



*Friends of
Lorine Niedecker*

*Issue #9
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I was the solitary plover...

Niedecker Archive Will Be Available Online

In December, the Dwight Foster Public Library was notified that they will be a recipient of LSTA funds to digitize most of the Lorine Niedecker archives that are housed at the library and the Hoard Historical Museum. This digitization project will take the handmade books, typed letters, handwritten notes, watercolor paintings, photographs, scrapbooks and other important Niedecker papers, scan them and make them available online so that anyone on the planet can view them. In addition, we will be digitizing the taped recordings of interviews with local residents who knew Lorine and digitizing the text transcripts of interviews. The videos of Gail & Bonnie Roub, Mary Gates & Marilla Fuge and other video material will be included in this project.

through the Library Services and Technology Act. It is a joint project between Wisconsin's Dept. of Public Instruction and the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center at UW-Madison. The digitized archive will be hosted on the UW server with the UW Digital Collections interface.

The purpose for this project is to both make the archive more accessible as well as preserve the archive in digital form. Unfortunately, in the short run, it will make the archive unavailable to the public between the middle of May and the end of October 2009 while the archive is in Madison being processed. We know that summer is frequently a busy time for researchers who may wish to view materials in this collection and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

The funding comes from federal money that is funneled to the state of Wisconsin

*I was the solitary plover
a pencil*

for a wing-bone

From the secret notes

I must tilt

upon the pressure

execute and adjust

In us sea-air rhythm

"We live by the urgent

wave of the verse"



This smiling group attended the premier of Cathy Cook's film "Immortal Cupboard: In Search of Lorine Niedecker" at the Milwaukee Art Museum last November. From left: Sue Hartwick, Mary Gates, Ann Engelman, Amy Lutzke and Margot Peters.



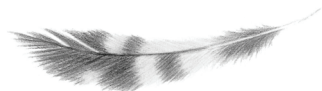
a pencil for a wing-bone...

Biographer Margot Peters writing Lorine Niedecker Biography

Although Niedecker's status as a poet has burgeoned since her death in 1970, no one has undertaken to write a major biography. Niedecker herself would say, "Read my poetry; it's all you need to know about me." But an artist's work is never all we need to know. When a writer moves and inspires us, we want to get behind the words on the page closer to the person herself. We want details, motives, everyday behavior. What did she look like? What inspired this or that poem? What was she doing on August 12, 1931?

Says Peters: "I've been walking toward Lorine Niedecker for twenty years. Her poetry as well as her life haunt and inspire me. When Bonnie Roub reminded me recently that in 1982 her husband Gail had approached me at a Madison restaurant demanding, 'Why aren't you doing a life of Niedecker!' I knew I'd come full circle from Niedecker's poetry to Niedecker's life."

Margot Peters, emerita professor of English and Women's Studies at UW-Whitewater, is the author of seven biographies. They include *Unquiet Soul: A Biography of Charlotte Brontë*, *Bernard Shaw and the Actresses*, *The House of Barrymore*, *May Sarton: A Biography*, and *Design for Living: A Biography of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne*. Her work has won two Banta awards, two George Freedley awards for best theater book, the Friends of American Writers 1975 Best Work of Prose, the English-Speaking Union's Ambassador Book Award, and five Wisconsin Library Awards for Outstanding Achievement by a Wisconsin Author. Margot is also a published poet and author of the thriller *Wild Justice*. She lives in Lake Mills with her husband Peter Jordan and, wonderfully nearby in Sun Prairie and Madison, her children Marc and Claire and granddaughter Violet.



FOLN Plan Wisconsin Poetry Festival

Mark your calendars for Saturday October 3 and Sunday October 4, 2009, the dates planned by Friends of Lorine Niedecker for the first Wisconsin Poetry Festival. As you would expect of a festival hosted by this group, there will be a strong Niedecker focus to the program. However, the inspiration for this event comes out of a desire to celebrate Wisconsin's poets and the diverse body of work that they create.

At this time plans include a Blackhawk Island poetry writing workshop, screening of Cathy Cook's film "Immortal Cupboard", lots of poetry reading, food and time to socialize. The event will take place in Fort Atkinson at the Hoard Historical Museum and the Dwight Foster Public Library. Watch the Summer issue of *The Solitary Plover* for a complete schedule and registration forms.

FOLN Thanks!

We would like to thank Mark Bardenwerper for his kind assistance with transferring our audio cassettes in the Niedecker archive onto audio CD's. We are thankful for his time, expertise and devotion to this project.

We send a big thank-you to board member Sylvia Sippel for her time-consuming work on the FOLN fundraising mailing. Sylvia orchestrated this huge project and put together the mailing herself, donating her time and her own money to the project.

We want to thank Julie Schoessow for sharing her family's old home movies of Christmas celebrations that include the only known film footage of Lorine Niedecker. Though Lorine's segments are very short, the video of she and Al surrounded by family are priceless.

We appreciate all of our friends. Thank you!

From the secret notes I must tilt...

POETRY

Black Hawk Island 9/17/05 to Jonathan Williams

She liked the Enlightenment
she liked cabbage.

What America needs
is not more cars in
church parking lots
but in a rural setting
a non-Christian poet.

(Lorine's bio)
no kiss from Louis
careerless.

I was officially loved
by some in the world
thus not without merit
but disdain for others
was tornado-dark.

The waltz was lovely
not slow, danceable and
sprayable on water.

Migration to Club 26
supper club of pirates
bathtub gin makers
toy boys free rounds!

Niedecker's Museum, Milwaukee

I

You got a raw deal
you said to yourself
Muse/Museum says
no deal is better son

II

Dreamt on these walls
future's furniture
nip it into you

III

From Morris Graves's
oiseau to another
without sleeplessness

IV

Baseball caps
underneath Mozart-randy
Bukowski in their pockets

V

Opposite of a soccer field
but plenty of moms
plus solitude's androgeny

VI

Le coq de la Liberation 1944
cet
no nebulae

VII

Everyone is half cute
in an art museum

VIII

Hold your heart
Rothko's shell or house
of windows

IX

Starved for typewriters
they played marbles
on rivers' doors

X

Step on Avery's river boat
Darwin Morris Yeats on board
like a supper club

upon the pressure...

XI

From pillar to post
in a glass menagerie
of grasshoppers (drinks)

XII

Should be drunk as a pet shop boy
LN on wild green arts and letters
parsing them
and molest the cocktail shaker

XIII

Gail Roub should we be sure
America moves
a 'golden futurite vessel'

XIV

On this coast and crossroads
the god Hermes holds
his workshop
two A's in the class
Watt and Niedecker

James Liddy 1934 - 2008

James Liddy passed away on Nov. 5, 2008. He was known to us as the UW-Milwaukee professor who brought his students to the Dwight Foster Library's small conference in 2001. They stopped at Blackhawk Island first for some inspiration and then shared the poetry they wrote. In his adopted hometown of Milwaukee he was known as "a poet, teacher, Irishman, memoirist, man about town (especially on foot and via the No. 15 bus), historian, gossip, subject of gossip and good Catholic boy" according to Jim Hazard at Express Milwaukee.com. He will be missed.



Lorine

1.

A bird, softly repeating
her evening solo
from the roof of a factory.

I couldn't pick out exactly
which rain-rusted
niche she sheltered in.

2.

Deep evening sky.
The clouds, wind-driven,
bird-perfect corollaries.

Below, a truck
backs into the dark
cave of a loading dock.

Only the name,
T & G Industries,
painted on its side.

Stuart Miller

Stuart Miller was born in Paterson, NJ. He received an MFA in writing from the Columbia University School of the Arts--so many years ago that it's amazing he can remember that far back. Has worked for Barnes & Noble since 1981, currently as an executive editor in the B&N publishing program.



execute and adjust...

Re-reading LN

*(in new times of depression and war
--italicized phrases are hers)*

The human woman
made the poet:

the day to day pressure
of competing jobs

that makes a woman's life.
She did what was needed

to be done, swept
floors, carried bundles

at Hoard's Dairyman,
tore herself away

*to sit for six months
on a line of poetry*

to make the words
pierce the point of pain:

a 'thirties Depression scene,
Wisconsin winter,

a woman in a thin coat
spruced up *charming*—
why, she's destitute

to see what anyone
might be driven to:

in *Wartime's* "scorched earth
a fleeing mother

abandons her newborn –
no child, no enlightenment.

The poet became
the sufferer: *Who was*

*Mary Shelley? She had
a child who died*

*and yet another child
who died*

shaped words to stay
beyond the book,

even the book of war:

had General Rodimstev
(Stalingrad) tell his story:

*White Guards flogged father to death,
I studied to save
Man's sweet breath.*

She left a cleaned stove
in the hospital kitchen,

didn't throw away
the night women's gravy

left it for the
day women, the cooks

coming in early to
begin to do their share

in the practical work
of saving lives –

for what else can be the life
and the truth of poetry?

**Jane Augustine
9 January 2009**

Jane Augustine has published 3 volumes of
poetry: *A Woman's Guide to Mountain Climbing*
(2008), *Night Lights* (2004), *Arbor Vitae*
(2002). She resides in New York city.



In us sea-air rhythm...

Stone Skipping

You throw me how I
lift with such spin cutting through
summer breeze and seaweed smell
gliding down a shallow arc

to smack Cedar Lake and lift
again flinging droplets away
a galaxy in reverse and drop
parting the sea and lift again
kids on the pier, a gull
dips a wing, the beach, umbrellas
the bay whirling you've made me

barmy, dizzy with dip and skim
skid, ski, sink
nestle by starfish
will this ever happen again

Word Processor

My operating system says
"loading your personal settings."
Feeling loaded I double-click the icon
and wonder what words might come.

What a way to invoke the muse.
I sit blinking, the cursor blinks back.
As the coffee brews I am informed
there are no new messages. Not good.

Ah, but she comes, wafting
aromatically on molecules of caffeine.
"Here are words rushing toward uncertainty,"
she says, "hurry after them, bring them back

toward the known, make the poem."
Fingers running on the keyboard I grasp
whatever words I can, lay out a few this way
and that, tissues, rags of material,
patchwork of bytes, why do I think

this morning of the enslaved the raped
the tortured the imprisoned? I see it
all happening chasing the keys like this
why do I get so angry and why

looking at this rough draft
is there this ecstasy that life is good
and science interesting, I still feel love
still try to do things I believe in,
still try to make the poem?

Wisconsin May

we watched the month leaf out
the first moth lazy on the porch
midges dots of light weaving
in evening sun

hungry for air we put up the tent
leaves threw their shapes on the roof
the way ripples shadow
a muddy bottom

marsh hawks called, a pair on a branch
harrier cries rising in pitch
they flew low and out
though we murmured "Stay."

new flies circled in the quiet
brown catkins ticked on the tent
and made a sandy rustle
tumbling to the ground

sifting through barely moving air
to where we whispered
slight drifts of pollen
yellow dust everywhere

R. Virgil Ellis

R. Virgil Ellis lives near Cambridge, Wisconsin. He is Associate Editor of *Rosebud Magazine* as well as its art director and web author. His chapbook *Bone Flute* is published by Parallel Press. He has numerous print publications as well as CD's & DVD's of his perform-

"We live by the urgent..."

ance poetry, including a CD entitled *The Story of Andro: A Rock Cantata*, and anew DVD entitled *Golgonooza*. Garrison Keillor has read Ron's poetry on the NPR program *The Writers Almanac*. He is an Emeritus Professor from UW-Whitewater who knew Lorine Niedecker personally and wrote the introduction to John Lehman's book, *America's Greatest Unknown Poet*.



Remembering Lorine

I remember Lorine
Tall, reserved and pleasant.
I met her at Miss Gruner's Bookstore,
At the Dwight Foster Library,
Walking downtown,
and more.

Deep eyes,
A quiet expression,
A memory,
An impression.

So sad,
I never knew
She had no patron
and poverty too.

Janice Redford

Janice Redford is a local Fort Atkinson resident.



Each year the Wisconsin Center for the Book solicits poems for consideration for their annual bookmark. The winning poem is featured on a bookmark that is widely distributed. In 2008 they selected the following poem by Lisa Fishman.

At L.N.'s

In marsh mud's thick beginning
on the green dark trail we were
barefoot
bare-armed
in the moon-bare night

the river quite still

I stepped in a boy's cupped hands
to look in the poet's window

Would she like the motorcycle
agleam in the only room

Would she let me live there
or tell me go,
listening

with my shoes in my hand, walking
mud-toed, toward

(c) 2008 Lisa Fishman

From Lisa: The poem, "At. L. N.'s," emerged from circumstances that are fairly straightforwardly, if incompletely, presented in the poem. I was teaching at Beloit College at the time (about eight years ago), and one evening several students and I decided to drive out to the island and look at the cabin. I had visited the site before, but it was still difficult to find in the dark. We walked around by the place that I think is a large bar/restaurant and read tarot cards on the dock. Then we made it to the house and cabin, and a student lifted me up to the window as described in the poem. The motorcycle seemed to be in storage there; it was oddly stilled but powerful in the otherwise mostly empty room. Not what we expected to see, but that is often the best thing.

Lisa Fishman a full-time professor in the English Department of Columbia College Chicago, where she teaches in the MFA Poetry Program and at the undergraduate level. She is the author of three books of poetry and three chapbooks and has a new book, *FLOWER CART*, forthcoming on Ahsahta Press.

REVIEW

The Next One Thousand Years, The Selected Poems of Cid Corman
edited by Ce Rosenow and Bob Arnold
©2008 Longhouse Publishers & Booksellers
ISBN 978-1-929048-08-3

Review by Nancy Rafal

The cover photograph immediately beckons the reader to get ready for a poetic journey. The path is the Haguro-san steps in Kyoto, Japan where Cid walked almost every day. Ce Rosenow and Bob Arnold serve up a delicious variety of Cid's work. Those familiar with Corman will feel simultaneously sated and hungry for more after finishing this volume. New readers will savor lessons for living and for death, advice for poets, and stellar translations.

The selection process for this volume must have been gratifying and grueling considering that Cid wrote a book a day for nearly half a century. Rosenow and Arnold point the reader to the pathway and then let Corman's words sing, bite, humor, and pique page after page. The reader goes further and further into meditation and rumination on this journey. Corman's words begin with:

Poetry
is all there

isso come
and get it.

Such a delectable place to start. Interspersed with Cid's original poems are his translations of other poets contemporary and past. All works flow seamlessly one to the next and the entire book can be devoured in a single evening's read. But each sparse page is packed with thoughts to masticate thoroughly for full benefit.

From beginning to end the volume addresses universal themes in a most personal manner. The meaning of life, offspring, love, compas-

sion, awe, and beauty are all here in Cid's short multifaceted jewels.

A number of poems refer to Lorine Niedecker, Wisconsin poet 1903 – 1970. Cid and Lorine corresponded by mail between Fort Atkinson and Kyoto. Her letters to him are contained in *Between Your House and Mine: Letters of Lorine Niedecker to Cid Corman, 1960 – 1970*. Cid expressed his joy in these exchanges.

Suddenly
a bird call
makes it seem

(I don't know
why)
like a
holiday

like getting
a letter
from Lorine.

When Cid died early in 2004, a major poetic voice became silent. But he still speaks loud and clear in this selection from his work, a collection assembled by two people who loved and respected him and in whose capable hands Cid Corman will continue to influence writers and readers for the next thousand years.

The Next One Thousand Years, The Selected Poems of Cid Corman is available from Longhouse Publishers and Booksellers, 1604 River Road, Guilford, Vermont 05301. The cost is \$16.95 plus shipping and handling of \$3.50 first copy, \$1.00 each additional copy.

NEWS

Sterling North Society's 18th Annual Hometown Talent Show Offers Fresh New Mix of Family Entertainment

The Sterling North Society's 18th Annual Hometown Talent Show will be held at the Edgerton Performing Arts Center Sunday, February 8 at 1:30 pm. The doors open at 1 pm. Admission is free, however, donations are welcome to assist with maintenance items and upkeep of the Sterling North Home, Museum and Barn.

Those who attend this event can expect top-notch performances, a meet and greet session with performers, refreshments, door prizes and raffle items. The show will include the best performers from the past and new, exciting performers as well. Following the show, attendees will have an opportunity to talk with performers while all enjoy tasty homemade treats. During intermission Sterling North Society related door prizes will be given away.

Raffle tickets will be available for purchase January through the day of the show with winners drawn at the conclusion of the show on February 8. Raffle items were graciously donated by local businesses and include a Performing Arts Theme Basket. Raffle tickets may be purchased at Piggly Wiggly of Edgerton, Edgerton Pharmacy and The Sterling North Society by calling 608-931-0919. Tickets may also be purchased the day of the show at the Edgerton Performing Arts Center.

Technical direction for this year's show will be courtesy of experienced, highly talented Edgerton High School Senior student volunteers. The show will be recorded courtesy of JATV who will make DVD copies of the program available for purchase.

Organized in 1989 as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation with 501(c)(3) status, the Society is

committed to preserving and promoting the heritage of Sterling North as it relates to Edgerton and surrounding communities. The Society encourages activities involving the entire community in the preservation, promotion and financial support of this local heritage, while increasing awareness of the literary arts for both children and adults.



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