

= The Danish Poet =

The Danish Poet (Norwegian : Den danske dikteren) is a 2006 animated short film written , directed , and animated by Torill Kove and narrated by Liv Ullmann . A co @-@ production of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and Mikrofilm AS of Norway , it has won both the Academy Award and Genie Award for best animated short film .

= = Synopsis = =

The film follows Kaspar Jørgensen , a Danish poet in the 1940s who is seeking inspiration . At the suggestion of his psychiatrist , Dr. Mørk , he travels to Norway to meet the famous author Sigrid Undset . However , after arriving in Norway , he meets Ingeborg , a farmer 's daughter , and they fall in love . He proposes to her , but discovers that she is already engaged , at her father 's wish . She promises not to cut her hair until they are reunited , and Kaspar returns to Denmark .

Later , Ingeborg 's husband dies in an accident , and Ingeborg sends a letter to Kaspar . However , it is accidentally dropped by the postman , and never arrives . When Sigrid Undset dies , both Kaspar and Ingeborg travel to the funeral ; they are reunited , and later marry and live in Copenhagen . As Kaspar tells Ingeborg that he loves her long hair , she does not cut it , but when Kaspar trips over it and breaks his thumb , she sends for her hairdresser from Norway . On the way , the hairdresser meets a young man on the train , who was also travelling to Copenhagen to meet Kaspar , his favourite poet . The two fall in love , and are revealed to be the narrator 's parents .

= = Production = =

Kove first became involved with the National Film Board , an agency of the Government of Canada , after her first year at Concordia University in Montreal . After working there as an assistant for some years , she wrote and pitched a script to the company , which led to her career as a director and animator . She first wrote the script for The Danish Poet some time ago , though she says that she " can ? t really remember when " .

Production was split between Marcy Page , of the National Film Board , and Lise Fearnley , of Mikrofilm AS in Norway , and took roughly three years , although Kove took a year off for maternity leave .

The film was made using hand @-@ drawn traditional animation , with pencil on paper , and then scanned and digitally coloured , with about half of the animation by Kove , and the rest divided between animators in Montreal and Norway . Kove 's style is simplistic , which she says is less a specific style choice than " quite simply [...] the only one I know how to do . " The backgrounds were painted by Montreal artist Anne Ashton .

Narrator Liv Ullmann was selected for the film because Kove liked her voice and " thought that her delivery would be right for the story " ; she reaffirmed this after the film 's release , stating that Ullmann was " just right " . She thanked Ullmann in her Academy Award acceptance speech , saying that " it was really amazing of her to participate in this . "

= = Origins = =

Kove 's first ideas for The Danish Poet began when she went through a period of self @-@ assessment ; she wanted to write a story about what she described as when " you reach a turning point or a milestone and you look back and you think ' how in the heck did I get here ? ' [...] And you realize that the answer lies somewhere in a complex web of all kinds of stuff , like genetic make @-@ up , upbringing , coincidences , choices you made along the way , missed opportunities , [and] lucky breaks . " She felt that it was a natural choice to centre on a relationship between two people , " because relationships , and especially the romantic ones , play a huge role in shaping our lives , and also , obviously , in creating new ones . "

Kove originally wanted to make the film biographical , based on a story her father told her : he had

dreamed of being an artist , and made an appointment with an art teacher to ask if he was good enough to make it in the art world . However , he stood at the top of the stairs and decided not to go , eventually deciding to go to architecture school (as his parents wanted) where he met his wife . Kove 's inspiration was drawn from the fact that her existence seemed to hinge on that decision , because " if the artist had said , ' Oh , you must paint , ' you know , then in all likelihood he would never have met my mother , and , you know , that would have been it for my chances . " However , Kove felt the story was too personal , and rewrote it to be fictional .

= = Themes = =

The film 's main theme shows the effect that coincidence and chance can have on the course of life ? like the bad weather , angry dog , hungry goats , slippery planks , and careless postman that change the course of both Kaspar 's and Ingeborg 's lives ? and shows , as the film 's website states , that " seemingly unrelated factors might play important roles in the big scheme of things after all . " In an interview , Kove said that " what I 'm trying to get across is just that I think life is really a kind of a meandering journey ... a lot is really up to chance " . However , Kove has also said that she 'd like people to be able to interpret the film in different ways :

I ? d like them to walk away thinking it ? s a film that can be interpreted in more than one way . I ? m happy when I hear from people who ? ve seen the short that it makes them think about the kind of strangeness where we find inspiration for art and where we find love , and the kind of miraculousness of just being alive and having a life . I ? m pleased when people get that out of it .

She also identifies several subplots of artistic inspiration , as Kaspar " finds [inspiration] within himself " , and not within another writer , and a " subtext ... about nationalism and how much emphasis we in the western world put on stereotypes and on which country we 're from " .

= = Awards = =

The Danish Poet received the Academy Award for Animated Short Film at the 79th Academy Awards in 2007 , a second Oscar nomination (and first win) for Kove , who was nominated in 2000 for her first professional film , My Grandmother Ironed the King 's Shirts , also co @-@ produced by the NFB . The win also marked the first Norwegian film to win an Academy Award since Thor Heyerdahl 's Kon @-@ Tiki won for best documentary in 1952 .

The Danish Poet also won Best Animated Short at the 27th Genie Awards in 2007 , and a Norwegian @-@ language picture book adaptation was nominated for the 2007 Brage Prize . It was also included in the 2006 Animation Show of Shows .