!” to a bunch of mostly longhaired boys – accessible again. One could leave some non-valuable things there. Like your sleeping-bag on the desired bunkbed; as sign that this one was ‘taken’.

That evening in London: What to do?

Ulf (*from diary*): Tuesday July 29th 1969. London, UK. A rainy day indeed. Me and friend Olle were trying to get along in the center of the big city. Writing postcards while eating lamb steak.

In the evening we split up, as Olle didn’t want to join me to The 100 Club. He probably went to the Marquee Club. Anyway, I walked the Oxford Street in the pouring rain, wearing my father’s long black raincoat. Outside this 100 Club was a thin guy, soaking wet, in a brown leather or suede jacket. He was looking at the outside sidewalk poster, and I did so also. “I am a bit puzzled”, he said. “Shakey Vick (he pronounced “V” as “F” – a German I thought) was advertised. But the poster says: Earl Dixon & The Nighthawks”. “Well, let’s give it a try”, he said - and we both went in.

The blues-club in the cellar on number 100 had a huge room as it was a former war-time bombing shelter, with a small low podium and a long bar on one side. One came in from the street thru’ an alley, next to a closed office, descend concrete stairs to get there. Halfway the stairs was the ticket office and the wardrobe.

The announced British blues band of harpman / mouthharp player Shakey Vick had been canceled for whatever reason. Replacement was found in Jamaican blues-pianoman Errol Dixon, just having his new album; ‘Blues in the pot’, out on the Blue Horizon label. Guests to join in where to be expected.

Nick Pickett, later violin player with The John Dummer Bluesband, was one of these. He laid down a magnificent version of ‘Shiney Town Blues’, originally by Frank Stokes in the late 20’ies.

Han (*from memory*): This Swedish guy who came in with me, knew - just as I did the original ‘Shiney town’ song: “Frank Stokes and Will Bast on violin” – which was an achievement. After a chat with him he appeared to be named ‘Ulf’ which means ‘Wolfe’ and it soon became clear that I had a much cheaper place to sleep - above all in the same street of experimental club The Arts Lab where the duo Tyrannosaurus Rex were the house-musicians. Ulf and me appeared to have a lot of alike interests and also the same musical interests.

The year before; 1968, I had my 3-day-ticket to The Windsor Jazz & Blues Festival, at Kempton Park Racehorse-course Sunbury, ordered at home with this pink International Check. Folks at my home never did any international paying so the main post office had to deal with this. On the weekend bill were Jerry Lee Lewis, Fairport Convention, the new John Mayall 4-piece band, Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, Eric Clapton with drummers Ginger Baker and Phil Seaman. This year's festival of 1969 at Plumpton, I didn't order in advance and I was in question whether or not to go. The weather seemed to disagree ... I asked the Swedish guy his opinion on this matter; a ticket or going back home because of all this rain over here right now.

The year 2012

Berlin

ULF'S letter to Han:

9/3/2012

Hallo Brother of Sentimental Tears,

I think I beat you on the sphere here: tears were even coming to my eyes last Sunday when I was watching the Wasa-race with skiing (90 km with mass-start, 14 000 skiers, always on the first Sunday of March). The winner was also crying after the finish...

Still some snow over here but for the next week the prediction is sunny and around 10 degrees.

Thinking about the travels in April/May. Why don't you join in with us in Poland? You can show up on the 28th, join in for the Speedway event and then ride with us, perhaps to Auschwitz and then Berlin only with me. I think we can get you in to the hotel we booked. Warm clothes with leather on top and a good mood, no problems for you man...

It was just an idea that come to my mind, perhaps not a choice for you at all.

I've been low on music for some times again now. But any how we, Mr. Parkinson and me, played together last Wednesday. We are looking for old Swedish songs which have blues or country connections, to be played with harp and slide. I don't know...

By the way, do you have any CD's with Harry Manx? I heard him doing an awful good "Long black veil" some time ago. It's too expensive at Amazon for me right now.

How was your visit to your daughter Leila, is she doing all right?

All for now - hear from you!

Uffe

HAN'S letter to Ulf:

Saturday, March 10, 2012 12:54 PM

Hi man!

Mails crossing; so a quick reaction to yours first.

The motor biking and Poland is out of my desire and time. I just have the 1 1/2 week and want to spend some 5 days of it in Berlin, with the 6 or 7 hours of train time as limit. Limits are time, job & birthday weekend at home. So, it's a nice idea - but not suitable nor my thing.

(By the way I spend some summer holiday with a long-time-ago guitar player of the band in south of France some 30 years ago. And some 3 years ago I visited Buchenwald camp in Germany.)

Then we are left with you & Berlin. Are you? Can we and should we combine time, and then: when? With my two possibilities I try to keep your possibilities in mind. But is it? And if so; should we book a hotel-room together? Look what's possible for you, and what you want. Make up your mind, brother, it's booking time for me.

The weekend with Leila in Leuven was a nice keeping in emotional touch with each other. So now looking at her place there, she seems happy. That gives me a peaceful feeling. This although I understand that her ties with Holland are loosening. I wonder if she'll come back to stay in Amsterdam in the near future.

So far, so good.

Hear from you soon, best to you and all your loved ones, Han

Ulf's letter to Han - *ETC.*

10/3/2012

Hi!

Ok, no Poland and motor biking for you.

But of course I want to spend some time together with you in Berlin. What I don't know, is when I can be there and for how long. As I understand of my travelling mates, those who have to take time off from work (five of seven), they count with one week off, which is Thursday 26th to Thursday 3th.

My problem is the economy. How many days can I be out staying in hotels, eating out, ferry tickets, gasoline, etc.?

So, up to choose: realistically, I can't do both Auschwitz and Berlin. Therefore I go to Berlin on April 29th or 30th and meet up with you and we see if anyone of the bikers are joining me.

But I think you better do your booking of the hotel without me, as I can't be sure of arrival. My wish for hotel-room is a safe parking for the bike and not too expensive. Other possibility is to stay in different hotels of course, but not so nice. I think it's possible to be somewhat flexible and compromising?

Hope you can cope with this so far.

Hear from you

Uffe

11/3/2012 **Spring is coming?**

Hi man,

Good that we meet each other in Berlin!

You leave me with some loose ends, tho'. I am left with most favorable dates and hotel. So I suggest I just pick my dates as I don't know when you arrive (29th? 30th? 1st?). As I only have the suggested dates I go and buy a train ticket coming Monday 12th of March. After confirming that I pick a hotel from my list with priorities 'good, good location, and not too expensive'. If you don't know the date, perhaps you are with more people, etc. So I think you have to arrange a hotel yourself later on. I'll inform you where I'm at. The motor parking can't be anything other than car parking, can it? But it might be impossible or cost money. I suggest you inform yourself.

We'll meet anyway and probably have some time together to some things together; that's good.

Looking forward to it!

Hear from you, Han

PS I should send attached '... then we take Berlin ... ' sung by Leonard Cohen

16-03-2012 16:25 **Train & hotel Berlin**

Hi Uffe,

Before booking train or hotel I looked at your dates and as it was not clear to me when you were leaving the 29th or 30th, and more important; arriving (30th? 1st?) in Berlin. So I took me the safest date: 1st of May I'm leaving Amsterdam for Berlin by train. Expected time of arrival: 17.20 that day.

As it was not clear whether you are arriving alone or with others, but as you had your trip before Berlin with the Motor-Bunch to Poland and expected economical shortage, I took me the cheapest nice hotel central in Berlin, where there are other rooms left to book. There's in fact another one other solo at a good price, double ones are cheaper (if you arrive with Thomas or someone else). Although a lot is unclear and uncertain, you know when & where I am in Berlin. We can spend some time or days. Talking & looking around, also reviving our former journey here.

I am looking forward meeting you in Berlin beginning of May 2012.

As old seems best these days to me, I send you an old Otis Rush song from his Cobra singles (1956-58), Double Trouble, together with this mail. It would be a good name if we were to form a blues duo! Use it with Mr. Parkinson, I suggest.

It's my 1/2 day of working at home, done my shopping, tonight Lucie and me are going out to a posh Mediterranean restaurant she booked with a bonus cheap, to have a full evening dinner. Tomorrow I'll clean my house, and as Lucie is attending a classical music evening, I'll be going to a Dutch jazz/r&b band (Zijlstra). Nothing much heroic; live is like a small river - moving on, moving on. The recording of our last cd will become a project for all 2012. In the meantime I'm beginning to dislike my job, but needing the money. Leila's doing well in

Leuven and is going to a study trip to Egypt later on this year. Well, well, well. Lately I doubt whether she'll return to Amsterdam for more than holidays.

That's it, hear from you, Han

18/3/2012

Hallo Man!

I've had problems with the E-mail for three days. Yesterday I could read the mail but not sending any. Now I hope it's all settled.

Berlin, yes! My intention was to go to, and arrive, to Berlin the 29th or 30th, mostly depending of condition and weather. Berlin is only 5-6 hours driving from Leszno, where we stay 28th to 29th. The most likely was perhaps to go the 30th because of a party on the 28th. The Mc-bunch haven't made any further planning. I think we have flexibility as a code word. That was our intention anyway.

We have a next meeting in a few weeks and after that I know more. But I know that some plans to be at home Thursday 3th and if I wanna go home with them it's only leaves May 1st and half 2th in Berlin...

For my own sake, I'll planning to be in Berlin May 1st anyway, alone or with same companion (s). Tomas is anyhow interested to go to Berlin too, but I don't know how many days off he can get.

We don't need to book any ferry in advance, it's low travelling those days. That makes it a bit easier.

That's all I know for today. I'll let you know as soon as I know more.

In some hurry,
Uffe

22-03-2012 12:26

So we meet

Howdy brother,

A day without trains (great breakdown around Amsterdam) makes me work at home and have some time to mail you. After evening of rehearsal with the band and evenings at work with (dissatisfied) citizens on parking, heavy traffic and other troubles, I'm in for a home break. So today I work at home, and the spring sunshine in my garden balcony is hot, just like my espresso. What more can a man want? No Nespresso but real espresso, George Cloony!

A bit disappointing that we only have dinner and a drink on 1st of May and breakfast on 2nd of May, as it looks right now. But it couldn't be otherwise of the impossibility of me travelling to on 30th and your Angels trip to Poland and returning on the 2nd to where 'the north winds blow'.

But let's cherish the time we have in Berlin! I suggest we have an appointment at the station, my hotel or nearby for a drink and dinner on the 1st of May to celebrate Labour Day. I'll have to find out my way from station to hotel to get rid of my bag first, I guess.

We'll see about the next day that evening.

At the moment I have trouble with Lucie (without doing the Watussi...), too much fuss about nothing and we are discussing if we can continue any longer this way. Also I am dissatisfied with my job, strugglin' to make the testament recordings with Juke Joint Light and a bit worried 'bout Leila's coming trip to Cairo. A not to reassuring situation for an this man. The trip to Berlin will do me good, I hope. Waddabout you & your family? Healthy, successful and full of joy & optimism - I hope. Anyway you're looking forward to your Bandido trip to Poland and as a dessert the days in Berlin; hope that makes you feel a happy & lucky man.

I once again go to meet guitarman and singer Paul Batto play in a bar, hear Jools Holland R&B Orchestra, Eric Bibb, Tom Russell and Ian Siegal all in Amsterdam; all seen & heard before. But: "all my heroes are dead and gone and I don't like modern music..." as Mickey Jupp rightly states. By the way: have you heard Siegal's 'The Skinny' album already?

With Chuck & Ronnie & Fred as a band I now try to sing Jupp's 'Pilot'.
Back to work now, later on more, HiHo, Han

27-03-2012 22:14

I know it's your birthday

Hi brother!

A bit early, but this Friday it's your day: birthday! 🎉 **happy birthday** already, man!

Package should be at your home before Friday. For your birthday it's nearly all reminiscing and old music. Seems like nothing much interesting new is out.

Books: a Pelecanos I found and hope you don't already have. I was attended on the man by you, and since he's a success with me.

Music: One new one, the combination of three slide men: The Sultans of Slide. Sounds attractive!

I send you two old Cuby cd's, recently for sale again. One from 1967, their 2nd album 'Groeten uit Grollo' (postcard from the place in Drenthe where singer Cuby had himself a farm to rehearse), which I think is their best. Line up Harry 'Cuby' Muskee on vocals en harp, Eelco Gelling electric & acoustic guitars, Herman Brood on piano, Hans Waterman on drums and Willy Middel on bass. Two dead man in the line-up: Cuby who died last year nearly 70 years of age of cancer, and piano player Herman Brood who had a later career as singer/piano player with his band Wild Romance (international hits: 'Saturday night', and: 'Cha cha') was a junkie who jumped off the Amsterdam Hilton summer 2001. On drums is one of 'our' last drummers the at that time very young Hans Waterman (17 or 18 years of age, who was later to play with Eddie Boyd, Van Morrison, The Pretty Things and Duke Robillard, and the Dutch Solutiion, rockband Rene & Alligators, and ... Juke Joint). Especially the numbers with only piano (Brood playing like Lafayette Leake) and acoustic guitar (guitarplayer Eelco Gelling was the Dutch Eric Clapton) are very beautiful.

Then there's their most popular album 'Appleknockers flophouse' from 1969, a switch from blues to a more poppy/jazzy sound. Line up vocals Cuby & guitars: Eelco, bass: Herman Deinum, drums: Hans Lafaille and piano/organ: Helmig van der Vegt.

As last music item there's a recent re-release of an old fantastic James Harman album originally on the Icepick label.

All because 'we don't like modern music', hope it's a sunny day in Sweden as it was in Amsterdam & Gouda, Han

21/4/2012

Yes! I've noticed that too. In Poland for ending next week it's almost summer weather expected. The only weak point for us over here is Thursday going to the ferry. For two days it has been snowing with temperatures around zero. It's melting now but still... you never know.

It's still unsure if someone will come with Tomas and me to Berlin. At our last meeting one guy was interested but didn't know for sure (he's a kind of eccentric guy, bachelor, pistol shooting on competition level as one hobby, shaved head with a tassel (?) of hair on top = fitting in well with us...? He's a nice guy I think, don't know him too well though.

I've tried to get a hint of what possibilities there is for parking motorbikes at your hotel, but haven't get a clear answer. Anyway, I think Tomas and me will book a room there anyhow. They still got rooms at vacancy.

Today me and Per, my hockey friend, was at the congratulation party for Brynäs on the largest square in Gävle. It was all filled up with many, many thousands of people and happy feelings all over the town.

More to come next week.
See you!
Uffe

22-04-2012 20:56

Hi man,

Good, good - I'm interested in meeting you, my purpose was meeting you 30 years later in Berlin. I guess I'm not wanting to blend in too much with the rest of the wild bunch, to be honest.

You don't react on my splitting up with Lucie a few mails before; missed it? Or: this happened before – I could have told you?

Anyway, me and Lucie probably were too different, small irritations, too little will to continue this way, not able or willing to change. But the 'why' doesn't matter; some questions are too good to bother them with an answer. Nevertheless sad.

The statement of our time is the existential loneliness of the human being, isn't it.

I'm off to a birthday, the wife of my old friend, the painter Peter, bringing them my regards and a well-chosen book 'on the crookedness of the human being'. This because she's so very well behaved.

Before and after I have to finish a juridical note on parking for appearing in name of my city for High Court.

And I've got myself things to do.

I enclose 'Something's out to get me' from Loudon Wainwright's CD 'Older than my old man now'. Good song, I think. Bit dark; 'we're all going to die sooner or later'. And that's the truth.

Up to last details from you, Han

06-05-2012 22:21 **Back home from Berlin**

Hallo Brother!

I'm back safely in Valbo after two cold and stiff days on the road in Sweden. Sunny but 6-12 degrees.

More later on

Uffe

07-05-2012 10:59

Hi bro',

Also back home after a less heroic train journey of nearly seven hours. Back in an empty Saturday night feeling house. Yesterday I watched some football on tv with Fred (the blues cellar). He got me Eric Bibb with Staffan Astner. We both had a copious dinner for my birthday in a Vietnamese restaurant. Today in the afternoon André is coming to rehearse some tunes with me. Feels good. Tomorrow the job again and today I'm gonna do some shopping, and buy me some bonboneri for my +/- 30 colleagues at the job - together with the ordinary shopping. Further on some old newspaper reading and answering post. Perhaps buy me a small hat in oxblood color - sounds good with my grey hair.

Thank you for the nice note with wish and epitaph 'younger than ever, older than yesterday'. Two cd's are new and/or unknown to me; the Hazmat Modine I know. I have seen them and have a copy of their nice cd. Good reading your nota and unpacking the package this morning!

I was emotional by saying goodbye as one never knows when or if we meet again. It was all in all a very nice time in Berlin; talking and doing things together. Berlin itself is a nice city, but nothing special to me.

As we're getting older and have more history we are tending to get a bit milder and 'more relaxed men', I think. Less politics than before, more stories and talking about the family, friends and the music as talking topics. So sorry that I had the bad news of my splitting up with Lucie as a subject. There have been more enlightened times. Nevertheless it was good and I think we did nice things as the Diz Watson performance and the boat trip. The walk in the Treptow Park was for me the best memory to keep of this holiday.

The last day I did my ritual visit to the local zoo, saw the highlights in the Pergamon museum (Greec/Roman & Middle East: the Babylonian Ishtar Gate!) when it rained outside and as I

was near able to get me a single ticket for the Brecht play that evening; the anti-war play Mother Courage.

I'm into my 63nd year in life now; a bit hesitating I must say. Job, relation at the moment give me no good feeling. Friendships and music do. No plans for near future, as holidays - because future is a bit unclear right now. In a month or so I probably be better to decide my route again. It was very nice meeting you again. Give my best regards to Eva, Anna Kärin, Björn & Silvia. And of course to Tomas and Bösse. We'll write, hi Han

PS more pics following





Diz Watson, former of The Doormen, piano in Berlin

09-05-2012 15:08

Berlin again

Hallo again!

Back to nearly normal life again, with food shopping, a dentist visit (no holes, thank God!) and power walking. Monday I was sleeping late and dedicated the rest of the day to newspaper reading. I think I've caught up by now.

To me Berlin was some sort of disappointment as a city. Too big, heavy, commercial, touristic and the strange DDR nostalgia. Nice things were: meeting and talking with you, the hotel, Treptow park and Yorckschlüssel with Diz Watson. Every city with some sort of self-respect have such a place for blues/jazz/R&R, don't you think so? Berlin, Amsterdam, Gävle, London, Atlanta, as a few I've been to.

As I had a more extended journey, I had more highlights, like the speedway in Poland, driving in the mountains between Poland and Czech Republic and when I alone on Saturday morning 06.30 drove along the east coast of Skåne near the water, cold in the air but sun bright...almost like grace. By the way, a big pheasant crossed the road some 50 meters before me. Quite rare to see over here.

I more and more fancy the slogan: The target is nothing - the road is all. Which suits going by MC. The ? was going small roads all the way from Berlin. At the north coast I bumped into a nice sculpture park in a big field and in Sweden I passed and stopped at the birthplace of author/Nobel Prize winner Harry Martinsson. Also a nice place for contemplation and reflection.

I think I'm an anthropologist by heart. I'm fond of looking how people are living, what they are doing, traces from past times. Special objects are, among more, outskirts and outbuildings, but also creeks, churches and old stone bridges.

And thanks again for the CD's and book! Loudon W. is a great one and yours seem to be a good ending of a long career. Live well, Uffe

13 05 2012 ... walk a mile in my blue shoes ...



walkingboots are made for walkin'

29-05-2012 20:44 pictures

Hallo brother,

Everything's alright? I will thank you for the nice pictures from Berlin.

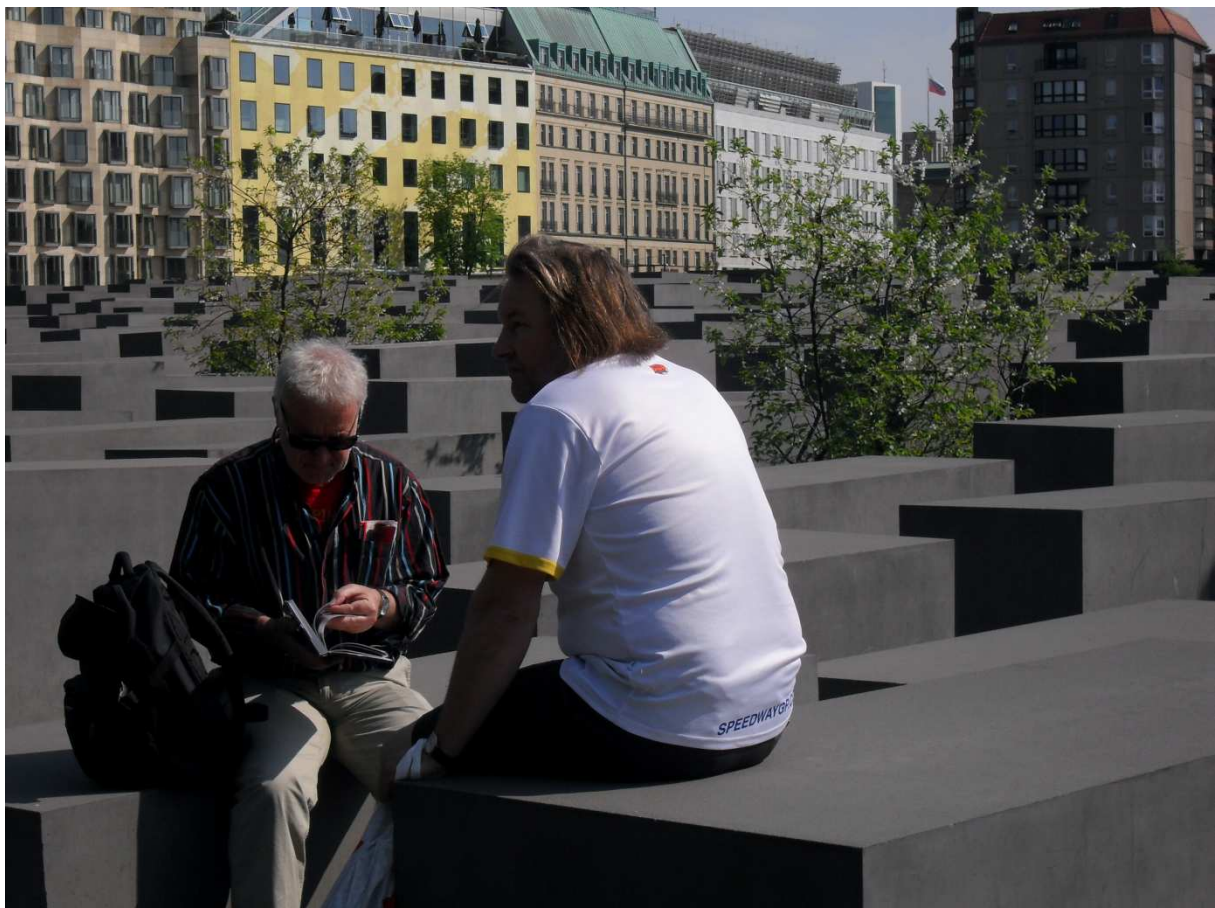
I've been very lazy with my pics from the Poland/Berlin journey. Mostly because I'm not satisfied with them.

Anyway, here's some you might have some interest in. The couple is Björn and Silvia outside the house where they rent the upper flat.

Nothing much happen over here, more words next time.

Have a good time and enjoy the sunshine,

Uffe



Holocaust memorial, architect Peter Eisenman, Berlin



Brecht, Brecht-theatre and... who are these guys?



Björn & Silvia: a happy couple

17-06-2012 19:56 **Long time no hear**

Brother Han!

No letter for some time. For me it's because of nothing to write about, life is slowly moving on. For you?

Anyway, this is a try to update a little bit, small things.

The weather has been poor over here for weeks. Cold (10-17 degrees), cloudy and rain with small spots of sun. For instance, yesterday my old sports club, Valbo AIF (football, ice hockey, athletics, skiing, and more), was celebrating its first 100 years with party, partly outside and the rain was pouring down...

Luckily the most interesting thing, a photo exhibition, was held inside.

I have started out very slowly with my new book project by reading some protocols but there are a lot more to read, so I'm glad it's a whole year to finished books.

Anna-Karin is trying to get her driving license this summer after working at the graveyard for a month, therefore we have been starting out our own lessons here. I don't think she is an easy learner but with a lot of practice it'll work out. She has to work to keep calm and don't get excited in difficult situations.

Our Berlin visit is still in mind every now and then. The visit memories win in the long end, I think.

Also in mind because right now I'm reading a novel by the American Douglas Kennedy - "The Moment", which is mostly taking place in Berlin in 1984, some years after we been there and before the wall's falling. I think, I've read half of it. It's a love story but with political undertones and some sharp remarks of Berlin of that time. But we didn't see or noticed any real filthy things, did we?

For the holidays, end of June and three weeks of July, no plans as usual. Stay in Nås and visiting Björn and Silvia and looking around some.

And what about you? Besides working the heck out of you...?

Hope most part is positive,

Uffe

24-06-2012 12:11

Hi yo' bro',

Over here life's been busy, complex, unexpected and more interesting lately. No going back to the old routine but looking for a new one to build up. That's also confusing and sometimes complex.

Berlin's been already 7 weeks ago. I had my birthday alone, dinner with André/Chuck, been to Jools Holland and Eric Bibb with one of the boys, more water under the bridge since split

up with Lucie. A new building in Gouda for the whole city government since 1st of June, with flexible workplaces; only laptops and portable phones, digital documents & no more paper. Appointed tasks; no more fixed hours; you plan your tasks (in hours) - when it takes more time you work longer, if it takes less you go home earlier. Music and life continue, no balance found yet; I'm changing all these changes.

Leila had a seriously drawback, but Yolanda & me were fortunately able to get her back on her feet. She's in a academical examinations period - quite something with the Arab & Turkish languages, transition from room as she goes flat-sharing with two mates in Brussels from 01/07 on and so moving out, a girlfriend who's got her first baby, and Leila's wanting to see to her old pals in Amsterdam again. I bought her two tickets for Dr. John in Paradiso, in whose music she seems interested at the moment. She's quite nervous, skin trouble, hair falling out, mailing or skyping a lot with her mother Yolanda and me. I told her she's a good student, mate, friend, daughter - so no doubts about that; pick your priorities as 'a journey of 1.000 miles starts with the first step'. I offered her to stay some time with me or come to see her in Leuven. I think that these last horrible prospects cured her some from all nerves. She was very pleased 'tho' with the soothing reactions from her mother and me.

Work is more interesting at the moment; it looks like my new director has stumbled upon me and sees me for the first time. I have nicer more difficult and suiting things to do. I represent the local government in a lawsuit (equality in parking, by two lawyers who live in Gouda) - we won the first round. So now it's waiting for the appeal.

I was the representative for Gouda at a parking congress where I delivered three short speeches of each 15 min. on planning and parking with sustainability.

I arranged my solo holiday for this year. Ending of July I go on my own 2 1/2 weeks to Japan. Always wanted to go there since I missed a scholarship at Kyoto during my student-times. A week Tokyo; probably I feel myself quite lonely there: 'lost in translation'. Next week in temple city Kyoto will be pleasing I guess, students and the Zen garden. To top it off a few days Osaka before flying back home. Leila attended me to the 'Point it - travel booklet'; with pictures to point out what you want on the items 'travel', 'staying', 'eating', 'urgencies' & 'shopping'. Fun or necessity?

The band is still continuing recording at very slow pace (hear our version of Tom Russel's Electricity) and in October we have a gig. The last one?

More and more friends of mine are getting older or 'fall to pieces'. One expects it to happen to others but not to one's own friends or oneself, but it nevertheless this happens. All men are mortal. I'm reading Paul Auster's book on this stage in life: 'Winter diary'. Although only halfway I can recommend it to you.

The EC football was disappointing from Dutch point of view, although I enjoyed the games from Sweden. I think it's predictable that Spain and Germany are the finalists. Germany is quite good, but as always I like the style of Spain more.

Today my old pal and painter Peter is going to restyle my tiny bit of garden a bit on this rainy day. Afterwards we'll go and have ourselves some beers at the local IJ-brewery at the mill nearby.

Enough for a lazy Sunday, I put my head underneath some cold tap-water and start the day at noon, Han

Friday, July 13, 2012 10:43 PM **One more song**

Hi there. On the hundredth birthday of Woody Guthrie; Friday night, a rainy summer, you wrote me a month ago - I wrote you back. And since then no moves. No news from either side of the Sont I guess.

Last week Ernie's Big Six-O birthday. A nice folk band who played a bit of everything from Havanagillah, to Everly Brothers, cabaret, Monty Python, R&R next to German Freddie or Heino ("Junge, komm bald wieder ...") tunes. All the same folks were there. Even the famous Eric Andersen was there, he's a friend as Ernst & Annette organize singer songwriter evenings at their place. A collection of lunatics, idiots and fools - me being one of them. With some of these guys & girls I never spoke a word thru' the years. It occurred to me that to some of my old-time friends I had little or nothing to say. Nor they to me. Are they still my friends? I thought; and if yes: What do we have in common? Because we have little to communicate anymore. Of course it's the 'getting older', which we all are. And the egocentric going inward attitude that goes with it. Silent, stubborn, grey. All of them couples (apart from Fred who lost his wife Anne) - that might also have bothered me. I heard from Els, the wife of André, that my last split up was not all my fault; it seemed to her that Lucie was insecure and to her an unstable woman, always bringing up opinions of the female pals of hers on me. As Els told her 'But what's your opinion? Shouldn't you take a stand with Han?!' Well, not all that ends, ends well.

But I guess, after all, I still miss Lucie every now and then, and sometimes feel a bit sad about it. But heart and mind are not on one line. I guess it's better this way - it wouldn't have lasted anyway, I guess. Loneliness makes one sing the blues. Listen! I'm moving on, moving on.

I went to Northsea Jazz to see & hear Taj Mahal, Nick Waterhouse, Hugh Laurie, Trijntje Oosterhuis, Robert Cray. Only Waterhouse was surprising & good.

Holiday nearer and nearer. Picked up my last travel stuff for Japan, just 1 1/2 week to go. Travel looks slowly more and more real.

Work better than it was.

Nothing new, are you still alive & able to write? Otherwise it'll be after Japan and jetlag.

Best regards, Han

17-07-2012 13:13

Hallo brother!

Thanks for letter and your song, attached to the letter. As you said before, the sax is lifting the song - nice!

Eva and me are just back home from visiting Björn and Silvia in Klevarp, Småland. They are now living on a farm more or less. They rent the upper flat of a side house on a farm. Nice neighborhood with calves, horses, green hills, etc. Seven km to the nearest town. Negative is the long way to the work for Björn, +/- 45 minutes by car. Their landlord is a former ice hockey player who now have farming as a hobby.

I don't know if it's of any consolation to you, but Eva and me also have our quarrels, right now in fact, due to different ambitions on spending the holidays in this case. She wants to take it easy, do things at home, things she doesn't have time to do when working; handle the flowers, sorting photos, reading, etc, while I want to have more action, so to speak. So, at the moment I feel a bit low down. I probably going out with the lawn mower as the sun now pleases us with their presence. Otherwise the weather has been terrible over here this summer so far. Rain almost every day in two weeks' time.

I have also spent some money on buying tickets for events later on this summer and fall. First, at August 5, Anna-Karin and me are going to Stockholm for one day of an art and music festival with among others, Buffy Saint-Marie appearing. Fun to have found a common favorite among artists!

Then, at September 30, Eva and me also going to Stockholm for David Lindley on some sort of guitar prize show in a theatre.

Finally, at December 6, Daniel Lanois is coming to Gävle Concert hall for the only appearance in Sweden. I don't know what he is doing nowadays but thrilling enough I think.

Hope everything is fine with Leila, give her our regards.

Good that your work gives you more pleasure now.

Have a nice time in Japan! Now, the lawn is waiting, cheers, Uffe

17-08-2012 13:39 Solo in Japan

Howdy bro',

Back on the track after going solo for 2 1/2 weeks in Japan. First week back was getting used to the old habits again, but luckily not much pressure because of holiday time. I slept thru' my alarm twice this week. That's the broken rhythm but also because of watching the Danish detective The Killing which is late in the evening on tv.

What did you guys do on your holidays? Not just working; working in the house and gardens - I hope. Did you have some nice weather? Over here it was or cold and rainy, or hot and dry. Now it's 25, 26 Celsius outside and I sit typing with closed curtains and bare underneath my Japanese home-jacket.

Japan; my motives to go there were a life-long fascination with the country. I corresponded with a Japanese girl at a young age (still have some pictures), read books on Japan as memoires of a Japanese kamikaze-pilot Yasuo Kuwahara, American/Japanese Edwin Reischouwer on Japanese history, later: Jay McInerney, Adelstein, and Japanese literature like Kawabata, Mishima, Oë, and saw movies by Kurosawa en Ozu. We have my martial arts practice (short time karate, long time taekwondo), and I did one year of Asian history on university – finished with a paper on the industrialization of Japan. Remember the Japanese landscape on the room & kitchen shutters at the Van der Hoopstraat I painted there? Around +/- 1976-'78, I applied for a scholarship for 2 years studying labor-sociology in Kyoto - I also had a Japanese study mate, Yosuaiki Kobayashi, who guided me in this. I made the final selection at the Japanese consulate in Den Haag, but they put me on the short list. Recently I had put Japan off of my list, as partner Lucie didn't appreciate foreign food or less hygienic circumstances due to her problems with intestines. A wrong view of her on Japan, of course. So now as I had the time, money and good health and no obstacles one way or another & no

ties that bind, I decided to go there. Most positive on this were Leila, Ernie and Yolanda - who herself had been there and might go again in autumn.

What did I do there?

I was very busy and running around in Tokyo (13 mill inhabitants, New York like but much cleaner, safer & much more relaxed), and walking mountains & forests in the edge of Kyoto as to watch Shinto, Buddhist & Zen temples. Japan is very crowded where I was, because the west sides of the isles are all mountains and forests. People behave polite, respectful, quiet, disciplined and formal. No trash, no graffiti, no hurry, no parked cars, no noticeable violence. A lot of queuing everywhere (the trains & metro during the rush hours), waiting for traffic signs, no traffic noise from horns. Robots and talking machines, money machines for paying, hardly credit-cards in smaller or local places, hardly any European marks but Japanese characters (my limited knowledge of Chinese characters was helpful) and hardly any English-speaking abilities apart from single words English. It was a good move to take a small course Japanese - in a hurry some 1 1/2 weeks before leaving. People appreciate the effort of a single word like 'thank you', 'please', 'yes', 'no', 'Holland', 'Japan' or counting from one to ten. Kampai! (=cheers)

Japan looks a very formal, hierarchic society. People are polite but impersonal. Shame is an issue; a waiter in a restaurant refused laughingly but persistent to take a picture of me with shirt a bit open, playing to sleep behind the empty cups of dinner. (As Micky Jupp on the back cover of his 'Juppanese' album). His shame, or to prevent me from doing something shameful? And 'no tips, please!' Japan was and is an inward turned society. You belong to the country (nationalistic, also worship of the emperor - imbedded in Shintoism), clan and group (by occupation or dressing style), family (family name above the individual; you are Westin Ulf). It was not 'lost in translation' as in the movie by Sophia Coppola; as people are very attentive and polite. With a bow, a smile, some words Japanese & some words English one gets along. But it was 'lost in culture without human contact'. Dying (I was there with some of the feasts for the dead; Eisa Matsuri) is connected with life and makes life worthwhile. In daily life you turn to your next of kin and superiors. That's where values in life and/or things are being handed over. The individual is just a link in the chain. All in all it was very nice but, but as I knew more or less in front, I made no real contacts: I looked in from the outside.

I visited a blues club, bought me some P-Vine blues cd's - as 40'ies and 50'ies jazz & blues is popular over there, went to the feast of remembering the dead, went to the Meiji shrine, the National Museum in Ueno park in Tokyo, the modern art museum on the 53rd floor of the flat on Roppongi Hills, the zoo, a samurai sword museum (no foreigners!), temples and shrines, made a trip by boat on the river, visited one very early morning the biggest fish market in the world. In Kyoto I walked, rented a bike, walked 'the philosopher's path', visited temples and cloisters, saw Zen-gardens and ponds (with koi carps), was on the boat for cormorant-fishing at night. In Osaka I did just nothing. I didn't make it to the martial arts school of sumo, nor to the Kabuki theatre; these need more arranging in front. I did see the Kabuki outfits in the theatre there.

I enclose some people pics (I made over 500).

And now I'm home, after the first week's work, ready for a long & hot weekend - with nothing much to do.

Hi, Han





18-08-2012 23:52

Brother of 'Long Travel'!

Thanks for your mail, postcard and nice pictures!

You went to Japan, 2 1/2 weeks all alone. You took a chance when you had the opportunity to follow up an old dream - good of you. I'm very impressed! And you did a whole lot of things, I hope it was worthwhile.

For me Japan has never been an attraction. Not the history, the music, the literature, films, the geisha system, not even the food. Sports? I'm not in with fighting. My less interest makes me of course not an expert, but... 'not for me'.

But I have read some books of Haruki Murakami. The one of what he is thinking of when he is running, 'Kafka on the beach' and one more which I don't remember the title. He is quite good, but not specific Japanese, isn't he?

Our holidays? We went visiting Björn and Silvia for five days in July as I told you in a letter from July, I think. We also went on some shorter travels with the car around the middle of Sweden.

Anna-Karin and me had two nice days in Stockholm with visit to a new event, the Music and Art Festival. Buffy Sainte Marie made a great performance. She's now 71 years old and still got power in her voice. Her band, three natives from Canada, was not too good but all in all, very nice. Saw also more modern acts, like Björk, an African band with a female singer who I don't remember the name of, and a bunch of Swedish bands/performances. Most of it not so understandable for me...

Been also to an anniversary concert for Woody Guthrie in the garden of Joe Hill house in Gävle, with American union/activist singer, Anne Feeny and Swedish singer/songwriter Jan Hammarlund. Nice to hear the old Guthrie songs and more in the same tradition still be sung. But holidays also consisted of contemplations over the sun going down over shining fields with cows and horses slowly pasturing, motorcycle travels, alone or with Tomas, to Speedway events (as usual) and the everlasting book reading, inside or outside, in rain and sunshine. A lot of rain in fact, in July, August so far much better.

We also been troubled with Anna-Karin's efforts to find a place to live in Uppsala for her studies. It ended we helped her to buy a small basement flat. Altogether, rent and the costs for our loans is at the same level as a rented room with no own door. Crazy situation in fact! But I think she is happy with the situation.

That's all for now - bed is waiting.
Kampai! Uffe

09-09-2012 19:53 **Letter in September**

Hallo there!

Time for some writing, although nothing special is happening.

I just arrived home after a visit to Nås and some grass mowing. By the way, have I told you that we have a renter in the house in Nås? A friend of Eva got a new job in a place 15 minutes by car from Nås, and while waiting for a flat nearer by, she's staying in our house. Means some help with our economy...

Today I went there alone with the motorbike. Went a slightly longer road, the old 'highway' from the mines in Dalarna, mainly the quite famous copper mine in Falun, and to the harbor in Gävle.

I used to take this road at least one time a year, nice bending, woodland and farming and small villages. Old houses but even older out-houses, like barns, stables, woodsheds, etc., built from timber and many hundred years old. That's my kind of interests nowadays! Near the Rockabilly district in fact and you can see real Swedish hillbillies = old men going by lawnmowers on the road.

Pity it was nearly too cold weather, around 10 Celsius.

Children growing old-subject:

Björn and Silvia have plans moving to Austria. You want your children nearby, don't you? Or are we just old antiques who don't favor the modern times?

Anyway, at least Eva took it very hard and went sad and I can't say I like it either. On the other hand, perhaps we also might become fond of Austria...

After a summer break, me and my harpman, have took up some playing again. I think his Parkinson sadly is getting worse. He's soon getting an operation to have his medicine right into the intestinal, might help him some.

Thursday the ice hockey season starts, something to look forward to.
Busy now with my book project, reading and learning all background, protocols, news articles, etc. Tough work!

All for now, I think. What about you?

Uffe

11-09-2012 20:50 **Great movie!**

A very quick one:

I've just watched the movie described below. If you haven't seen it, be sure to do so!

Uffe

Heartworn highways

Amerikansk dokumentärklassiker inspelad 1975. Här möter vi den tidens debuterande singer-songwriters som följde i den ursprungliga, genuina countrymusikens fotspår. Mycket stämningsfullt men inte alltid rumsrent. Medverkar gör bland andra Guy Clark, Townes van Zandt, Steve Earle, Peggy Brooks, Rodney Crowell, Charlie Daniels, Wayne Moss, Gamble Rogers, Glenn Stagner, Larry Jon Wilson och Steve Young. En film gjord av James Szalapski, som efter att ha gjort trailern till Alien och förtexterna till Garp och hans värld gick bort i förtid år 2000.

14-09-2012 16:27 **September, indeed**

Hi there Uffe,

Rain is pouring outside "and it looks like summer is over ..." But inside Antonio Carlos Jobim is singing from CD the 'One note samba', 'Desafinado' and 'The girl from Ipanema'. With the help of Astrud Gilberto and Stan Getz. Music I knew from way back when and bought cheap for the sunny but melancholic sound.

Yesterday during the last(?) day of sunshine me & my working department had our day-out. Could be the last time, taking in account the lousy financial situation of the city of Gouda and the on-going economic crisis. We went to a neighborhood in Rotterdam to see roads, traffic, parking, restoring monuments and housing. The afternoon we went canoeing in the small waters of the green pastures of the backland of Gouda; the Krimpenerwaard. After that a BBQ at a farm over there and in the night in cars back to, in my case, by car to the railway station of Gouda. After midnight dead-tired in bed and slept like a log. The beers or the outside-air?

Yesterday was perhaps the last day before autumn beginning. I had me a memorable year so far; split with Lucie, Berlin with you & the guys, Leila doing very well with her studies in

Belgium, alone in Japan, slowly recording with the band some beautiful sad tunes, 'rediscovered' at my job as 'the man for difficult negotiating & dirty deals' which gives me great satisfaction. My body, mind and health still fine. Conclusion is this is a gentle way of aging.

Your being busy with writing, motor biking around, making duo music and watching ice hockey, doesn't sound too bad either. Of course I see your struggling with health and age, family - children moving abroad, money sometimes. And you and Eva may think you're old-fashioned - but I feel the same way too over Leila. But as long as you're happy in general, I guess it's OK.

Think most of these problems are because of the state of age. If not yet, some of them may come too in some time. As long as they're not yet here, I'm planning to do nice activities as long as possible. 'Sex and drugs and R&R' as Ian Dury sung us; music, holidays, drinks & nice meals with friends. Brussels to see Leila in her new shared flat, a few days off somewhere in autumn, to Paradiso to hear Nick Waterhouse & band for 2 sets, a lecture of Daniel Dennett on the brain and consciousness, new movies to see and new days to come. I'm in an optimistic mood at the moment.

Elections in my country last Wednesday. I, as I lately do, voted the Socialist Party - the former ML party but now (as all parties moved to the right) on the point of view of the former PvdA, the social democrats. Who are in turn now 'a rightish middle' party. The big winners last Wednesday were the Liberals, who are now very right winged and nowadays warning for any 'socialists and other reds', and just behind them the right winged social democrats. These two are very pro-European. The Socialist Party is third, but much smaller than both mentioned ones. Good news is that the near fascist party lost heavily - but then again: to the right liberal party. The 'Big Two' are alike the Democrats and Republicans in the USA, also with their stress on personality of leadership instead of political views and visions. What a mess!

Did I tell you I had this small 'dear Han' message from Lucie (which did upset me a bit, as after six months I felt off of the hook) but I think I shall stay the way I am - as plumbing after a while is seldom successful. I'm going to movies etc. with friends or alone for the moment. Which is the way it has to be - for this moment.

I think of you & your family with warm feelings of friendship; don't worry, be happy,
Han

02-10-2012 03:39 ... life proceeds ...

Hi brother,

In the middle of the night, awake because of a bit of flu. Head full of water, painful lungs, headache. I take my Seretide for the lungs, Aspirins against the headache and lots of handkerchiefs for all 'the bodily fluids' (quote the general in Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove).

As a band we recently had (this weekend last one) some gigs with Juke Joint Light. Every gig can be the last, I guess. This one was special: we had to play 'That's how strong my love is' (by Roosevelt Jamison; sung by O.V. Wright, Otis Redding, Stones, and ... and ...) for a recently deceased person at this meeting. We never played a crowd of people so silently listening and weeping at a song ...

Nicer: we are recording Mickey Jupp's Pilot - in the inimitable way of his live BBC recording with Mo Whitham on guitar. Listen to the real thing!
After that I'm going fishing, keeping goldfish (Wanda?) or pigeons. Everything will be ready & done.

Gently getting old, although always things happening all the time. I'm going to visit my child abroad: half November I'll go and visit Leila in her shared flat in Brussels. I booked myself a hotel just around the corner for three days. Leila likes it, I think - she says. She's just had her 27th birthday. Ain't it funny how time slips away?

Ending of October I'm doing my yearly visit to Antwerp to buy some old rock and blues music on record or CD, some books and drink some good beer. Watch the Decap organ (1937 this one) at café Beveren. As a lone wolf in my own tracks. Sture Ulvan, was the place we stayed in the Scandinavian High Mountains, wasn't it, brother wolf?

Next weekend I got me a ticket for 3 Roman tragedies of Shakespeare (Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Antony & Cleopatra) next each other; six hours of continuous policies from old times! I got me tickets for a reading of neurologist and author on consciousness Daniel Dennett one Sunday afternoon in Paradiso. And of course bands; Mavis Staples, Nick Waterhouse, Bettye LaVette.

But these are gems in a further on quiet stream of autumn: 'leaves they turned to gold'. Remember the Bill Hawkhead-song written for Herenakkoord on getting older?

It's night and quiet. Looks like student times, once in the Van der Hoopstraat where I lived. I then preferred to study at night because of the quietness. Now I'm a bit feverish and watching the single light of a car turning into the traffic tunnel aside my house at night. Sleeping birds in the Italian trees; poplars is the right English word – I think). The new Bob Dylan softly on my laptop; again a Shakespeare connection: 'The Tempest' (tune & play). The new Martin Amis, 'Lionel Asbo', to be read on the table, on lower class vitality.

A right winged liberal wind blowing over the country, alike the republicans in the USA. A new government of right winged liberals and right winged social democrats in the making. More and more bad behavior, less and less solidarity. The individual is king. And crisis continues. We stumble at environmental and economical, moral and political crises. Old man alone at night, listening to the blues creeping 'round. Sad.

Howdy and take care; feverish regards, Han

13 /10/2012 Letter in October

Hallo brother,

Hope that your flu is history by now and you're back in best shape. If we have to talk about illness, I've have had a hurting back for some weeks. Sitting on chairs and driving the car have been special painful. Better now, but I think I have to do some back training further on.

Björn was 28 the 29th of September and we met him and Silvia in Stockholm that day, stayed in hotel, had an early dinner where Anna-Karin also joined in but she then went back to Uppsala. We, the others, went then to the Folk opera of Stockholm to see a modern version of

Verdi's Masked Ball. Not so enjoyable, if you ask me, but interesting as a phenomenon.

The day after Eva and me stayed one more night, using the Company flat and went to The Guitar people's Prize concert. I didn't know about that prize before but it has a 10 years history and the recipient this year was David Lindley. Before his performance there were different kinds of guitar appearances. From loud rock, over Cuban to (two sisters, guitar and violin - very good), to Swedish lap steel. Lindley played two different Weissenborn guitars and two kinds of eastern instruments, oud or mandola, or...
He was very good, a bit weak singing but amazing fingerpicking on the instruments.

More music:

Yesterday Eva and me went to see the Swedish clarinet player Martin Fröst, world famous they say, together with the Symphony Orchestra of Gävle. He was really great; see him if he's nearby. He played some Klezmer tunes, some Hungarian dances (Brahms), some new written Swedish music (together with 'dancing') and ending with Artie Shaw's clarinet concert. Oh yes, before the Shaw tune, he was directing the orchestra in Tchaikovsky's 'The Nutcracker'. Do you notice a change in an old man's music favorites?

No more writing. Give our greetings to Leila,
Uffe

Tuesday, 16 October, 2012 3:33 PM

Re: Letter in October

Hi brother,

Remember when October was red? We've gone a long way, man!
Just finished my discussion on the phone about politics with my friend in the band: André Chuck. How times have changed, sometimes so have we, but: are or have been main things in society changed? Or is it just the thinking, the stories, the hear-say? This *without* saying the alternative we once proposed was, in my view of today, much better. Old men grow bitter?!

Japan is miles & miles behind me in every possible way. I'm on to my yearly few days in Antwerp; as always this time of year, with as always the museums (Plantijn Moretus, MAS), music shop (record collector), bars (Kid's for blues, De Muze for the memories), the zoo, Chinatown, the restaurants (the Portuguese for big prawns in the docklands) and the beers (Westmalle Dubbel and Hopus). But I stated this Mirage before. Beginning of November I'm going that way again to visit Leila in her shared flat in Brussels for a weekend.

Right now I'm working home with also an aching back as a leftover of last flu.

Send you a copy of a nice music docu I got from Leila: Staff Benda Bilili; perhaps you know this 'African band of cripples' as they have just toured in Europe. I can't play the disc on my tv, but with the help of VLC media player I put a copy on my laptop. I send you the disc, if your tv-set turns you down - act the same as I did.

I also send you the most promising sound around: a new act I've seen 1/2 hour this summer on Northsea Jazz, next month in Paradiso: Nick Waterhouse. It's his first CD, not brilliant - but promising; the touch he has live is already there. Old R&B to my humble opinion.
Also Robert Cray, Mavis Staples and Bettye LaVette are coming at a new place in

Amsterdam, near my former house at the Watervalplein the end of the 10 tramline. I think you've never been there the two years Kitty and me lived there when we were married. Instead I visited you with a provisional band for your 50th birthday. Something like that.

What more? Juke Joint Light's still incidentally playing, I'm still at work 'thou more and more people get kicked out; I'm a civil servant 'on mission': 'Hak is the name, parking is the game'. Also without partner-in-crime at the job. What's new?

Best to you and your loved ones, Han

18-10-2012 17:34

Old men easily getting tired. From picture and music-clip I noticed that André nowadays has to sit down while playing... What was it again?
Very fascinating, anyway.

Uffe

25-10-2012 09:34 **Fast one**

Hallo brother,

This is just a short one. Received DVD and CD. With DVD it's like yours. It will not play. As my computer-DVD-reader is broke. Shit with all this technique!
My CD player still spinning...Nick Waterhouse, well, might be nice to hear live but on this CD, in my ears, he's like stiff, non-swinging, English garage band from the 60'ies.

Sorry Bro', I'm a grumpy old man...

Good luck in Antwerp! Uffe

31-10-2012 12:59 **Is Grumpy a nice character?**

Hi man,

Grumpy was my less favorite dwarf in the Snow White tale; you'd better go for Doc - that's a role which suits you & you might just like role!

Send the CD back if you don't like it, 'cause I like it. The band plays in Paradiso next month and I go there - so I don't have to buy their CD once more there. The DVD asks for the required trick in my last mail to you (free downloading of VLC media player on your pc or laptop).

Yesterday I went to Mavis Staples and band in a new venue in Amsterdam - near my former place Watervalplein. By biking around I found out that they also build a new tennis court for international games over there in the park; 'Wimbledon in a former Amsterdam working- and squatting neighborhood'. How unsuitable! How can a poor old man catch up with times like this? Am I Grumpy, too?! Anyway Mavis is nice, but the getting older is notable in her

performance. Guitar player Rick Holmstrom, and bass/guitar player Jeff Thurmes were very good as ever. I saw she's playing Uppsala too. Your thing?

Next week I'm off for a few days to Leila in Brussels. Looking forward to it. During the train trip (two times 2 1/2 hours) I'm intending to read the book 'Congo' by the Belgian author David van Reybrouck, who's anthropologist. The history since Livingstone and Stanley up to the bloody wars now going on in 650 pages. He builds on oral history in some parts. Don't know whether it's translated in English yet. Van Reybrouck is also very active in nowadays Belgium, the poor, democratic and language movement. I think he's a moderate lefty, bit populist. His book is well praised.

After the boots of 'the rare species of the blue snake', I bought myself a Bordeaux-red - oxblood to be precise, Italian Borsalino hat for the winter. The older the crazier - is that what they say? But what can a man alone do - not buying roses for a loved one anymore? I went to a reading in the not yet open Rijksmuseum (open March/April coming year) for historians (I got in with a friend, Bert, who is historian) and listened to a reading by famous historian Simon Schama on the link craftsmen - artists: On image and art. Very nice. Remarkable quote: "Understanding & compassion are the little sisters of wisdom." Coming up for me a reading on a Sunday afternoon in Paradiso (!) by neurologist (brain scientist) & philosopher Daniel Dennett on brain & consciousness. I'm into 'learning by hearing' at this stage.

Now back to work again; I'm working at home today.
Best regards, Han

01-11-2012 10:26

Dear brother Doc!

It's a bloody shame, but Grumpy is my name. Although I wasn't thinking of the dwarf character when writing last time, it's a nice thought of you, I think. Of course grumpy or Grumpy is not nice at all, but who wanna be nice in days like these...?

Talking about the tale, did you know that in the Grimm origin and the old German model, the dwarfs had no names, and in the first Broadway show they had completely different names. (*Dept. for Meaningless Knowledge*).

The Staples lady was in Uppsala yesterday. I wasn't there. I did some playing with my harmonica mate instead. We have a GIG! We are appearing at the local Parkinson Club (Society?) in December. So, a lot to care about: the show, dressings, make up, footsteps, between chats, and of course the music. We are, among other ideas, thinking about a medley of 'shaking" songs', like 'Shake', 'Shake your moneymaker', 'Whole lotta shakin'', etc.

I send you the CD back. I'm looking for something to include for you, but I've been out of serious music-listening for some weeks now. Nothing seems to suit me, it's part of my now grumpy character, I guess.

And it's easy to see that you really deserve the name Doc (Doc is the Wise guy, isn't he? Hihi. I'm not familiar with the English names, might get it wrong...)

Last Friday we had a lot of snow over here, by now it's almost gone. I don't know if it makes me feel any happier. Last night it was full moon. I was howlin'...

Stay wise and strong and give a hug from me to Leila,
brother Grumpy-Uffe

15-11-2012 16:35 **CD's**

Hallo you Brother Doc,
Grumpy here, in a bit hurry.

Today I sent you a parcel with CD's.
First, the return of Nick Waterhouse.
Second, BB Driftwood, who is, despite of the English name, Swedish. A slightly grumpy elderly man in his best years, writing songs and recording them together with musical friends. I don't know if it's good or...well, not bad I think.
Third, a secret one. Kind of quiz. Do you have it or dislike it - throw it away. Want more information - let's hear!

Grumpy day today. The heating in the house broke down. Lucky it's positive degrees. Got it fixed during the day = good service!

Now away to ice-hockey, hope the luck will turn, it's a meeting between two top teams.

Best to you!
Uffe – aka The Grumpy One

07-12-2012 13:41 **'Snow' is just another word for 'hard work'**

Hi brother,

Yesterday I was at the Daniel Lanois-concert in Gävle. First gig on the European tour, only concert in Sweden. Sometimes 'the ways of the lord are unfathomable'.
Anyhow, Lanois was really good, with a fantastic drummer and a fascinating bass player wearing kind of Mao-cap and high platform shoes but good too, who sung harmonies on the songs, mostly from the Acadie record.
The band members arrived in Stockholm with one of the last planes before they closed the airport. It had been snowing more or less since Monday. We have 80-90 cm by now.
My arms are kind of worn out, see salutation.

Have you got the parcel with CD's? Haven't heard anything from you for some weeks. Hope everything is alright.

This evening Björn and Silvia are coming here, and Anna-Karin too I think. Tomorrow we are going out to eat the traditional Christmas-table. Silvia is then going to Austria for Christmas and Björn will come home for the Christmas days and then he is going to Austria for the New Year.

Eva is very busy with all the Christmas music but also with a bad boss and all that things.

On Wednesday me and my Parkinson friend are playing at the Christmas party of the Parkinson Society in Gävle. I wonder how it will turn out? My friend is very unpredictable, cause of the illness and sometimes he can't get any sound out of the harmonica...

Right now I see from the window that snowing has decreased a bit.

All best to you and yours!

Uffe

Saturday, December 08, 2012 5:44 PM **Re: CD's**

Hi Uffe,

Thanks for your mails and the parcel with music! Driftwood is good and laidback - a bit the Swedish J.J. Cale. Nice to hear anyway. The mystery CD is indeed a guess; is it perhaps Refreshments? I don't know. Don't like covers too much, although there's a bit of surprise in them I must say. Who are these Question Mark & Mysterians? I've got me a new CD with old demos from Dan Penn, and an old and rare jazz CD (from Dixie to 50'ies in the city of near Amsterdam) to send to you. But wondering whether they are suitable or that I have to wait a little bit longer and search a little bit harder.

Snow over here, which is unusual over here but happening more and more. Busy over here. Work, private life - all tumbles over one another.

I've seen Shuggie Otis & his band, in another new club The Northsea jazz-club in the west, near my former place at the Watervalplein. I was with Yolanda. This also because I saw father Johnnie Otis with the R&B Revue 28 years ago, at the North Sea Jazz Festival in Den Haag when Leila was listening in the belly of the pregnant Yolanda. But at that time Shuggie had just left to start a career of his own. Still Bull Moose Jackson, vocals and sax, was in the show, among others. Of course Nick Waterhouse was good; he's old fashioned R&B. And I attended a Bach organ concerto in an Utrecht church which was exceptional good. Got me my tickets for John Mayall and Bettye LaVette.

At the job I'm still being successful but having a row with some citizen committee whose chairman is of the same political party as the political alderman in the council I have to advice and both having different interests. Careful not to get in between hammer & anvil.

I posted you my X-mas and new year wish early. Why early? I don't know.

Hear from you soon & promise to write back sooner.

All to good and love to you and your family, Han

10 /12/ 2012

Hi,

Got your card today, thanks. First one in with a good margin.

The mystery CD is by a Finnish group called Leningrad Cowboys - with the very spectacular hair dressing - and also on the CD is the Red Army Orchestra and Choir. As you say, not extremely good, but fun I think. I'll send you a copy of the cover.

Dan Penn is one of my all-time favorites, the Amsterdam jazz is nice too, I think. Question! How sounded Shuggie Otis today, what kind of music? Didn't even know he was still playing.

Regards, Uffe

11-12-2012 19:09

My friend,

Hear and see! I guess it'll be Dan Penn and jazz. The jazz one goes with a story, I guess.

It's Haarlem city jazz in fact, and I worked (my practice year study for social worker) a year in 1972-1973 in this Haarlem 'Paradiso-like' club: Electric Centre/Zero. Just as my chum Dick. The nights in between the working days we roamed the bars of Haarlem. There was an un-official music scene going on. There was this small jazz trumpet man from a in my eyes despicable Dixieland band, The Dutch Swing College, who could play very good blues on his horn on his own in late-night-bars in Haarlem. Just for the free booze. And especially when he was playing duets with this blond heavy tenor-sax player.

I don't know if you hear the booze 'n' blues in the tunes, but it was surely there in the bars there and then in Haarlem. This is a limited edition from this small jazz club in Haarlem. Hear the best of it or otherwise forget it and put it in the dustbin.

To me it was just like the magic of the bar De Muze in Antwerp, where in the 60'ies I saw folk- or protest-singers Armand, Wannes van der Velde and Boudewijn de Groot and 'local-boy' Ferre Grignard with his Jugband play for free booze. Grignard became my favorite - and although he died years ago after too much booze and a cancer in his early 40ies having made only one good album in the 60'ies - he still causes my yearly visit to this now jazz bar in Antwerp where there's still a large black & white picture; or to hear his first album 'Ring, ring I've got to sing!' played on the record-player.

Penn's demos made at night at the Fame studio's; the songs that got later famous in versions by other musicians. It's all there in his later 'Do right man', but this is the raw stuff. I've seen the man twice in his later days with piano-/organ-man Spooner Oldham; once in a club in Haarlem, once in a cross-over literary festival in Den Haag. He's the man who guided Elvis Presley around his 'come back' 1968 and 'gave' him the Sweet Inspirations as backing vocals group.

Lately I'm dating Sonja, small pale redhead, mother of 2 grown up children, 57 years of age, coach and trainer and mediator, living in a large house in old Utrecht, near a park. What to say, other than 'till next time, Han

11-12-2012 19:25 **AND ... 'Snow is just another word ...'**

.... Daniel Lanois I've seen & heard years ago in Amsterdam; I liked and like him more as a producer than as a musician (doom-music, doom nothing but) - but I do like snow.

My best regards to Eva, Anna-Karin, Björn & Silvia,
Han

Thursday, December 13, 2012 11:45 AM **PS music**

PS

I'm home from research at the hospital for a 'pinched muscle or nerve' - reaction in my right upper leg; scans were taken. Just old age, I guess.

Music: missed points in former mails:

-How did your gig as Parkinson Twins (Tremblin' Joe Harp & Lonesome Guitar Strummin' Uffe) went? Did you make some recordings or are there pics of this happening?

- The music of Shuggie Otis was and is eclectic: funky, jazzy blues and pop. With his own band (bs, drs, gtr, pno/organ, 3 horns among which a flute) he's still the brilliant guitar-player he was, lousy singer, not outstanding but clearly the main man. He looks a bit like Peewee Connie Crayton in the limelight. I got me cheap 3 of his older albums ('Here comes ...', 'Freedom flight', 'Inspiration information') for the price of one. They are all OK but not outstanding - more jazz & funk than the former R&B Revue of his father. He's not totally my cup of tea.

- The jazz CD, 'Spaarne Blues' – Spaarne. is the local river in Haarlem - , has also Ben Webster on one tune, a tune on 'Old Stockholm' and one on 'Berlin'. Coincidence? Chance doesn't exist, does it?

Package with CD's on its way, HH

13-12-2012 18:35

Hi Old Man,

Welcome to the gang of stiff and hurting bones!

Thanks for the description of Shuggie. I use to mention him as one of my favorite guitarists in the time with his father. His later albums of his own are less interesting, I agree.

And yes, yesterday we had our first appearance in front of audience (+/- 40 persons). We did some Christmas tunes, one, more or less a children song, we combined with 'Key to the highway' (similar melody), 'Silent night' with slide and harp, two Swedish anti-war songs, two Joe Hill songs, the 'Shake-medley' and finally, the protest tune 'We shall not be moved', with lyric examples from the nineteenth century and forward. Altogether 9-10 songs. I was very skeptical toward the whole thing. My companion, Lasse, has good days and bad days, yesterday was in between. He did his singing parts well, but he had no grip on his harps, didn't find the right key and that kind of stuff. Therefore the harp parts didn't go so well and I was really nervous in the beginning, but it improved I think. The audience was of course very understanding and the expectations were small and some also a bit of surprised, but also puzzled of the different versions of some songs, I had questions about my dobro guitar, etc.

Summary: A good experience for future occasions, if there are any to come. No recording (glad over that fact), but pictures: yes. I'll try to get hold on some and send them to you. Stay well and good luck with Sonja!

Uffe

24-12-2012 12:35

Hallo there my brother of snow,

Thanks a lot for the CD's and card. Music is great! Dan Penn as always, but jazz CD surprisingly good, with the tune featuring Rob Hoeke on piano as top number, really great!

Don't know if you got my Christmas card in time, late as always. Whoops, is it Christmas once again?

But, for the safe sake:

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and all yours!

I couldn't find out a fancier greeting.

Uffe and the family

