

Torsken har ankommet

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I can fake my way through a Norwegian newspaper, but this goes by too fast for me to follow at normal speed. I have to pause each subtitle to give me time to read it.

Last year, to introduce the redesigned 100- and 200-krone banknotes, the central bank of Norway recreated the 1980 musical comedy sketch *Torsken kommer* (“The cod is coming”) with some of the original cast members and adding a cameo from the governor of the central bank of Norway.

Why cod? Because a cod fish is featured on the new 200-krone note, worth roughly US\$25 or €21.

Come for the funny accent, stay for the rap at 1:20 that covers the anti-counterfeiting features of the new notes.

Here’s my attempt at a translation. I did not try to capture the rhymes. The first verse is taken from [the original song](#), and the “The cod is our friend” verse is adapted from the original.

[man on dock]

Torsken kommer!

The cod is coming!

[man fishing]

Torsken kommer!

The cod is coming!

[governor of central bank of Norway]

Torsken kommer nå!

The cod is coming now!

[fishermen singing]	
<i>Se torsken!</i>	See the cod!
<i>Se torsken!</i>	See the cod!
<i>Se torsken!</i>	See the cod!
<i>En feit og fin og norsk en,</i>	A fat and fine and Norwegian one,
<i>en norsk en,</i>	a Norwegian one,
<i>en norsk en.</i>	a Norwegian one.
<i>Torsken kommer nå.</i>	The cod is coming now.
<i>Uten den kan verden ei bestå.</i>	Without it, the world cannot exist.
<i>Det fins ei en eneste fisk</i>	There is not a single fish
<i>som er bedre enn torsken faktisk.</i>	that is better than the cod actually.
<i>Det er da sant og visst.</i>	That's true and correct.
<i>Torsken fersk og frisk</i>	The cod fresh and healthy
<i>er jo Norges nasjonale fisk.</i>	is Norway's national fish.
<i>Og kundene venter på land.</i>	And the customers are waiting on land.
<i>Vi selger så mye vi kan.</i>	We're selling as much as we can.
<i>Særlig Johan!</i>	Especially Johan!
<i>En forsker som forsker på torsker</i>	A researcher who researches cod,
<i>fant nemlig på å lage</i>	found out how to make
<i>blå sedler fra havet.</i>	blue banknotes from the sea.
<i>Så nå kan millioner</i>	So now millions
<i>av norske personer</i>	of Norwegian people can

få lønn i torske kroner.

get paid in cod kroner.

Ja, blå torske kroner.

Yes, blue cod kroner.

[oh no, here comes the rap]

Til venstre på seddelen skjer det spennende ting:

On the left of the banknotes, there are exciting things

Der har vi laget et rektangel, en slags flytende ring.

There we've put a rectangle, a kind of floating ring.

Den er norsk, det er torsk, ikke hyse og sild

It is Norwegian, it is cod, not haddock or herring

og hvis du vipper litt på seddelen syns et fargespill.

And if you tilt the banknote, there's a color game.

Å forfalske denne seddelen, det blir litt naivt

Counterfeiting this banknote is a bit naïve,

for overallt så har vi trikket ting med mikroskrift.

for everywhere we have printed things with microprint.

Vi har et kobbertrykk som du kan ta og føle på,

we have a copper strip that you can touch and feel

Og den gjennomgående streken er en sikkerhetstråd.

And the line that goes through is a security thread.

Og selve vannmerke-tankegangen er litt kul

And the watermark-thing is itself a little cool

For hvis du holder den mot lyset syns en lundefugl.

For if you hold it to the light, a puffin appears.

Og til høyre er an ankerkjetting, saken er grei

And on the right is an anchor chain, that's for sure.

når du vipper på den ser du den beveger på seg.

When you tilt it you see it move.

Thorbjørn Egner hade rett: «en lofottorsk jeg er»

Thorbjørn Egner was right: "I am a Lofoten cod."

Løp til fiskebanken, slik kan du blir millionær.

Run to the fish bank, so you can become a millionaire.

Ja, bare sjekk 200-lappen, den er skikkelig rå.

Yes, just check the 200-note, it's really raw.

Og hvis du drar den mellom tenna spiller'n

And if you drag it between your teeth it plays

torsken kommer torsken kommer torsken kommer nå.

The cod is coming the cod is coming the cod is coming now.

[okay, back to the singing]

Torsken er vår venn.

The cod is our friend.

Og nå er'n plutselig verdt 200 spenn.

And now it's suddenly worth 200 big ones.

Og bruker du pengene opp

And if you use up the money

Så trykker vi fler uten stopp.

We'll print more nonstop.

Allt er på topp.

Everything is tops.

Ja, heisann og hopp.

Hey there, and hop.

[bartender pours Möller's Tran (cod liver oil) into shot glass.]

[man spins combination lock dials]

to, tre, fem, syv.

Two, three, five, seven.

[singing resumes]

Og torsken,

And the cod,

ja torsken,

yes the cod,

ja torsken.

yes the cod.

er stadig vekk en norsk en,

Is still a Norwegian one,

en ekte og norsk en.

a real and Norwegian one.

<i>Men nå kommer'n fra banken,</i>	But now it comes from the bank,
<i>fra banken,</i>	from the bank,
<i>fra banken.</i>	from the bank.
<i>Så fin som bare fanken,</i>	So nice as heck,
<i>som fanken,</i>	as heck,
<i>som fanken.</i>	as heck.
<i>Torsken kommer nå!</i>	The cod is coming now!
<i>Ny 100- og 200-kroneseddel fra 30. mai 2017.</i>	
New 100- and 200-krone banknotes starting 30 May 2017.	
<i>nyesedler.no</i>	new.banknotes.no

Bonus chatter: Ten years ago, I was in Lisbon waiting at a tram stop, when I saw a retired couple approaching. From a distance, it sounded like they were speaking Swedish, so when they reached the platform and the man started to study the posted schedule, I told him in Swedish that the next tram came in five minutes.

Turns out that the couple was Norwegian, but Norwegian and Swedish are for the most part mutually intelligible,¹ so we were able to converse in our respective languages and be understood by the other.

The woman's only contribution to the conversation was repeatedly asking me in disbelief, "Du snakker svensk?" ("You speak Swedish?")

¹ The sentence "Du snakker svensk?" is an example of how the languages are different yet are mutually intelligible. The corresponding Swedish verb *snackar* means "chat" rather than "speak", but it's clear what the woman is asking.

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