

You Sit on a Chair

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An extract

Translation hand-crafted without any use of generative AI

Original title Je zit op een stoel
Publisher Koppertnik, 2026

Translation Dutch into English
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You're sitting on a chair, well no, you sit on a chair. And sitting on a chair you have the feeling that you are both inside and outside of your body, that you're sitting here on a chair at a table and that at the same time you're sitting in a chair inside your head, the walls of the surrounding room blend seamlessly into the walls of your skull like two lines crossing on a blank page, well no, but that's the feeling you have and that's why it's impossible to separate what there is – the facts – from the experience – your feelings. It's precisely because you are sitting on a chair at this table that you're sitting on a chair inside your head and precisely because you are sitting on a chair inside your head, you remain frozen on the chair at this table, because the mental sitting and the physical sitting are tied together like a fetus to its mother, which allows this space to fit perfectly within the clear boundaries of your perception as well as within the diffuse vibrations of your mind's eye and because of this you experience this space as a square with blotchy corners. And you could have sat somewhere else, on a different chair, but then you'd have done exactly the same thing on that other chair as on this one, so perhaps it has nothing to do with the chair at all but with the chair inside your head, well no, perhaps this chair is both under you and inside you, both inside you and under you, though it could just as well be that there are two different chairs, like two equal but different wheels on the same bike. And what does it matter whether you're sitting on this chair or another one, would you feel any different if you sat not on this chair but on that one? You're sitting on a chair and it is perfectly possible to leave the chair, to leave the room, if you can already call this a room, but as soon as you allow this thought, as soon as you open the door, inside your mind, like now with this thought, you open it a chink, you get the feeling that whatever else, you have to stay sitting on this chair, you have to persevere, persevere and press on, because you sat down on this chair for a reason and getting up from the chair would run counter to the original motives that lead you to want to sit there, even though you can no longer remember exactly why you sat down on a chair, which doesn't matter because you're sitting on a chair. And the fact you're sitting on this chair says something about why you're sitting there, namely that you are sitting here, no, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter, it is what it is, and yet, even though it doesn't matter, even though it is what it is, you try all the same, well no, and because it doesn't matter you try to tense your muscles, straighten your back, press your heels down, to begin twisting the torso, but you seize up, you freeze, as though someone is pouring liquid concrete into your limbs. And you get the feeling that your attempt fails, that the attempt is immediately nipped in the bud, so it doesn't matter whether you made an attempt or not because that attempt to move failed, that you don't move but the chair moves itself, that the chair isn't only inside your head but is moving from your head to your neck, from your neck to your mouth, and via your mouth to your oesophagus and from your oesophagus to your stomach and from your stomach to your intestines and via the intestines to your liver, spleen, kidneys and pelvis, and via your pelvis to

your sexual organs, your thighs, your knees, and via your knees to your calves, your ankles, and via your ankles to your toes to end up in the rough, picked-at calluses on the soles of your feet, the chair in all your halted cells, and you, trapped, in all these coagulated cells, like a prisoner marking a tally on the inside of their own skin. And you are too fossilized to move which is why your body tries to ascertain the position of your limbs in order to calculate the position of the walls, in order to construct this space, this labyrinth made of concrete, thoughts, grout and joints, but you sit frozen on the chair and because you are frozen on the chair your body cannot adopt any other position, and because your body cannot adopt any other position, you are unable to open the spaces your body has stored in the memory bank of your ribs, knees and shoulders, which you would have been able to by adopting new positions. And because of this, it will be impossible, should you be lying on the bed in your childhood home instead of sitting on this chair, impossible to follow in this moonlight the paths you took as you played in the sun as a child. And you don't know how long you've been sitting here, no, you don't know that, all you know is that you're sitting here on a chair but in the situation you find yourself in, in the present moment, this situation, this standstill to be exact, in this utterly vague and murky situation, you have absolutely no conception of time, the way people sometimes say that a year has gone by in a flash and the way someone who has just woken up from a nap but has actually slept all day, or the other way round, when someone who has just woken up thinks they slept for a day but it was actually just fifteen minutes, that's how you're sitting here on a chair, trapped in a few minutes that seem to last an eternity. You sit on a chair and you look outside and in the reflection of the window you see yourself sitting on a chair and because of this, it's not entirely clear whether you are looking out or in, no, it isn't entirely clear, the way it isn't entirely clear that you're not looking at someone who is a spitting image of yourself, or that you're looking at yourself with a head that belongs to you but the face of somebody else, no, whatever the case, it is impossible to leave the chair, or perhaps that possibility doesn't fall within the realms of your willpower because your own hands are just outside of hand's reach? Are you not allowed to leave the chair or are you not able to leave the chair? You don't know and so you might be able to stand up on the chair, no, the murky territory of being present on your chair but also no longer sitting on your chair, no, standing on your chair is an interesting option, an act of resistance within the bounds of the acceptable, well no, standing on a chair, standing up and hanging yourself with a frayed rope, defying gravity, falling and hanging, hanging and falling, no longer being able to stand up, no, no, no, no longer waiting, following through with the action, put your money where your mouth is people sometimes say, dangling above a kicked-over chair, well no, better to sit then, better to sit, stuck, but are you still alive? You open and close a window on your screen, you're sitting at a table and as you sit at a table to try to fit your fist into your mouth and on the table there's a mug of steaming coffee, and there's a window, and there's a door, and there are walls, and in one of those walls there's a crack, and there's a windowsill and on that windowsill there's an aloe vera, a cactus and an arum lily, and there is the sun and there is the moon, and when you first sat down here, this chair was the place of your dreams, your future, and in your future you were still very young but on this chair you've suddenly become very old. So you say to yourself 'this situation is untenable, you need to move, you need to leave the chair', and as you say this you look at the room with its improbable walls and as you look at the walls you realize how irreally and improbably you've placed yourself on this chair between these walls, well no, as you sit here with your willpower on this chair between these walls without end, that ceiling without end and this floor without end, as you sit there on the chair, you move your hand, index finger pointed, towards your screen, the kind of pointed finger that people use when they are explaining how to get to the nearest bakery or supermarket. And as soon as the tip of your index finger touches the screen, you move your finger to the other side of the screen, first to the left and then to the right, moving your finger over the screen, before ordering the finger to stop in the middle of the screen as you look at the space with its endless walls, its endless ceiling and its endless floor,

no, 'you have to get moving', you repeat with the tip of your index finger on the screen, the endlessly moving images inside it. You're sitting on a chair, and sitting on your chair you're afraid, afraid, you're afraid that, sitting on your chair, you'll eat yourself, swallow yourself, digest yourself, afraid you'll never make yourself a reality, you'll never stand up for yourself and so certainly not for others either and you're afraid that your teeth will turn around in your mouth and then start moving, from your mouth via your oesophagus to your stomach, from your stomach to your liver, from your liver to your lungs, from your lungs to your spine, afraid that your intestines will slowly swallow your body, that your body will slowly, via your oesophagus, sink away into a swamp of stomach acid, dissolve, disappear, afraid, so incredibly afraid that nobody will know who you were, what you dreamed of, afraid afraid that people will remember you as a paving slab, as an empty soft drinks can, a dead birch branch, a misaddressed love letter, a chewed sandwich crust on an overgrown tombstone, hence the fear of dissolving or shattering into a thousand pieces, afraid that both your eyes will turn into wells and that that someone without a hand will throw a stone from your childhood into one of the wells and that after years and years they still won't have heard a splash, that in the end ten naked toes will be left, arranged loosely next to each other on the ground beneath your chair like the remnants of an incomprehensible ritual, you are afraid, afraid you are, afraid to disappear, afraid afraid afraid, do you even exist? You look out of the window and outside there's a tree, a bare tree and that tree has a trunk and that trunk has branches and these bare branches and in the distance between the glass and the reinforced concrete, the tip of a church tower sticks out, and you're sitting on a chair and there are clouds and the clouds are located above you and the clouds are white and some clouds are big and other clouds are small, and you lay your hand on your thigh, and you lay your hand on the table top and you count the freckles on the back of your hand and then move your hand to the mouse mat, and you lay your hand on the mouse and now the palm of your hand is covering the mouse. You move your index finger up and down, you lay your hand next to the mouse, your hand is next to the mouse, the mouse is on the mouse mat, the hand is therefore also next to the mouse mat, positions, spatial relationships, geometry.
