

Kari Bremnes, The Copenhagen Cavern

We'd been walking so far,
Where the houses lean together,
On cobblestones not made for my high heels.
As we drifted along,
Slowed down by the weather,
No need to talk
About the way that summer feels.

We went into a doorway
To a run-down bar beneath the ground,
To a place that the sun has never been.

Coming in from the day
To the darkness and the shadows,
The feeble lights could not dispel the gloom.
Slowly making our way,
We found an empty table.
The winter seemed to live inside this room.

This Copenhagen cavern:
A run-down bar beneath the ground,
A place that the sun has never seen.

Like a frail figurine,
She walked between the tables
With a vacant look and thinly braided hair.
She was all of sixteen,
Straight from a Dickens fable,
She was pleading for some money
For her fare.

The Copenhagen waiter
Wanted her back on the street,
But some impulse
Made us offer her a chair.

As I started to speak
I sensed a strong emotion.
She said I am from northern Norway, too,
She had come for a week,
A journey with her school friends
But a year had passed her by
Before she knew.

She said: I come from Senja,
A village on the outer coast,
But the climate here
Affected me much more.

Walking into the lane,
Looking back in through the window,
The light of day now seemed a little strange.
Would she leave for the train,
Would she stay another winter?
She moved between the tables
Begging chance.

We'd been walking so far
Through cobblestone back alleys
No need to talk about
The way that summer feels.