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## Homage To Hans Christian

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# Homage To Hans Christian

By Henrik Nordbrandt

Now I understand all the statues  
you had to pose for  
how hard it's been  
to sit still, casting shadows

over the lawn, where children like those  
now clambering on your bronze  
must have played  
laughing, in a twitter of birds

while you, shut out from the game,  
tried desperately to  
resemble the picture of yourself that  
made you seem most harmless.

The smile on your lips is not  
caused by their laughter  
or by the May breeze, but rather  
by the pain of sitting in a position

where your long nose under your hat  
and your large, clumsy hands  
which must have taken  
immense effort to control

seemed least conspicuous: Only  
as a statue do you have a chance  
to be accepted by  
proper bourgeois families in the park.

Your shadow is still the washerwoman's son  
who, bound to the earth, looks back  
and says without conviction: "This  
is I, this is H.C. Andersen,

Denmark's great writer of fairytales."  
I can understand, Hans Christian,  
your need to pose  
even though it's been difficult.

Translated from Danish  
by Nadia Christensen

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