

## Niels Hav

### Women of Copenhagen

Now I have once again fallen in love  
with five different women during a ride  
on the number 40 bus.

How is one to gain control of one's life  
under such conditions?

One wore a fur coat, another red wellingtons.

One of them was reading a newspaper, the other Heidegger  
--and the streets were flooded with rain.

At Amager Boulevard a drenched princess entered,  
euphoric and furious, and I fell for her utterly.

But she jumped off at the police station  
and was replaced by two sirens with flaming kerchiefs,  
who spoke shrilly with each other in Pakistani  
all the way to the Municipal Hospital while the bus boiled  
in poetry. They were sisters and equally beautiful,  
so I lost my heart to both of them and immediately planned  
a new life in a village near Rawalpindi

where children grow up in the scent of hibiscus  
while their desperate mothers sing heartbreaking songs  
as dusk settles over the Pakistani plains.

But they didn't see me!

And the one wearing a fur coat cried beneath  
her glove when she got off at Farimagsgade.

The girl reading Heidegger suddenly shut her book and looked  
directly at me with a scornfully smile,

as if she'd suddenly caught a glimpse of Mr. Nobody  
in his very own insignificance.

And that's how my heart broke for the fifth time,  
when she got up and left the bus with all the others.

Life is so brutal!

I continued for two more stops before giving up.

It always ends like that: You stand alone  
on the kerb, sucking on a cigarette,  
wound up and mildly unhappy.

## My Fantastic Pen

I prefer writing with a used pen found in the street  
or with a promotional pen, gladly one from the electricians,  
the gas station or the bank.

Not just because they are cheap (free),  
but I imagine that such an implement  
will fuse my writing with industry  
the sweat of skilled labourers, administrative offices  
and the mystery of all existence.

Once I wrote meticulous poems with a fountain pen  
pure poetry about purely nothing  
but now I like shit on my paper, tears and snot.

Poetry is not for wimps!

A poem must be just as honest as the Dow Jones index  
- a mixture of reality and sheer bluff.

What has one grown too sensitive for? Not much.

That's why I keep my eye on the bond market  
and serious pieces of paper. The stock exchange  
belongs to reality – just like poetry.

And that's why I'm so happy about this ball point pen

from the bank, which I found one dark night  
in front of a closed convenience store. It smells  
faintly of dog piss, and it writes fantastically.

## Hunting Lizards in the Dark

During the killings unaware  
we walked along the lakes.  
You spoke of Beethoven,  
I studied a rookpicking at dog shit.  
Each of us caught up in ourselves  
surrounded by a shell of ignorance  
that protects our prejudices.

The holists believe that a butterfly in the Himalayas  
with the flap of a wing can influence the climate  
in Antarctica. It may be true.  
But where the tanks roll in  
and flesh and blood drip from the trees that is no comfort.

Searching for truth is like hunting lizards  
in the dark. The grapes are from South Africa,  
the rice from Pakistan, the dates grown in Iran.  
We support the idea of open borders for fruit and vegetables, but  
however we twist and turn  
the ass is at the back.

The dead are buried deep inside the newspaper,  
so that we, unaffected, can sit on a bench  
on the outskirts of paradise and dream of butterflies.



**Niels Hav** is a Danish poet and short story writer with awards from The Danish Arts Council. He is the author of six collections of poetry and three books of short fiction. He has participated in numerous international poetry festivals Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America. He has frequently been interviewed by the media. His books have been translated into many languages including English, Arabic, Turkish, Dutch, Farsi, Serbian, Albanian, Kurdish and Chinese. His second English poetry collection, *We Are Here*, was published by Book Thug in Toronto, and his poems and short stories have been published in a large number of journals, magazines, and newspapers in different countries of the world.

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