

(Stadsbeschouwing)

HET ANDERS ZIJN

VAN DE ANDEREN

IS DE SLEUTEL TOT MIJN GELUK.

KOKSIJDE IN MAY

A typical Belgian resort.

“The world is full of good people. Only the baddies hit the headlines.”

– SOCOTTI

Shopping street – an exercise in doing as little as possible,
in non-conceptual awareness, not in the slightest judgmental.

Reciting *Namo Amida Butsu* at sunny intersections,
watching the awkward movement of traffic, the smiles on passing faces.
I now realize that beauty and ugliness are one and the same thing.

Like a well trained basset hound I follow my wife and sister-in-law,
chatting uninterrupted, at a snail's pace, from one shop to the next.
Other people's worlds and ideas can be a source of inspiration:
Het anders zijn van de anderen is de sleutel tot mijn geluk.

Somewhere in this seaside town of boys on skateboards, pensioners arm-in-arm,
clothes for a million keizers and half empty middle-class restaurants
lives a Buddha, the compassionate all-seeing saviour of souls -
almost as unobtrusive but ever-present as the patient sea.

Our stroll has brought us to that! *Namo Amida Butsu* it murmurs
to the sparsely populated beach, an everlasting litany.
Wave after creamy wave repeats the Name, roar of a distant lion.
Son of a sea-dog, I stand perplexed at the rail and take it all in.

The streets are covered in sand. Hearty old gentlemen greet each other.
Outside the butcher's a baby in a pram is licking an ice-cream.

While I jot notes outside, my guides disappear into *Distant Horizons*,
a gay and garish emporium selling all except poetry.

In another fancy boutique trousered dummies show off their bottoms.
Through the door I watch a chihuahua tug its owner to a tearoom.

“Nice, and not too pricey,” confides my well-dressed wife, enjoying herself.

When night falls four hours from now this town will be completely deserted.
Where will they be, the boys in groovy casual wear, the girls on scooters?
The camera never came out of my pocket. Will I see them in dreams?

Surely there is room in the Pure Land for everyone in Koksijde.
Perhaps this poem will inspire some painter a hundred years from now.

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