

Each month we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these newsletters. We hope that this helps us all get to know each other better. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and tea are becoming, as the tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of the tea fuels some great work in this world, and we are so honored to show you some glimpses of such beautiful people and their tea. This month we thought you should meet our poet—the quietest and most serene tea drinker in GTH, Jasper Hermans.

How to introduce myself here to this amazing family which I'm so grateful to be part of!?. Okay, I'll give it a try... Once upon a time, long ago (actually last February, but it feels like years ago), I made plans to travel to Taiwan. And two weeks before my departure, while being lost again in the sometimes challenging and dangerous combination of two worlds: Internet and Tea, I stumbled upon the Tea Sage Hut website. I stayed one week at the center, and after being away from the center for less than a week, I felt that the only right thing to do was to go back and stay until my flight home to Amsterdam. I knew pretty soon that this was and is my home and family. Now I continue this path, step by step, trying not to take too many steps at once in my sometimes youthful impatience. And after three "break" years of working, traveling, staying at spiritual communities—of which two became my home, Plum Village and the Tea Sage Hut, I'm living together with my parents and sister in a town close to Amsterdam where I'm doing one of the most horrifying things I could imagine: going to school. (Actually tea and meditation pretty much transformed my fears about studying completely... Well, almost.) I have been trying my best to open my heart and space to anyone whose spirit is ready to meet and become one with the spirit of the Leaf and Mother Earth. Although at times I feel like I'm the only person on this path of Tea here in this piece of land we call the Netherlands, I never feel as if I'm drinking tea alone. Even when I'm not so fortunate to share tea (as I do often) with a true bodhisattva with whom I live under the same roof—and is also my biological mother—I'm always sharing my bowls and cups with many of you. And often while sipping tea I smile to you, because I know that you're there, and I'll do my best to be there for you too!

Here is a poem that I wrote recently on the plane back to Amsterdam while crying tremendous tears of joy and gratitude, after an incredible week together with Wu De and the amazing group of people in Estonia. Thank you all so much for sharing tea with me every day. Whenever one of you finds her or himself in Holland, you're very much welcome to come by and share some bowls, hugs, words or anything (even in between a transit at the airport—I'll bring the tea and bowls along)!

*The tears I shed today are the tears of thousands.
Thousands of beings whose paths we cross along the way,
And thousands of beings who are healed by the love from
Mother Earth every day.
These tears are also tears from Mother Earth.
Tears of compassion for the beings that have forgotten that they
themselves are Mother Earth,
And tears of gratitude for the beings who light up this uni-
verse.
Tears of only God knows what, as words can't describe where
these tears are coming from.
May we recognize each other in every sip, breath and step.
I bow deeply to you and all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.*

