

De lastpost / The Nuisance - English Translation

Basic version of De lastpost, as performed 15 April, 2019

For the translation of the complete version (all 24 parts), see www.delastpost.nl/inenglish

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About this translation

Texts with an asterisk in the title were translated in 2017 by Hendrik Jan Bosman, to be sung on the same music as the Dutch texts.

The other texts were translated earlier, by Pauline Donders and Hendrik Jan Bosman, just to help the singers understand the words they sing. This translation is *not* intended to be poetic nor to be correct English; the words chosen and the word order resemble the original song texts as much as possible.

In 2019, 4. That Man was added. It replaces 4a-c, 6, and 8.

Texts

1*. Begin

All singers and audience

O tell, stories need a beginning.
Begin, give us your words, your singing.
And tell, tell us the news you're bringing
of him, Jesus the Nuisance. Sing!
Begin, now, and sing!

4. That Man (Die man) - 2019

Kajafas

What do I do about that man?
That nuisance, that rebel, that unhinged teacher.
He drives the people wild, they make him far too great.

Jesus

The world is about to be cleansed
The whole thing will be turned around.
Who bullies people, will be booed away,
what holds people captive, [will be] torn apart.

A new world is coming soon
where those who cry now, will be able to laugh again
Who are oppressed now, will be allowed to stand up
Who hide in shelter now, will skip and dance.

The truth is: coercion or dominion
have no place in my kingdom.
No high or low, for every human is free,
equal to every other.

People on the temple square

He says that well: coercion or dominion
have no place in my kingdom.
No high or low, for every human is free,
equal to every other.

Kajafas

What do I do about that man?
I put him in his place, for I am the high priest.
He shakes his head and laughs.
Then he makes a fool out of me,
just listen to what he tells:

Jesus

A wine farmer appointed stewards.
He said: "Take good care of my vineyard.
And when the grapes turn ripe,
we will share her abundance"
Yet, this sharing never happened.

Every servant coming for the rent
was scolded, thrown out on the street
and sent away, black and blue.

At last the farmer sent his son.
He thought: "Him they will not harm."
But they beat him to death, just like that,
As it goes in the world.

Kajafas

What kind of a story was that?
That son, is that supposed to be him?
And we, the priests, those stewards?
And has he no respect?
No respect for our authority?

Jesus

You hear this, but you don't get it.
My words blow like the wind.
And who doesn't see truth in them
is deaf while hearing, and blind while seeing.

The truth is, that some day the power
of those who still think a whole lot of themselves,
of king, emperor, ruler, highly esteemed,
will blow away like dust on the wind.

People on the temple square

It will be like that: the day comes that the power
of God will conquer the world,
the day that this king, long awaited,
begins his kingdom of peace here with us!

Kajafas

Wat do we do about that man?
We must get rid of him!
Just think about the Romans:
They'll burn down everything,
if this should become a revolt!
He has to go, that man!
But wait: not on the feast,
that would cause too much trouble.
Far from his fans, or else it will not work.
But what? When? How? Who could tip us off?
A renegade, perhaps, who has lost faith in him?

9. Wait (Wacht)

A reflection

Wait, wait a moment:
behind me time
stands still, before me lies what
unwritten,
in your hands, in your eyes,
wherever you will go.

But wait, wait,
were you not once
who I am, I who you
thought to become?
I thought you, dream you, knew you,
more than I know myself.

And now?

Oh, everything piles up in me.
Pride upon tears
Spite upon truth
Passion upon pain

You change the rules,
you turn the tables -
not I.

Heavy is my heart.
It rages and weighs,
it ponders and turns
and breaks.

10*. At the Table (Aan tafel)

Judas

Look at that Messiah! If he only knew
what's about to happen, doesn't have a clue.
I have just betrayed him, but I still pretend,
sitting at the table as his closest friend.

See the man just sit there, take a piece of bread.
But, what is he saying? 'Soon I will be dead.
One of you betrays me, one of you who knows.
Well, so much for friendship, that is how it goes.'

I reply: 'Never me! How could that ever be?'

Our eyes meet. He says: 'Well, you would know.'
Far too close. Too painful. I must go...

11*. How come? (Anders dan anders)

Youngest one at the table

How come, how come,
how come tonight is not,
how come tonight is not the same,
diff'rent from others, from others,
is diff'rent from all the others?

Oldest one at the table

I'll tell you the story: We lived in distress
as prisoners, slaving in a valley of death.
But listen, remember, how this very night
He led us to freedom, and from darkness to light.

All

O blessed you are, o blessed you are,
the One and only King of All,
You give us the wine, you give us the wine
of freedom that makes us whole.

Youngest one at the table

How come this night is not the same, different from all the others?

Oldest one at the table

I'll tell you the story: We still couldn't flee.
On one side the armies, on the other the sea.
But listen, remember, how this very night
He paved us a path among the waves, a way to life.

All

O blessed you are, o blessed you are,
the One and only King of All,
You give us the bread, you give us the bread
of life that 'll make us whole.

Youngest one at the table

How come this night is not the same, different from all the others?

Oldest one at the table

I'll tell you the story: We wandered in vain
through desert and wasteland, with no purpose or name.
But listen, remember his voice on that day:
He led us to love, let his commandments show the way.

All

O blessed you are, o blessed you are,
the One and only King of All,
You give us your word, you give us your word
of love that 'll make us whole.

Youngest one at the table

How come this night is not the same, different from all the others?

Jesus

For me it is the last one.
I will no longer see it.
My body will be broken, like this bread is.
My blood, it will be poured out like this wine.
Yet I will never perish:

Look here, this bread: I break it.
Look here, this wine: I pour it.
The bread and wine are life and love and freedom,
yes, everything I am and ever was,
I pass it on to you now.

So break the bread and share it.
So drink the wine. Remember
this bread and wine as life and love and freedom,
as everything you are and ever were,
and pass it on to others.

14. Among the black trees (Tussen de zwarte bomen)

Jesus

How did I end up here,
shivering, alone, in the night?
Lost, among the black trees,
hidden from what awaits me in a minute.
Oh, Father! You seem so far away from me!
Who else can stand with me now?

See my friends sleep, over there:
Would stay awake with me,
but their eyelids are too heavy
to make that happen.
I am alone...

What's about to happen to me?
All I know is: this is going wrong.
My life, my body, all my dreams:
to shreds, because a troublemaker is never welcome.
Oh, Father! Does it really have to go like this with me?
Can I really not skip this?

You who, tired and afraid,
would never leave me:
Is it already taking too long for you
to see it through?
I am alone...

Where should this lead up to?
Should I flee, or stay strong?
This life that I have taken on
now only seems the preparation for my death.
Oh, Father, you always have your plan ready, don't you?
What should I do? You tell me...

Wake up! Stand up!
Don't let courage sink.

Look: the gang is already coming
to arrest me.
We're going over there...

15. As agreed (Volgens afspraak)

Judas

Where can I run? Where can I hide,
away from the despair that fills me?
Can I get away from the thoughts,
away from the darkness that envelops me?
Where is a way out? Where will I find breath,
away from my deeds, away from the guilt?

Underneath this tree I rest, panting, for a short while,
What just happened: How can I live with it?

I see it again: Me and the men,
clubs and swords along for the job,
Then a short search. Sure enough, there he is!
We come closer, close the loop,
and as agreed, I give the sign:
I walk towards him and give him... a kiss.

He says: "Dear friend, what has driven you?"
Friend! He calls me friend! Can I live with that?

Furious Peter swings a sword.
Jesus says: "Stop that! We will not strike!"
Disciples flee, scared like hares,
he is bound, meets my eye.
I stand watching, cold and terrified,
now I realise what I have done.

Underneath this tree I think, with fear and trembling:
I have murdered him! With that I can not live...

17a*. Who's it going to be? - part 1 (Kiezen jullie maar - deel 1)

Herald:

All rise, all rise, Mr. Pilate's here!

Pilate

As for the Jesus case: I had my doubt.
Before I had said a word, they began to shout:
"Indictment: rebellion! Death our demand!"
But Jesus seemed harmless. The charge would not stand.
I wanted this over, so I tried a plan.

I said: "You know, that on the Feast it is tradition
to pardon a prisoner. Now, you make the decision:
Will Jesus Bar Abbas, the terrorist, be free?
Or Jesus of Nazareth, the teacher? Tell me:
Just who will I free? Which Jesus? Who's it going to be?"

17b*. I've had a dream (Ik kreeg een droom)

Clerk

Message for you, mister Pilate, greetings from your wife.

Mrs. Pilate

My darling Pontius, please let him be,
the man in front of you, please let him be.
Do not convict him, for I know:
He is not guilty, simply not guilty.
I've had a dream, my darling!
And now I ask of you: Please let him be,
the man in front of you, please let him be.

My darling Pontius...

You are the governor, you're in command.
I stand here powerless, with empty hands.
You're the decider, yet I know:
He is not guilty, simply not guilty!
Make no mistake, my darling!
Again, I beg of you: Please let him be,
Don't have him crucified, please let him be!
My darling Pontius... / A loving, loving kiss...

17c*. Who's it going to be? - part 2 (Kiezen jullie maar - deel 2)

Pilate

In that one minute, while my wife had me distracted,
The high priest had worked the crowds, who eagerly reacted.
I asked them to choose now. They answered as one cry:
"Not him, but Bar Abbas! Bar Abbas is our guy!"
It scared me: The rage, the hatred! Who could tell me why?

"What then," I asked, "of Jesus? How should he be punished?"
The crowds bellowed: "Nail the guy! A cross! We want him finished!"
"I wash my hands clean," I said, "my conscience must be clear!"
They kept screaming: "Kill! Cross!" I gave in to fear.
"All right," I said, "Flog him... Then have him crucified... Get him out of here!"

19*. I Must Be Nuts (Ik lijk wel gek)

Simon of Cyrene

Step by step and step by stumble
on the long, long way
How did I come to this?
Lugging lumber! Chafes and cuts!
First that wooden cross was his,
now it's mine, I must be nuts.
Hey, you there! Simon of Cyrene!
He stumbled down in pain.

Then some Romans drew me near,
said before I could complain:
"Help this loser over here!"

Hey, you there, Simon of Cyrene!

Fine! Let me make the climb,
bear his cross. I can, I will.
He will get it back in time
On the execution hill.

20. No more words (Geen woorden meer)

Roman soldiers, people standing by

Left! Right! Left! Right!

Look! There he is, our King Nuisance!

March on the spot and... at ease!

Get that scum over here.

Give him some wine, that will keep him calm.

He doesn't want it.

He doesn't want it? Whatever. I don't care.

Look! There he stands, King Nuisance!

Take off his clothes.

Whoever wants them, can have them, just raffle them or something.

Who wants clothes from a nuisance?

Put him down on that cross over there. Nail him to it.

Nails through the wrists

Some more through the ankles.

Great! Now up with the thing!

Look! There he hangs, King Nuisance!

Yes, he hangs just right like that:

Right in the middle, among the robbers

That's where he belongs.

Now a notice above his head:

"This here is Jesus, from Nazareth, that dump, King of the Jews"

What that means? What do I know? Pilate wants it.

There he writhes, the poor sod,
gasps for breath.

There he hangs, on display for all his people.

Hey, you, saviour! Son of God!

Save yourself or croak!

Come down from that cross, if you can!

If you're The King, then do it!

Ha, Ha! I laugh: this is quite a change from "Hosanna!"

What has happened in just one week?

The noon hour. The sun is at its peak.

But around us, and within us, it gets dark,

black as night. No hand in front of our face.

The sun can no longer bear to see what we are doing.

I am laughing no more.

What is this?

What kind of man is this?

The world is silent, tense. The hours crawl.

Until he, he of all people, tears up the silence.

He screams, a raw scream, full of despair:

My God! My God! Why do you abandon me?

No one wants to understand. Still they are laughing:

Hear! The loser calls his God!
We're very curious if that will amount to anything,
If perhaps you can already see someone
coming to rescue him? Don't think so!

Jesus pants.

No breath.

No more words.

One scream.

Then he collapses

And suffocates.

And dies.

22. Blankness of Days (Leegte van dagen)

A reflection

Everything in me echoes the past.
Everything turns to stone, has broken
off like glass.
And I tear my heart open
on the blankness of days
which one by one by one
and not a single one
the way it was.

Put out the stars, steal away the moon,
for all light turns to shadow
and each new dreamless night
whispers, desperately, your name.

23*. Farewell (Adieu)

Choir and audience

The last shimmers of light are fleeing,
the long shadows of night come creeping.
A grave lies in a garden, sleeping.
So sleep, resting in peace, farewell.
Dear Jesus, farewell.

A stone blocking the cavern's entrance.
A guard, openly in attendance.
All help hopelessly at a distance.
So sleep, resting in peace, farewell.
Dear Jesus, farewell.

That's it. Does it all end in sorrow,
Go home, back in the line tomorrow?
Just look: What is there left to hope for?
So rise, living in peace, farewell.
Dear people, farewell.

Matthew's Story in a Nutshell

In De lastpost, een veelstemmig verhaal

See also www.delastpost.nl/inenglish



Part I

Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem

Pilgrims are arriving in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Jewish Easter. Among them is Jesus, riding on a donkey. On his entry he is cheered by the inhabitants of the city, who expect him to drive away the hated Romans. Jesus goes to the temple, however. The children continue to follow him.

(Dansen van plezier – Sing and Play)

Debate in the Temple Courts

Upon entering the temple courts Jesus chases away all the merchants and starts to prophesy about a new world that is coming. He is confronted by the priests and scribes. Jesus offends them by telling a story with an all too clear message. The people that have been listening respond with enthusiasm and the priests and scribes retreat.

(Pardon, jongeman – Excuse Us, Young Man)

Meeting of the High Priests

The high priests decide that Jesus poses a threat and must be taken care of. At the same time they realise that they risk causing a revolt if they arrest him in public.

(Niet op het feest – Not during the Feast)

A Woman Embalms Jesus with Expensive Oil

Jesus and his disciples are sitting at the table, when a woman enters. She approaches Jesus and pours very expensive oil on him to, in a way, anoint him as king. The disciples complain about the wasting of this expensive oil, but Jesus praises the woman. He says that with her oil she has already embalmed him for his death...

(Die dag – That Day)

Judas Betrays Jesus

Judas, one of Jesus' friends, goes to the meeting of the high priests. He announces that for thirty pieces of silver he is willing to tell them where they will be able to arrest Jesus without being noticed. He is paid at once.

(Wat komt hij doen? – What Does He Want?)

Jesus' Last Supper

On Thursday night Jesus and his friends celebrate Pesach, the Jewish Easter. At the start of the night, Jesus says that he knows he will be betrayed and that he also knows who will betray him. Judas is ashamed and slinks away.

(Aan tafel – At the Table)

In the Pesach ritual the youngest child (here: the youngest disciple) asks questions about the meaning of the celebration. The oldest person present, in this case Jesus, answers and tells about the history of the Jewish people: the enslavement in Egypt, the exodus through the sea, the coming together in one people under one God. After each answer everyone joins in a festive song of thanks.

(Anders dan anders – How Come?, part 1)

After the fourth question Jesus says unexpectedly that this Pesach meal will be his last. He breaks the bread and pours the wine. In the same way, he says, will his body be broken and his blood be shed. He then passes both bread and wine around and adds: in this way I give myself and everything for which I have lived to you. Then he instructs his disciples to do the same and in this way spread freedom, life and love.

(Anders dan anders – How Come?, part 2)

In conclusion everyone sings an exuberant song of praise.

(Van hand tot hand – From Hand to Hand)

Part II

The Mountain of Olives (the Garden of Gethsemane)

On their way to a place to spend the night, Jesus tells his friends that they will all abandon him. They are shocked and protest. Jesus says to Peter: before the rooster crows, you will be gone.

(Onderweg – In the Moonlight)

In the garden of olives Jesus asks his friends if they will stay awake with him. He isolates himself and prays to God in despair. Three times he returns to his friends and each time he finds that they have fallen asleep. On his final return he urges them to get up and wait with him for his arrest.

(Tussen de zwarte bomen – Among the Black Trees)

Judas arrives accompanied by a number of men that have been sent by the high priests to arrest Jesus. He identifies Jesus by giving him a kiss. Jesus addresses him as 'friend'. Later Judas will come to regret his actions and he will hang himself from a tree.

(Volgens afspraak – As Agreed)

Before the High Priests

Jesus is interrogated by the high priests, who decide that he should be put to death. Peter is watching from a distance when bystanders recognize him and accuse him of being Jesus' friend.

Three times he denies this. Then the rooster crows.

(Die ken ik niet – I Don't Know Him)

Conviction by Pilate

As the legal authority of the high priests is limited, they take Jesus to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. He does not consider Jesus to be a serious threat, but the high priests pressure him to convict Jesus anyway. Pilate attempts to find a way to release Jesus and allows the people to decide who should be pardoned: Jesus or the infamous freedom fighter Barabbas.

(Kiezen jullie maar – Who's it going to be?, part 1)

Pilate is distracted for a moment when his wife urges him to leave Jesus alone.

(Ik kreeg een droom – I've Had a Dream)

In the meantime the high priests have incited the people to demand the release of the freedom fighter and the crucifixion of Jesus. Pilate washes his hands and orders Jesus to be flogged and crucified.

(Kiezen jullie maar – Who's it going to be?, part 2)

Jesus is Mocked, Flogged, Crucified; He Dies

During a rough soldiers' game Jesus is dressed up like a king and mocked. Next he is flogged to within an inch of his life.

(Zo doen we dat – That's How it's Done)

Afterwards Jesus has to carry his own cross to the place of execution, but, as he is no longer able to do so, a passer-by is forced to carry it for him.

(Ik lijk wel gek – I Must Be Nuts)

The soldiers then undress Jesus and nail him to the cross while the crowds of spectators mock him. In the middle of the day everything turns dark and the soldiers become frightened, but the mocking continues, even after Jesus cries out "My God, why have you forsaken me". At last he dies.

(Geen woorden meer – No More Words)

After Jesus' Death

Strange things happen and make the high priests understand that the world has been changed forever.

(Aan rafels – In Tatters)

Jesus' body is placed in a grave, which is then sealed off with a heavy rock and guarded, at the request of the high priests. It seems as if all hope is lost, that it was all for nothing. Is this then the end of the story?

(Adieu – Farewell)

Epilogue

This may be the close of the Passion, but the story does not end here. Matthew and the other evangelists describe Jesus' resurrection and his command to all people to carry his message into the world; where he himself will then be as well.

De lastpost concludes with a poem in song: Maar in mijn hart – But in My Heart.