

WILLIAM V. ZUCKER, Translator

Little did I realize as a kid growing up in ethnic mid-Manhattan during W.W. II that when I became a grown man, the tiny country of Denmark would play such a huge role in my life. And how ironic that my best friend in elementary school...the valedictorian in fact of our 8th grade graduating class...was Peter Larsen. You can't get a more Danish name than that!

How I transitioned from a lower middle-class NYC street boy in those lean war years (1941–1945) to a gymnastics-loving, energetic youth is a first hint of how I got to Denmark, and promptly fell in love with the people, its culture...if not its windy, rainy climate...is a story unto itself. But I digress.

Let me cut to the chase.

I had a fabulous high school education (Stuyvesant High...all boys, then!), went on to Cornell University with the help of a New York State Scholarship...and working part time at 65 cents an hour... and arrived 5 years later with a B.S. in hand (Biology and Chemistry), but still didn't know how I fit into this world (1957). On a rash impulse to do something 'different', I boarded a ship to Denmark, and enrolled in a school where



gymnastics is mainly what you did. (After all that studying...I loved quantum mechanics...I needed to take an orbital leap into hard, physical, precision-type body movement. I would better hone my gymnastic skills.

It was not to be. I damaged my pelvis in a stupid bravado of showing-off, and spent several weeks recovering in bed, letting connective and bone tissue repair. No one spoke English in 1957 at the little *højskole* I attended, so it was sink or swim...I needed to make myself fluent in Danish. (Most Danes might agree with me that the language sounds like someone is vocalizing with a mouth full of potatoes!) In all, I spent about 4 years in

Denmark, in two trips, first as a student-gymnast in training, and then as a bio-research technician. I became near fluent...of course.

Eventually, graduate school (University California, San Diego, Ph.D. 1968, Biochemistry) and then a career in Academia...teaching, research, publishing, including a move into the private sector toward the end. Skipping over some 32 years of life... marriage, babies, divorce, Italy, and finding love again, FINALLY, in the year 2000, I had enough of that part of life...retirement at last. I was 65.

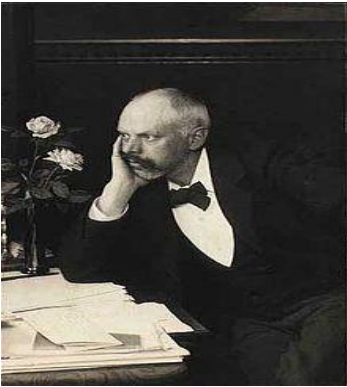
What to do?

In the course of living and working in Denmark, I fell in love with an unforgettable blonde (1962); we were great pals, but when her last 'Dear John' letter came...I was leaving for home again to start graduate school...she included a little Danish book (*Min Lille Dreng – My Little Boy*): "To Bill ...with deepest thanks for your loyal friendship."



The author was Carl Ewald. It was a charming story of how...and why...he raised his little son as he did, in a world which presented so many challenges, obstacles mainly, and remains a book that I treasure. It is available on my website, gratis. classiconaturesstoriesforkids.com

That book was in a few words--**inspiring and deeply personal**. It appeared in the 1936 Edition of the *Woollcott Reader* in English translation, as one of the best books by a foreign author; the book has been reprinted and translated in many languages. Who was this Carl Ewald? What else did he write?



Inquiring further, I stumbled upon a treasure of his short stories. I was immediately captivated by the talent, the skill, and the daring of this man, who thumbed his nose at the prevailing...and still prevalent idea...that children need to be coddled, protected from the 'cruel world' in their choices of reading material, and, failing that, they would be scarred psychologically, turning into problem kids, or worse. To which Ewald would have responded: 'Nonsense'! The result of my initial forays into the manifold efforts of this author was to discover how well read and respected he was in his day in Denmark, and how his short stories about nature, especially, captivated his readership, both young and old. I was launched as one of his translators.

And now it's YOUR turn. Give your kids exposure to these stories! If it's 'substance' you want for them, you'll find it. (Soon, I'll be sending out lots more stories in forthcoming books!)

Oh...I forgot to mention. I have been translating these since retirement (2000). That's a 22 years project, so far, and while translating started out as just an occasional pastime, it became a weekend hobby, then a habit...finally a compulsion? and is now a cause. Carl Ewald would have understood; he was a driven man, too!