

Tootje Boutkan

Dutch patient with ABC



Part I

Some relationships are changed by having this illness. But it's not getting worse. I can't say that I lost friends because I'm sick and they don't know how to handle me. I think many friendships have become closer because friends want to help us and want to be with us.

There is a dark mist around me but near to me, it's clear. I can see what's close by, but there'll always be the mist. In some things I think I will be richer. This illness gives me some more intention for my life. But I didn't want it. It would be nicer to have no cancer. To work the way I want. I was always working as a woman. It was for me important to work. I was the working woman. Now I am the ill woman.

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Still in my heart it's there every day, every minute. With the all the things I do, there is cancer inside me. Sometimes I say, I'm Tootje and I have cancer. But I am not the cancer. I am Tootje.

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Part II

I always said my prognosis is bad but the time I have now is okay. But I always know there will be something wrong with me in the future. Only I don't know when the future is here. In the beginning we talked a lot about the cancer with my children, with my family, with my friends. You have to talk about it because it's so mean inside you. You have to talk about dying or leaving the children and your husband. But now, later down the road, I'm not always talking about cancer. Still in my heart it's there every day, every minute. With the all the things I do, there is cancer inside me. Sometimes I say, I'm Tootje and I have

cancer. But I am not the cancer. I am Tootje. When I go out most people think I'm a normal woman. Who looks good, sounds good; happy with her children. Nice pictures. They don't see what's inside. But I also don't see what's inside of you, you or you. We never see what's inside people.

