

## ***Beyond the Cold***

**Michael Kleiner**

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Michael Kleiner's childhood family trip to Norway set the stage for a lifelong romance with the country and its people. In 1969, his father took a sabbatical from Temple University to do research in Norway. Michael, his mother, father, brother, and sister lived in Oslo for a year, and that early introduction kindled his fascination with the country.

*Beyond the Cold* is not the usual sort of travel guide. Instead, it is a reconstruction of Kleiner's seven trips to Norway, beginning with his immersion as a boy of ten. In each journey, Kleiner reveals different facets of his beloved Norway, from the Norwegian schoolyard and winter wonder he experienced as a child to the political climate he saw as an adult.

Kleiner's childhood memoirs are particularly fascinating. He reminisces about the Norwegian school system, his reindeer sled ride with the indigenous Sami people, learning to ski and skate, and the trials of not having access to American sports. World War II had affected nearly everyone he met; Kleiner learned of Norway's heroic resistance to the Nazi occupation and its efforts to shield the Jews. As Jews themselves, Kleiner and his family found additional meaning in their Norwegian experience by connecting with the small Jewish population in Oslo (only about 800 people at that time).

In later trips, Kleiner's network of friends became a sort of Norwegian family, and he found even complete strangers to be endlessly welcoming. A sportswriter, Kleiner hoped to cover the Lillehammer Olympics in 1994, so he learned Norwegian, first from several Norwegian students in America and then by enrolling in an intensive language course at the International Summer School at the University of Oslo.

Written in a straightforward style, *Beyond the Cold* contains some fascinating asides about Norwegian history and culture. Kleiner used his travel journals to reconstruct his later trips to Norway, and while his affection for his second home shines through on every page, the book sometimes offers too much information; perceptive anecdotes are lost in a deluge of names and places. Even so, *Beyond the Cold* is a charming and insightful look into Norwegian culture over four decades.

Michael Kleiner is an award-winning sports writer and public relations practitioner. He operates a public relations and web site design business in Philadelphia, where he lives with his wife and boy-girl twins.

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