

Al Stewart, Swiss Cottage Manoeuvres

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