

This is also the Netherlands:

Listen,

See,

Feel,

Smell.

Listen:

Denkend aan Holland – Hendrik Marsman – 1936

**Denkend aan Holland
zie ik breede rivieren
traag door oneindig
laagland gaan,
rijen ondenkbaar
ijle populieren
als hoge pluimen
aan den einder staan;
en in de geweldige
ruimte verzonken
de boerderijen
verspreid door het land,
boomgroepen, dorpen,
geknotte torens,
kerken en olmen
in een grootsch verband,
de lucht hangt er laag
en de zon wordt er langzaam
in grijze veelkleurige
dampen gesmoord,
en in alle gewesten
wordt de stem van het water
met zijn eeuwige rampen
gevreesd en gehoord.**

See:

Flood

In the night from Saturday to Sunday 1953 February 1 happened that which where the Dutch people always were afraid of: the water came. A unprecedented heavy northwest storm, in combination with a high tide, the see drove in to the holes from South-Holland and Sealand so high that on many places de dikes broke.

War

The German bombardment caused a fire that burned out the whole city in three hours. Ninehundred Rotterdammers died, tenthousand became homeless. Twentyfivethousand houses get lost, over twentythousand shops and twothousand fabrics and workplaces. Two days later Catrinus, his brother Arie and his father Koos went to Rotterdam, to visit their clients. ‘It were kind of visits to offer our condolences to our relations and colleges, cause all those cases lie in ruins. But still these man with their complete staff were standing next to the half smoulder buildings, the places where they worked a lot, years and years. What remembered Catrinus the most, were the smells, de combination of tar, rope, coffee and other fabric smells, mixed with the some sweet dead body smells who where rise up from under the rubble.

Feel:

Compartmentalization

With the death of my great-grandmother, the mother from my grandmother, there was a break in my family between Reformed Protestant and Reformed. The Reforming of Abraham Kuyper was just beginning when she swore on her deathbed to my grandmother: 'Child, follow that Reformed minister, go to his catechization, raise your children in the through learning that they will be saved.

Together the Reformed people began with building a complete system within they could be safety for their morals: the stronghold from the family, the stronghold from the own church community, from the own university, from the own papers, from the own school, from the own politic side, and that all together under the credo 'sovereignty in own circle'.

Netherlands East Indies

(Introduction: Hansje is the little brother of Geert Mak and he was born in Indië. He became sick on his first journey to the Netherlands. Now follows a part about his feeling when he was in the Netherlands for the first time.)

My little brother came in as a phenomenon in the hospital. 'Do you come from Indies?' 'You're not that brown at all?' 'Didn't you brought a monkey?' Over here he learnt for the first the real Netherlands, threw the children and the nurses. 'The people were crazy to me! I would never lose that feeling. When I walked to an Indies kampong, almost a half century later, it came back, that feeling. Then I knew what normal was again.

Smell:

Tar and rope, that had to be the first smells from my dad. Fresh, new rope, canvas and schooner sail, foresails, topgallants, square sails and storm foresails, those were drying in the workplace. There was a kitchen, that smelled like milk and bread, and later on the day it smelled like dripping, crackling and baked fish. And at last there was something as wood, and the coolness of steel.

The first noises. In the house sounded from out of the workplace now and then the rattle of a pulley or the towing from a role sail. Sometimes the voices from my granddad and his two oldest sons, Koos and Arie. Outside there were the footsteps, the barrows over the street, the tinkle from the horse tram.