

Swiss Cottage Manoeuvres

Al Stewart

On a Christmas cake day one Friday in August
In a bookshop in Charing Cross Road
I first set eyes on a girl and at once I did know
She had eyes like a poet and hair like a rainbow
Reflecting the lights that did glow
And the sadness she kept in her eyes
Struck my senses a blow

And so as by chance at the touch of a glance
We could find ourselves out in the road
With no crush of time to defeat us and no place to go
And I couldn't say how but the coffee bar crowd
Had appeared through the silence that broke
And she said "Oh my father's a judge in St Albans you know."
"Oh well, then perhaps I could help you
You know that St. Albans is miles away
And I've got a room in Swiss Cottage in which you could stay"
She laughed "Oh I couldn't do that, for I've got
To be up in the morning you see."
So I rang up to find out the first morning train she could take
.

And so in the gloom of a candlelit room
With spaghetti, two forks and a plate
She said "Oh I really would like to be free and escape."
"Oh well if it's like that
You don't have to go back
And you're perfectly welcome to stay"
"But I've not finished school yet." she said as she got into bed

And so as she slept and the pure morning crept
Through the windows to take her away
I thought you can't make people be what you want them to be
I could see my self nailed to a dormitory tale
Of a holiday night's escapade
And just yesterday she had seemed like a woman to me

And so like a child with the sleep in her eyes
Where the sadness of age had once been
She left on the train with a "See you again" and a smile
And I couldn't say what I had won or I lost
Or even just what I had seen
But when I'm alone I just think of her once in awhile.