



# Poem: Dedicated to Andries G. van Aarde by Lina Spies

## Author:

Lina Spies<sup>1</sup>



## Affiliation:

<sup>1</sup>Department of Afrikaans and Dutch, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

## Correspondence to:

Lina Spies

## email:

linaspies@xsinet.co.za

## Postal address:

PO Box 675, Stellenbosch 7599, South Africa

## How to cite this poem:

Spies, L., 2011, 'Poem: Dedicated to Andries G. van Aarde by Lina Spies', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67(1), Art. #1041, 1 page. DOI: 10.4102/hts.v67i1.1041

## Ontdaan

*Nee, dit was nie 'n heilige nag nie;  
dit was 'n nag soos alle ander nagte.  
Miskien was dit 'n sterligte nag  
waarin dieselfde sterre  
– soos die wette van die natuur bepaal –  
geskyn het bo Galilea,  
die oproerige provinsie  
waaronter die Romeine altyd 'n wakende oog moes hou.*

*Nee, jy het nie – hoogswanger – die reis afgelê  
saam met Josef, die fiktiewe vader van jou ongebore kind,  
om jou te laat inskryf in die sensus  
soos bepaal deur keiser Augustus nie;  
vrouens het nie getel as inwoners van 'n land nie.*

*Nee, jy het nie gelyk soos die Italiaanse meesters  
jou later geskilder het nie –  
die nakomelinge van Pontius Pilatus  
wat daardie kind wat jy in skande moes baar  
toe hy èrens in sy dertigerjare was  
veroordeel het tot die skanddood aan 'n kruis.*

*Nee, jy het nie 'n Fra Angelico-blou mantel gedra  
en bo jou hoof het geen stralekrans geskyn  
toe 'n sogenaamde engel jou die boodskap sou gebring het  
dat die kind wat jy gedra het die Seun van God was nie.*

*Nee, jy moes donker gewees het van huid en haar  
– eie aan die volk waartoe jy behoort het –  
en aan die vrug van jou skoot  
moes jy soos alle uitgeworpenes swaar gedra het;  
of hy uit ongeoorloofde liefde verwek is  
of uit geoorloofde misbruik van 'n vrou.*

*Vaderloos in Galilea, het God van hom besit geneem  
sodat hy aan swakkes en geminagtes  
die status van menswees kon gee;  
sy hande op kinders kon lê  
en vrouens na hom aan kon trek  
onder wie hy jou nooit uitgesonder het  
as die Moeder van God nie.*

*Ek was lank op reis na hom  
maar eers toe die engelekorre stil geword het  
en ek sy stem kon hoor;  
eers toe die geur van wierook en mirre verdamp het  
en ek die sweet en stof kon ruik  
van sy tuistelose omswerwinge,  
het ek my rug gedraai op die Kind van Bethlehem  
en jou seun ontmoet, rabbi Jesjoea van Nasaret.*

Lina Spies, 17 Mei 2008  
Opgedra aan Andries van Aarde en gepubliseer in *Tydlose gety*, Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, bl. 68–69, 2010; met toestemming van digter en uitgewer.

## Unsettled

*No, it was not a holy night;  
it was a night like any other.  
Maybe it was a starlit night  
in which the same stars  
– as the laws of nature decree –  
shone over Galilee,  
the unruly province  
closely watched by the Romans.*

*No, you – heavily pregnant – did not travel the distance  
with Joseph, the fictitious father of your unborn child,  
to be registered in the census  
as ordered by Emperor Augustus;  
women did not count as citizens of the land.*

*No, you did not look like the portraits Italian masters  
later painted of you –  
the progeny of Pontius Pilate  
who condemned the child you bore in shame  
when he was in his thirties  
to a shameful death on a cross.*

*No, you did not wear a Fra Angelico blue cloak,  
no halo adorned your head  
when a so-called angel brought you the message  
that the child in your womb was the son of God.*

*No, you must have been dark of hue  
– like the people to whom you belong –  
and bearing the fruit of your womb  
must have been hard like it is for outcasts;  
whether he was conceived from illegitimate love  
or from the legitimate abuse of a woman.*

*Fatherless in Galilee, God usurped him  
so that he could give the weak and downtrodden  
the status of humanity;  
could lay his hands on children  
and draw women to him  
among whom he never favoured you  
as the Mother of God.*

*My journey to him was long  
but only when the angels' choirs were silent  
and I could hear his voice;  
only when the scent of incense and myrrh had faded away  
and I could smell the sweat and dust  
of his homeless wanderings,  
could I turn my back on the Child of Bethlehem  
and meet your son, rabbi Jeshua from Nazareth.*

English translation by Yolanda Dreyer of Lina Spies' poem *Ontdaan*, dedicated to Andries van Aarde, and published in *Tydlose gety*, Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, pp. 68–69, 2010; with permission by poet and publisher.

© 2011. The Authors.  
Licensee: OpenJournals  
Publishing. This work  
is licensed under the  
Creative Commons  
Attribution License.