



2018

From the Translator's Desk

Michael Goldman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge>

Recommended Citation

Goldman, Michael (2018) "From the Translator's Desk," *The Bridge*: Vol. 41 : No. 2 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge/vol41/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Bridge by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

From the Translator's Desk

On the Saturday morning of the fortieth anniversary conference of the Danish American Heritage Society, translator Michael Goldman gave a talk in which he interspersed readings from his translations of five accomplished Danish authors with his personal recollections and anecdotes. The texts he read included the first major publication of Benny Andersen's poetry in English translation; the first English translations of Cecil Bødker's adult novels *Stories about Tacit* and *The Water Farm*; the first ever book publication in English of Knud Sørensen's *Farming Dreams*, a selection of poetry about the decline of family farms in the latter half of the twentieth century; the first major English publication of Knud Sønderby's essays, *Fragments of a Mirror*; and the first English publication of Marianne Koluda Hansen's poetry collection, *Average Neuroses*. The talk was so well-received that he was invited to read one of his translations of a Benny Andersen poem as part of the introductory remarks of the gala dinner that evening, which he accepted. The text of the poem he read is printed below, in the original Danish and in Goldman's English translation.

Morgenhymne

by

Benny Andersen

I dag skal der leves, folkens!
Vi er allerede i gang
startede tidligt i morges
vand i ansigtet
kaffe i halsen
et rask skænderi
og lidt morgenavis.
Vi mangler stadig latteren
arbejdet
kærligheden
og et par måltider til
så mere kul på folkens!

The Bridge 41:2 (Fall 2018)

Nye ideer modtages gerne
Hvad med uden forklaring
at gi grønthandleren et kys
eller ta frakken omvendt på
Det skal mærkes at vi lever
Musik må der til
og blomster til alle
hvem ved, en enkelt banan måske
Øs hele din sjæl og opfindsomhed ud
hold kroppen i gang så den damper
thi hellere dampe end støve
Skriv tredive breve og plant et træ
efterlign et par fuglestemmer
tillæg din kone en frygtelig last
og tilgiv hende på stedet
det er altsammen tegn på liv
Endnu er dagen spæd
du kan nå en masse
inden du segner livstræt om
Brug store ord i massevis
overdriv for en gangs skyld:
Thi kendes for ret:
Du er dømt til at leve!
Du må ikke kassere din skæbne
tværtimod tage den på dig
Fyld den ud
som din hud!
Bid livet i låret
Find fremtiden frem
Rut med planer og visdomsord
for i dag skal der søreme leves!

Benny Andersen's "Morgenhymne" ("Morning Hymn") | Michael Goldman

Morning Hymn

by

Benny Andersen, translated by Michael Goldman

Today is for living, people!
We are already on our way
started early this morning
water on the face
coffee down the throat
a brisk quarrel
a little newspaper
We still need laughter
work
love
and a couple of meals
so fan the fire, folks!
New ideas gladly accepted
How about without explanation
give your grocer a kiss
or put your coat on inside-out
We've got to feel alive
There must be music
flowers for everyone
who knows, maybe a banana too
Pour out your soul and inventiveness
work your body until it is steaming
better steam than dust
write thirty letters and plant a tree
imitate a couple of birdsongs
unload on your wife
and forgive her on the spot
these are all signs of life
The day is still new-born
you can achieve plenty
before you drop from exhaustion

The Bridge 41:2 (Fall 2018)

Use lots of big words

exaggerate for once:

The court hereby finds:

You are sentenced to life!

Don't throw away your fate

put it on

Fill it out

like your skin!

Bite life in the thigh

Go find your future

Squander your plans and words of wisdom
because today we're really going to live, dammit!