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**An extract pp 2-12**

**Original title** =  
**Publisher** Zuidpool, 2022

**Translation** Dutch into English  
**Translator** David Colmer

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p 2-12

## scene 1 – flat on my back

me                    I'm lying flat on my back  
  
                         in protest  
  
                         legs flat  
                         arms flat  
                         shoulders flat  
                         hair flat  
                         bum flat  
  
                         as flat as possible  
                         as quiet as possible  
                         moving as little as possible  
                         breathing in and out  
                         blinking  
  
                         you're probably wondering  
                         what's she doing lying on her back  
  
                         I can guess what you're thinking  
                         that I'm lazy  
                         spoilt  
                         that I don't know a thing about the world  
                         that it doesn't work like this  
  
                         lying on your back won't get you anywhere  
                         it won't stop anything  
                         it won't get anything done  
                         it doesn't prevent anything  
                         but it doesn't cause anything either

is that the plan?  
maybe my big ambition  
is to avoid the limelight?

I'm not waiting for anything  
I'm just existing  
doing exactly what I choose  
absolutely nothing  
bugger all  
no work no school no coffee no tram no bus no train no bike not walking not writing  
no marks no classes no goals no skills not making money no boss no workmates no  
conversations about the weekend or the weather no rain radar no umbrella not  
necessary at all I'm not going anywhere no friends no stuff not buying anything no  
news no consumption or fashion no future no past no exit clock or time  
no, thank you  
no, thanks  
no, that's okay  
I'm lying flat on my back  
that's the best I can do

if you're not doing anything  
you suddenly notice that time doesn't always go at the same speed

how long will the rest of my life last  
if I stay lying here forever?

if I died now  
would I have lived?

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## scene 2 – me and the birch

the birch:     *appears*

hey, you there  
climb me

me:             no, thanks

the birch:     I can see you want to

me:             no

the birch:     climb me

me: no

the birch: you're scared

me: no, I'm not

the birch: fear of heights?

me: I don't fear heights  
I yearn for the ground

the birch: you're not curious  
about the view?  
you don't want to know what the world looks like  
from my top branches?

trees are the world's hair  
perfect for feeling the breeze on your cheeks  
a choice location for seeing things in perspective

am I talking your ears off?

you've only yourself to blame  
just lying there and staring at me like that

me: aren't you curious what I'm doing here?

the birch: I've never understood you lot

tell me  
why do you fall in love?  
and how come when you do  
you find it necessary to prove you have  
by carving it into my leg with a sharp knife?

me: I'm on my back

the birch: I see that

me: people think I should get up  
because I'm a bit cold  
a bit of cold is the reality  
because I'm getting knots in my hair  
they think I should get up  
to make sure I have a beautiful future  
with a beautiful job a beautiful house a beautiful garden  
a beautiful dog with a beautiful name and a beautiful collar

the future isn't beautiful and that's why I'm lying flat on my back

don't you ever get scared  
of the future?  
of not surviving it?  
or even worse  
that the future dawns  
and you're still there  
and you can't escape  
even if you wanted to?  
that you're stuck  
in the future  
and have to sit it out  
without any hope?

the birch: you know what I think?  
I think that's for me to know and you to find out

me: you probably think I should get up  
just like the people

the birch: people want you to have as few worries as possible

me: I want to worry about everything that's worth worrying about  
  
and if you don't mind wandering off  
I'm very busy right now  
lying on my back  
bye

off you go

the birch: I think you'd have a very different view of all this  
from my top branches

me: no

the birch: you're too close to it all

me: no  
go now

the birch: but

me: shhh

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## scene 3 – me and life

life: *celebrating*

the idea is for you to do something with it, huh?  
with the life you've been given

me: do I owe you something?

life: there are so many sperm cells that would have liked to have won that race  
who would have loved to fuse with an ovum  
and grow into a human  
a breathing  
running  
jumping  
bumbling  
stumbling human

me: there's enough of them already

life: life isn't something we can have enough of  
let alone too much

aren't you scared of missing out on all kinds of things by lying here?

don't you miss running?  
don't you miss tensing your muscles?  
paddling in cold water and feeling a chill run up your spine?  
falling in love?  
don't you want to fall in love?

me: no

life: of course you do  
of course you want to fall in love  
hardly-able-to-eat hardly-able-to-breathe in love  
to grow up  
and drink coffee that's far too strong at breakfast  
expensive champagne with bubbles in your nose  
to feel what it's like to stab someone with a sword  
to fight  
to get a tattoo  
to wave someone goodbye with a tear rolling down your cheek  
to float down a river  
not knowing where you'll end up  
but wanting all kinds of things and planning all kinds of things  
to feel what it's like to want something

a human who doesn't want anything stops moving  
and if you stop moving long enough you're dead

is that what you want?

you should try living before you die  
I really can recommend it

just get up

me: no

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## scene 4 – me and death

death *silent*

me: people say when you die  
you stop existing  
and disappear  
that life drains out of your face  
what does it drain into?  
what happens with your life when you're dead?

are there different ways of dying?  
or does everyone die the same?

I want to die like a catapult  
life-size

as I die I'll be catapulted up  
with enormous force  
whoosh into the sky  
past the birch  
past the cloud  
through the atmosphere and the stratosphere  
past the moon  
beyond Venus and a few black holes  
to the end of the Milky Way  
through unknown galaxies  
until I bang into the window of the universe  
and get stuck there

I won't hold onto anything from the world below

I won't keep anything  
my parents  
my raincoat  
my boots  
the things I've experienced  
or lost  
my keys, thoughts, feelings  
regret  
everything will slide off me  
and drip back down  
all the way to the Earth's surface  
through the galaxies  
past Venus and a few black holes  
through the atmosphere –

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## scene 5 – me and the river

the river:	<i>flowing</i>
	by the way, I heard you want to float down me
me:	I heard you sweep people away
the river:	who told you that?
me:	people
the river:	people love to talk I hear you're lying flat on your back
me:	who says so?
the river:	people
me:	are people talking about me?
the river:	they say it's a protest
me:	right
the river:	they say you're not moving
me:	I'm not

the river: that you're not causing anything and not contributing to anything  
that you don't want anything  
not even to climb a tree or fall in love  
they say you're not doing anything

me: I'm not

the river: that's not true of course

me: yes it is

river: it's a lie  
your blood doesn't stop flowing when you lie on your back

did you know that if you cut out all the blood vessels in your body  
and laid them out one after the other like a river  
you'd give rise to a bloodstream of a hundred thousand kilometres?

that river in you  
doesn't stop flowing

you've really taken people for a ride with your  
'I'm not contributing to anything, I'm not setting anything in motion'

me: I'm not  
I'm lying on the ground doing nothing at all

the river: even lying on the ground doing nothing causes things  
put a stone on my bed and the water flows differently  
no matter how still the stone tries to lie there

me: I'll do my best to try harder

the river: doing your best to try harder to not do anything won't work  
accept it  
as long as you're alive, you're moving

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## scene 6 – me and the wind

the wind: *blowing*

remember me?

there's something I want to tell you



you know when you were sad  
and I touched your cheek with my breeze?  
it was a comfort, right?  
something as small as that cheered you up  
didn't it?

you see  
in the beginning  
long before you existed  
I was a bit tired  
and I let out a little sigh  
and what people call a ripple appeared  
on the Earth's surface

so  
in the beginning  
there was that sigh of mine  
because I was tired  
but in the beginning I didn't even realise that it was me  
I found them kind of annoying  
those ripples on the surface of the Earth  
which made me sigh even harder

it was only when the ripples were taking place more often  
that I saw a linear connection  
between my sighs and the rippling  
I had caused those ripples  
me

I was so happy about this discovery that I started blowing  
and whistling  
and because I was blowing  
the seeds from one plant were transported to another  
the plants started growing  
animals that could eat them appeared  
all because of my sigh

and out of pure delight at this discovery  
and the sight of a flowering Earth  
I started to race  
to howl  
to roar  
and there you had it, the first storm

that's how it began in the beginning  
me  
the wind  
with something as small as a sigh

it can be that tiny  
a sigh, touching a cheek  
isn't that enough?  
isn't it enough for you to make a tiny difference?  
do something instead of nothing  
you're alive so you can do something  
take it from me

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## scene 7 – oxygen particles

me:

I'm not alive so I can do something  
I'm alive because I breathe  
that's the only reason I'm not dead  
because the wind wafts me oxygen  
oxygen particles

I'm alive because the wind brings me oxygen particles  
and those oxygen particles  
roll over my tongue into my windpipe  
to my lungs  
and push through thousands of little alveoli to my blood  
and go on a tour of my whole body in my arteries  
to supply all my cells with oxygen

and when my cells are full of oxygen  
the oxygen particles gather at the exit for an exhalation  
and slip back into the wind

who takes them somewhere further along  
where somebody else needs some oxygen too  
so those oxygen particles  
that were in my body just now  
do the whole tour again in somebody else's body  
that's been the existence of oxygen particles  
for millions of years  
getting breathed in, doing a tour of a body, getting breathed out  
off on the wind to the next one  
ever since the first sigh of the wind

the oxygen particles in my lungs right now  
were once in Cleopatra's lungs  
Buddha's  
Napoleon's

Mussolini's  
the lungs of the person who discovered atoms  
and the person who discovered the atomic bomb  
the lungs of extinct sabretooth tigers  
mammoths  
T-rexes  
the lungs of the grandfather I never met  
and that garbage collector  
who one day out of pure desperation  
stuffed himself into a garbage bag  
and let himself be picked up by the garbage truck

they're still here  
floating in the air  
and if they'd known they were still going to be here  
they'd have done things differently