

## **A STRAW DOG MEMBER PROFILE**

**Michael Goldman**

By Celia Jeffries



Michael Goldman is well into his third career and loving every minute of it. "I'm really aligned with what I'm doing now," he said. "I'm doing something close to my heart." That seems quite fitting, as his heart is what led him to this third career of writing poetry and translating Danish poetry.

Goldman spent a month in Denmark on a Rotary International exchange program in 1983 and fell in love with Jette. "I had to find a way to impress her and her family," he said. He returned two years later and took a job with a pig farmer in southern Denmark. "The farmer had a copy of *Catcher in the Rye* in Danish. I taught myself Danish that summer by translating it word by word and working with a fourth grade Danish textbook." Jette and her family were impressed. They've been married now for twenty-five years.

"I went to college as little as possible," he said. "I never let school get in the way of my education." Today, after earning a degree in environmental studies and working as a carpenter/contractor and jazz musician, Goldman is the owner of Hammer and Horn Productions, translating and promoting Danish literature. He has translated two of Denmark's most prestigious writers, Benny Andersen and Knud Sørensen, and has been invited to guest-teach and lecture in the Scandinavian Studies program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. All this without a formal degree in translation.

Goldman always enjoyed reading Danish literature, and in 2011 began to translate some poetry for friends. At one point he sent a few of his translations to Benny Andersen, whose work was no longer available in English. Andersen liked the translations and together they finished a manuscript of Andersen's poetry. "I began to send out translations and eventually received six grants for translating," Goldman said. "I am non-academic. I don't have an MFA. I am a poet, a carpenter, and a musician."

"The mother tongue resides in one part of the brain and a second language resides in another part of the brain. When translating, you are essentially talking from one side of your brain to the other—you are talking back and forth to yourself. This is how you bring out the meaning, the intent behind the words in poetry."

Goldman joined Straw Dogs Writers Guild last year after attending a Straw Dogs Treats event in June. "I was impressed with everyone there. It's a group of really nice writers who have a good time with their craft. It's low pressure, with well-done events. I joined the Program Committee where we brainstorm ideas for

events and how to make them happen. I think Straw Dogs is an inspiration for writers. I need that for my own writing—to cross-pollinate with other writers.”

For more information about Hammer and Horn Productions and their audio poetry offerings, see [www.hammerandhorn.net](http://www.hammerandhorn.net). View a reading of Michael’s poetry and translations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUZivjBzhEA&feature=youtu.be>

