

# Runner

## *A Villanelle*

by [Cristina Nehring](#) (June 2025)



Combing the Hair (Edgar Degas, 1896)

My lovely girl, don't run away;  
Stay close as we wander the winding streets:  
The world holds you cheap, no matter what I say.

An extra chromosome is all it takes

For people to judge you less than their bland selves  
My lovely girl, don't run away.

Should you disappear into the madding crowds,  
Should you get lost in the fray,  
The world holds you cheap, no matter what I say.

An ice cream, a statue all serve to distract you,  
To you, Parisian alleys are full of pearls,  
My lovely girl don't run away.

Let's walk hand in hand as far as we can go.  
Let's press each other's palms as we pass through the town.  
The world holds you cheap no matter what I say.

Our adventures are not ending; they are only at the start:  
We have miles to traverse, both near and far  
My lovely girl, don't run away.  
The world holds you cheap no matter what I say.

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**Cristina Nehring's** most recent book is *The Child Who Never Spoke: 23 1/2 Lessons in Fragility*. She is also the author of *A Vindication of Love* which made the front page of the *New York Times Book Review* as well as two books in French. She writes for *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. She lives in Paris with her daughter. See more at [www.cristinanehring.net](http://www.cristinanehring.net).

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