

# "You're the Guy with Parkinson's"

POEMS, PROSE AND PONDERINGS  
'REFLECTIONS OF NORWAY'



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**WITH WILL & CORRIE BOAG**

## Norway - Oslo

I feeeeeeeel good. You must see the movie called The Burial with Tommy Lee Jones and Jamie Foxx. Well, you don't 'must', but I think most people would 'feel good' after watching it and hearing the 'feel good' lyrics in this movie. I felt good walking the streets of Oslo, and it gave me the peace and quiet I needed to find out the meaning of this very likeable city. So I perused the first edition of the 'Will Boag's dictionary of meanings' you can't find anywhere else. The meaning is actually in the word itself – 'Oh So sLO'. There seems to be no great rush in Oslovians' legs. They probably know that if you leave 15 minutes before your usual time you are never late. And the cars in Oslo also move so slow and quiet you may not notice walking straight into them.

The buses, the trains, the trams, they all suffer the same affliction. They all move slowly and quietly. So what I am noticing is that silence goes hand in hand with slowness. In the next edition of my dictionary I will look further to include this phenomena and call the city by an alternate name – Oshhhhhhhlo. No-one need say this word because noise does not happen. At breakfast it was crowded with scores of guests, but if I had walked in blindfolded I would have been shocked by the large numbers. I walked through malls and markets where many were drinking, but were relatively quiet.

We both noticed a reservedness about them where they don't take the bait, possibly wanting another type of conversation. But when I walked outside this morning there was a man kneeling down over an elderly man who was crying on the footpath. As he knelt, he held a pram in one hand, a mobile in the other, while one of the siren-men, in answer to that call, jumped out, held his hand and concerned, started chatting to him, but the pram-man stayed.

In geographical terms the river Akerselva is performing a decathlon as it pours from the mountain snow, jumps over rocks, bounces off nearby banks, shoots through pipes, sneaks under houses, sidles up to cafes, refreshes the multitude of dogs, amuses everyone, and herein lies its magic. It is for everyone, it's like a community magnet. Waterfall after waterfall, each is vastly different, putting on individual displays – it's free and on in all weathers, you can attend at any time, no dress code and you can eat and drink. On the lower side there are cafes, on the other you sit on chair-like slopes of grass. As I sit back, I ponder our lovely quiet, long walks in all directions.

Below is a photo showing this runaway continuous waterfall without the hundreds of spectators. However they are not those people who collect photos and never look at them. They walk slowly like bird watchers do, and like bird watchers they may sit for hours waiting to see the incremental changes in this never ending and ever changing flow of nature. The people aren't in this photo for it takes a small deviation and quickly recharges itself by renting that energy, here it just floats.

The water gathers pace again as it sees its people and performs a few acrobats, a rush of froth here, a purposeful spray there, a shallow part like a museum that shows off its special rock editions, while the deeper part is rarely seen because they are rarer and the depth hides its secrets. Its artefacts are well guarded by night time lights and fences. They don't have to be high because Norwegians don't need a lecture to obey signs that don't have to ruin the wet spectacle. Just the slightest hint is needed for these honest people to understand.



## **Norway - Oslo - Lillehammer**

We had just completed a fairly long day of 25kms. Corrie was at home looking after her unhealed elbow, sore back and painful toes, a bigger deal than she will let on. As I continued past an athletics field I saw a bent-over woman (about our age) walking along using poles. From a non-alarming distance I asked her if they were working for her, to which she replied "sort of" (though Norwegians I have met are not easily alarmed).

After chatting a bit about Nordic walking she revealed to me that she had Parkinson's. This was an entree for me to tell her my story. We began to discuss other things we do and I told her at one stage that I walk a yearly marathon that I began for those with PD (varied distances). This was my third marathon of 42kms and my time has been under 8 hours each marathon. Included are many 'slow down greetings' and once in a year opportunities to check those out who I feel naturally expect this. I love this role that I gave myself, unofficially. Then this bent-over woman blew me away when she revealed, (without ego), that she was the Norwegian women's champion marathon runner for most of the 1980s.

We strolled for a way sharing stories, one of which was about Nordic walking. A friend of mine, Ruth, I told her, was amongst many things, a champion Nordic walker, and she had taught me the finer skills which you only see in professional Nordic walkers. For example: to pretend your foot is a spring, bounce as you put your foot down and then up. Another, is to leave your poles dragging on the ground, and a third is to let your arm go fully straight as you reach out in front with one pole, and behind with the other. If you don't walk in a similar fashion you are not Nordic walking, and need to call it something else. We said goodbye, not knowing that we would soon meet up again.

I've heard many say 'when you've seen someone with PD, you've seen them all'. But this is not always so; we are unique and this pertains also to waterfalls. In Oslo we saw some unique waterfalls on the river that sidles along the edge of the city, then seeing others in villages. But something asked us to slow down or else we may miss some jewel, so we slowed. As we dropped the pace we saw something unusual, a floating body of shining ice with water underneath shooting out of a large pipe below.

The sun left us so we let go of our beauty to view the acrobatics of a steep river as it made its art in the air with the help of all shapes of rocks. We kept crossing the falls to and fro watching it from different angles. And I wondered what I was missing as I became more waterfall obsessed.

Another day arrives and the warmth of it enticed us onto the long snow. Wherever we looked there was snow. Our sun was still shining but the wind off the snow was making it very cold and the Nordic walkers had come to learn a special art, one where you learn to breathe a bit. Yet for one, her Collie-type dog breathes differently. It was pulling her through the snow (supposed to) but also pulled her over in her enthusiasm (not supposed to).

And.....we met a dog with her Norwegian parents that we hadn't seen before. I was intrigued, her dog was lovely so I wanted to know more. Surprise, surprise - we had just met our first 'Australian Cobber'. We told the owner we were also from that country and so were given a command performance. Our new Cobber friend said hello to me, then leant against Corrie and looked up at her as if to say: "I don't mind cats either".



## Norway - Dombas

Jack dragged himself out of the potentially deadly marshes, his resistant tent behind him. We met him at breakfast just the other day. He is a pilgrim (this can be anyone who thinks they are a pilgrim: from a dedicated church goer, to a person who loves to travel abroad - that's us). Now I met him again at breakfast, he looked 10 years beyond his tender 40 years. He was in a hurry the first time, however this time, days later, he was travelling slowly.

He was about 400 kilometres into his 643kms walk when he took his first step into the water, three months of melted snow. He thought he would be through in no time but it went on and on. We think we saw him once not far from our train and that time he was struggling with the delicate metre deep snow. A couple of times, up a Dombas mountain, the snow gave way, and once it was my crutch only that avoided a complete disappearance.



## Norway - Oppdal

The last couple of days we walked more of the camino, with the usual mountains and islands of small rocks, all mossed up, so beautiful with the lovely Edelweiss scattered around each favoured feature.

One stood out in many ways – it was a graveyard for the Vikings where their bodies were burnt (or not) and then covered with dirt above ground making it look like a stunning natural landscape.

The Norwegians continue to be the most obliging people I have ever met. It's as though they have a rule book that doesn't work, so they move it aside and say to themselves: "In this situation, how would I like to be treated" and then treat them accordingly, not over the top. That is my perception.

Just like the weather. It was cold now because we had moved north. In fact, it was colder in early May than it was when it was supposed to be warmer in April. There's been some drizzle just to test my rain gear - it works - and no heavy rain or strong winds, the latter resulting in my most challenging moments.



## Norway - Trondheim Day 1

We met him in Trondheim, as we entered our new home for a few nights. It was to be our last stop, but because of paths being closed it was not, so we spent time discovering other tracks because we have kilometres to walk.

We warmed to him straight away as he was interested in similar philosophers, mystics, great thinkers over recent times, and us. Names like Schiller, Jung, and Gandhi were not just other words to be spelt correctly but people who changed his life and the world.

There were women too but they were often not recognised because of their gender alone, and I believe we have a darker world today because of that fact. The feminine touch talks it out and wants a solution, and only after thorough investigation. That clearly doesn't happen with the boys, who like to get on with it (life), however, while they are doing this, a better life can escape them.

So we made a lovely connection with Gunter and we hope to keep in touch. He also seems to like some of my poetry and we spent time sharing philosophers and poets, as we read poems together and shared stories. So I wrote him a poem for being so good to us, but he doesn't win over easily.

From those we don't know, concerns were raised about felling trees unnecessarily (for the wrong reasons); and the unbearable fact that oil is being wasted and will run down to desperately low levels in 10-15 years.

Most people, the papers write, have a positive view and talk of an innovative Norway with many new ideas in the pipeline (pun intent). The positive ones say that with innovation, less oil can be used to produce much more energy thus lasting many years, and it will continue to improve much further into the future.

For those who haven't seen a Fjord, it was an unusual experience. I stepped back, took a deep breath and sat there for a while feeling very small. I know they are economically and socially important but I was also told they look magnificent. I didn't see that.



I'll try again in my next post when we head north to much later dusks than 0345. In the meantime we have walked continuously for 15 days ie. 375kms.

We set 500kms, but the distance we would like to match is the one between Oslo and Trondheim which is just under 650kms. We aimed to complete that.

In the meantime our room is on the Nidelva River that drifts thoughtfully through this city of coloured houses, the beautifully-old Trondheim where King Olav seems to still reign today. Made a saint, his is the name of the path that we've been weaving in and out of since the start of May.

The Nidelva River is host to our front yard, with its 7kms of grassy walk, and also home to an outdoor exercise park. This allowed me 'no excuse' to dodge my morning PD exercise routine, whilst also beckoning me out of my cute little 'river view home'. The 7kms walk crosses the river twice before the 200 metre walk past the iron gates, then up a curved set of stairs and welcomed by the world's best manager where we clicked like a bushman's tongue.

The next day we took the sun with us, as we formed new relationships beyond the midnight sun, but first we caught up with a pilgrim of St Olav - the one who dragged himself through that horror night some days ago.

We made a deal to have coffee and smokes (both help to prevent Parkinson's), but do nothing to get you out of 5 feet of snow, although your feet get washed at 6 feet, but also stuck. Alas it seems we need another remedy for this item.

He arrived last night after walking 46kms. and went straight to his hotel. The next morning he had to walk 200 metres to meet us for coffee at 10.30. We caught up at 11.30. Why? Because he was at another of the 5 cafes that carried the same name? It didn't matter cause we were able to spend another hour with him as he took us to meet others who had the best advice for our friend wanting to walk this trail. Another goodbye, but we will stay in touch. By the way, three of his friends/relatives have PD so we had much to talk about.

Sick bay report – your soothing words mean that Corrie has recovered from her pre-trip fall, and now it's my turn - my aching back is back, but it still completes its daily duties.



## **Norway - Trondheim Day 2**

We had a birthday party today. Very small but relatively large for those in the know. Recently I had found myself in the right place just when something important was happening. This woman (86 today) and her two girls, perhaps in their 50s, settled in for breakfast. I had built a bit of a relationship with them the day before and thus had got through the small talk. They had come to attend Norwegian National Day on May 17, an important festival that we were trying to avoid.

I was looking to buy a cake but had just finished a book by an author she knew and loved, and there was, coincidentally, a chapter on the day of celebration May 17. She loved the author and her previous works so she's starting her book tonight.

They were German and always wanted to come to Norway, especially Trondheim, this special place which is part of the pilgrim's history. A special part of this show is Mary who had just begun her job as manager of our hotel. She was delightful and went out of her way to provide us with information and laughter.

We were leaving today so I took the opportunity to introduce her to a fellow philosopher, our other German friend. We saw our new friends before we left and I won't forget them in a hurry.



## Norway - Bodo

Well, we did leave on a small plane, so smooth and quiet. We were flying to Bodo, close to the famous Lofoten Islands.

“We are landing in around 16 minutes at about 1600 hours in calm weather. It is 16 degrees” and it just happened to be May 16. Sorry, just one of my addictions which also happened on my recent birthday on 24 – 04 – 2024.

We soon landed in Bodo but the sky didn't explode into an array of colours I hadn't seen before, and the sun refused to stay above the horizon. So we went for a walk, another long walk out of town and around some beautifully planned and designed mountains and rock slides (you know the architect).

Our plans were not going as well because the ferry idea was sinking slowly, times weren't working for us; in dry dock everyone was new and all at sea; and it was late and I wanted to witness a day that stayed all night, so I planned to sleep, when everyone else was awake.

But I couldn't get to sleep so we planned to have a day off, and sauntered outside to breakfast, talked to 'National dayers', and then headed out of town by bus to a national park by the sea.

We headed up into the bush, quite steep and slippery. Too steep in parts which had me crawling. I came upon an educational idea for those with PD who like a walking challenge. I make it look easier than it is, so I made a video showing and telling them to take it slowly. Balance is the main issue so don't worry if you have to crawl.

They were glorious views out to the ocean and lots of variation inland. On one of our climbs, after wishing half the nation happy National day, we came across a young girl with her dad. She was picking a small leafy plant which she found was edible, to go with lunch. She had a serious type of cancer at such a young age, and with her strength battled through and won (this was only part of an incredible story of determination).

Her father had a story also which was about excellent and rare photos he takes. I was lucky to receive them from him soon after that day. I will treasure them.

We eventually left father and daughter, and dog, (a gorgeous Australian Shepherd), and walked in the direction of a large Viking grave on the coast, close to some uninhabited islands. It was eerie because I could smell dying flesh, that of a more recent death of a large, fully grown, 'pilot whale' about 6 metres in length.



## **Day Off - Bodo**

We had a good day with still over 20kms walking - not bad for a day off. Then it was time to catch a bus (we had an appointment we had to make and still needed some rest). After waiting a while, I became restless, so I lifted my trouser leg a little, smiled (difficult for some PD people) and put out my hitching finger. In 5 minutes a lovely young man dressed up in his suit for National Norway Day thought he would fill in time by picking us up while waiting for his mum to make dinner. But first he had to swing his car around, illegally I think, but safely. I know it wasn't because of my ankle!!! He was a delight.

Our info. office was now the general public who made our day very special. They were two young men, three young women, and an older woman, all generous with their time, patience and it seemed, part of the local community. I had asked them for directions along the way.

### Queries:

#### The Midnight Sun

I stayed awake for the last two nights to witness daylight all night. I fell asleep at times but awoke several – each time it was daylight. I'm still unclear if this is called the midnight sun because I did not once see the actual sun after the initial sunset. I contacted my friend who supplied me with some magical photos of the midnight sun and the aurora borealis; he replied with this simple and succinct answer to those (like me) who were confused re. the Midnight Sun.

Here goes: "The Midnight Sun is a phenomenon that occurs all or part of the summer between the vernal equinox and the autumnal equinox between the arctic circle and the poles. Midnight Sun means that the sun, at its lowest position during a single day, does not go completely below the horizon. Thus, provided the cloud cover is not too extensive, it is visible 24 hours per day, and in Bodo it lasts from June 9 until July 10 (longer the further north you go).

The Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights are a spectacular display of light commonly seen in the night sky in the northern hemisphere. The Southern Lights or Aurora Australis are seen in the southern hemisphere. Both lights occur following massive explosions on the sun.

Weather:

It is less than two weeks until Summer but the Spring cold gets colder still. From 10 degrees three days ago, it is now 7 degrees and for 48 hours has retained that temperature. My painful fingers indicate it's a bitter 7 degrees. Our first rainy day, but easy to walk in. However, rain clothes needed!

It is time to go, so we are turning around and heading south for more walks in Bergen, dodging mountain peaks in our small plane.





## Norway - Bergen

We started our exploring in beautiful Bergen after walking through one of its oldest parts, and you could tell it blind-folded because this was their busy fish market open every day. It was the guiding scent for many a popular place.

Across a bridge then near vertically up, it started with stairs. I don't mind stairs but I talk a lot to my body and stairs offer a place to lean and chat. I'm a 'leaner' so resting and leaning as I talk usually lead to a good outcome. However I decided to take the more gradual winding road than the stairs, owing to my A/F. Then the flowers threw a huge celebration, but that's not the Norwegian way. They want you to discover their fulsome flowers along with their dark mauve tulips and deep reds that seem to bow to the rhododendrons and golden yellow daffodils, all of which play a part in welcoming the lucky visitor.

As we walked, probably too quickly, through the city's 50 odd parks and gardens, it was obvious how they were treasured. They were well-gardened and because the sun was out they were also well-peopled. Both were losing their inhibitions as clothes were being shed to gain the most of the first summer suns. We looked out onto this stunning small 'village within a city', 'weatherboards within concrete', 'electric within gas', and 'trompe l'oeil' on walls to make you smile.

The cutest village within a city, stunning weatherboards, a lovely type of trompe l'oeil surrounded by hedges and shaded with yellow flowering trees. A resident who bought here just last week couldn't be happier. On another city walk I found 5 of these quaint villages, a bit like movie sets from the past - delightful.

Sun baking happens in all parks and there are lots. They are not huge but a handful would allow you a 30 minute stroll around its perimeters delightfully undulating with some human engineering. I bet they silently shrug their shoulders when complimented, while once again taking out the major awards, and humans performed well with their mentoring of the introduced plants.

But sadly they came dead last in at least three parks where runners ran between headstones with no foolish intent but maybe to expose the rent. No amount of money could effectively create the natural undulation of cities like Sydney, Puerto Rico and Lisbon, all of which have a soothing ambience that cannot be replaced.

Usually when we climb a mountain only a few others join us, but in Norway they maybe want to check your respect for it. In the short five hours we were there, as well as another three hundred or more, most choose to walk. It wasn't easy. There were over 1000 steps and it took us 3 hours up and 2 hours down. On the way up I regretted leaving our poles at the railway station, but before too long I found a throwaway.

After about 2kms we passed a staircase wending one of the ways to the top for 800 metres. We decided to take the 2.5kms alternative which was supposedly less steep though much rockier underfoot; however, in parts the steepness meant it was difficult to stop. If you did, it was very hard to get going again. A young blond Norwegian woman came running by with her baby who was fast asleep while strapped to her chest. In Norway, locals are encouraged to get outside and stay healthy, and this is one option they choose. Talking to her got me thinking of doing a visual research project then and there on the day, so I did and below are the results.

The older men know what they can do and at what pace, resting when a recent ailment reminded them of their age. The older women knew all along what ailments went with what age and like their daughters and grand daughters just powered along thoughtfully but with no thought of stopping, Younger men would stop more often. Then there were the runners, mainly represented in the older men, because I think that sure connection when the ground is safer, and with plenty of rest, is important for my A/F.

The very best, and they are only less represented in the older men, are a delight to watch in both an entertaining and educational sense. I will still do it my way but I would suggest others with PD take their time in deciding how hard to push themselves. By the way, I did not see children (under 7 would be my guess).

With my PD, and without my low BP and A/F, I would go faster, and keep up with all but the top. I say this so you have all the facts when you start to experiment or go on long walks. It seemed in retrospect to have been the most stressful part of the walk with the fear of falling backwards on a steep hill being the worst. Fear often makes the best memory, so I don't think I will forget this day.



## **Norway - Stavanger**

We completed the other hills on the western side by sidling up to them with no more than a glance to thank them for diverting large expected rainfall away from Bergen. Mountains can do this I believe, in the form of Orographical rainfall.

Departing Bergen, our huge ferry with a helicopter pad turned around slowly, and passed through a Sydney Harbour size fjord with its small islands which had the appearance of creating a guard of honour until our fjord became the open sea. We took with us the musical god of nature – Grieg, who made music that understands nature so much that it flowed through his blood. This highly admired and respected Norwegian has influenced the average citizen to a degree that is lauded throughout this country today.

We arrived in Stavanger and took Edward to bed with his inspirational piano concertos as they brought their gentle sounds to what often is to me, the reality of nature. One of the beauties of creativity is that we can use our own interpretation.

I used to get up before dark to escape the morning rush until I realised I was the morning rush. Everybody lay peacefully asleep or dozing, dreaming, enjoying the few awake moments of life, when those moments are totally theirs. I haven't done any of those things for a while because I have been rushing to do things so I can turn to 'PD things' to keep me functioning fairly well.

We started walking when she, the bus driver said: "We have arrived". I was conscious of leaving the track any time but I always had a way out. Not so this time. There were wrong names and distances in some instances which meant luck had to throw us a lifeline. Three of those were young men who literally showed us the right track.

The trails we followed have a physical theme also, with the numerous rocks to be climbed and therefore placing a high focus on balance, a bit like a daily PD exercise class. It would be great to have a video maybe to play for part of the class so I'll look out for some material.

I am now in the exercise zone and perform my PD warrior exercises daily for 20 minutes. Then I do my Osteoporosis exercises for 20 minutes. Our accommodation was at the back of a church where I could attach my resistance band to a tree branch and an old sturdy pipe. On my ways to and fro I met a local who wanted to know about my sign 'Walking with Parkinsons'; we had a long chat. A similar one occurred the other day. I enjoy those times greatly, and I've also had conversations mainly with women our age.

Other chats have been about cost of living and the trustworthy economy. For tourists it is different and we are noticing changes as we go into summer.

Accommodation started its rise about mid May going up about 30% if you can find it, and entertainment prices the same. If you are hiking, those costs don't matter as much, about 10% of the track is so wet you may have to change course or wait till the time when the track is dry and that's the first week of June when more rooms open their 'sleeping doors' also.

Today we're off to another beautiful part of the world near Sandnes with nearly all of their homes bordering on a pendulum.

It is difficult for all but Norwegians seem to take it better than most.

There were flat and hill walks; mountain and stream walks; bush but no bashing walks; dog and kid walks, on leash or no leash, every walk one might imagine. There were walkers and runners, and bikes, but only a few of each. The biggest shock was the 'just a few', on a glorious day with one of our few showers just cooling us a little.

As I said earlier I have adjusted our distance to equal the amount of kilometres of the pilgrimage between Oslo and Trondheim of 640kms.



## Norway - Lillehammer

It was raining as we left our little room in Stavanger. In Norway we really didn't need to deal with the weather because it dealt with itself. The little rain we did get often came at night time. When it came during the day it was light and our rain gear was very effective anyway. It was mild mostly, often sunny with no storm activity, no boggy ground. The only time we needed to be careful was when we left a path and ventured out onto the snow, which was often deep.

We travelled through spectacular countryside with huge moss-covered black rocks and a whole range of nature's deliciously shaped lakes on different levels, with superb mountains holding them like a nest in between each other. Grieg would have been living in such a spectacularly divine country, and to add another rhythmic side, it was an invaluable musical legacy.

Another train journey and another story. Just when we thought all was settled, we had a problem. She was the first Norwegian we'd heard raise their voice. We saw that she had no. 3 (on her mobile), we had tickets for numbers 3 and 4. Before anything could be negotiated she screamed: "I'm not leaving" (she can't be like that after all the nice things I've been saying about the Norwegians). But apart from this short outburst she had done nothing wrong. We didn't want to make this an issue and she did not care, so we waited for the conductor who also really didn't care. After a few words were spoken – I said I didn't really care either but I don't want someone asking for my ticket because it's his/her seat. Immediately, the one who really, really didn't care (the conductor) had 'an out': there were lots of seats in first class. So four hours in the best first class seats with free coffee soon took us back to the Norway we love.

Arriving back in Lillehammer there were lots of nearly forgotten walks but my number one priority was to find my marathon runner. My host and her friend called her. She had been wondering where I was. When she finally found us, she greeted us warmly, then it was into her car (she loved driving), where she drove us across a great expanse of water into the forest to her old home with great views over a large lake and where we had just been. Her husband could no longer care for her (she mostly cared for herself because she could) and we had arrived in Norway just as she was in the throes of moving. Despite her independence, she was in the last stages of PD and so was moving closer to necessary services.

Corrie got on well with Oodrun and both had a lively talk. One thing in common they had experienced was a terrible weeping blister. Oodrun's still hurts thirty years on but her race time was her best time ever! Corrie had forgotten she had one, it seemed so long ago, but wonderful lingering memories of our French friend Sabina came flowing back.

As we descended from yet another steep mountain, I was looking forward to my dance down. I took advantage of its steepness and taught Corrie how to do the mountain dance so we could dance together down the rocky path. The momentum was such that we kept in time with the beautiful singing we could hear ahead. I think she was Iranian, and so we stopped awhile and danced and sung. This was all part of a conference in a hotel and Charlie Ebdon the cartoonist was one of a few guests. What stood out for me was when he said this: when nations have differences they often fight in public, but not in Norway – here they learn respect first and then they fight fairly.

When asked about the world's future he said he was not an optimist. As he began to discuss this, my mobile shook. It was a busy time. Oodrun called to invite me to a two hour PD class with those who were living with PD. So I did, and I will share my experiences with Mel to see the possibilities of doing something with them at a later stage. We said our goodbyes and went for a four hour walk. By the way, we are back on St Olav's trail.

Are you ready for the first of its kind walking marathon, only two months away? A great team of primarily those with PD are expanding their horizons, drawing their line in the sand which gives them the opportunity to gain the rewards that PD plans to hold back from them. But we have a bigger plan and part of that plan is to inspire ourselves so that we can inspire others..... like Oodrun did.





## Norway - Oslo

We were in the foyer when Tom came up to me and asked: “do you want to come to a poetry reading?”. This was totally unexpected because I was concentrating on the final kilometre goal. I get very excited when I hear the word poetry though.

Uncertainly he looked at me, partly I suppose because my medication hadn't taken hold. More certainly he said: “Would you like to read a poem”. “Yes, I'd love to”. We arrived at room no. 316, it was already packed. There were 15 young people on the queen size bed; 4 young couples on the couch; 6 around the couch; 30 mixed men and women sat on the floor and in the bathroom and in the hallway. There were 5 poets and me. I heard them through an interpreter. The five, mostly young, read their poems. They were good but hard to understand even with the translator. Then Tom introduced me as “the man from Australia who thinks he is a poet and we will find out in a minute or two”. We were fortunate that the midnight suns were in alignment - it went well.

Walking included crossing the fjord and exploring the one kilometre walk across the town's river and then some kilometres into the other side of town. Then it was our promised return to our waterfall mountain which was close to a 'type of source' reaching into the “mountain top mosquito ridden swamp” that prevented us from more vistas. It was so mysterious, we were so close but held back from seeing our long awaited source, then finally defeated by the mosquito guards.

Overall though, it was a victory. The gracious mountains interlocking, with their snow melting faster every day, with plenty still for beautifully crafted snow men and women. Grieg's use of Norwegian folk music in his own compositions brought the music of Norway to fame, as well as helping in developing a national identity that is Norway today.

