



*Friends of
Lorine Niedecker*

*Issue #11
Winter 2010*

I was the solitary plover



Lorine's Teapot

This is a photograph of a teapot that belonged to Lorine Niedecker. Lorine's step-daughter, Julie Schoessow, donated it to the Friends of Lorine Niedecker ar-

chive. The Friends in turn gave it to the Hoard Museum so that it may be displayed in the museum's Niedecker room.

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"



Friends of Lorine Niedecker Receive Poetry Foundation Grant

The Friends of Lorine Niedecker were surprised by an unsolicited grant from the Poetry Foundation. The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation itself was surprised by a large grant from philanthropist Ruth Lilly in 2003.

"This is a great honor for us," said Ann Engelman, President of the Friend of Lorine Niedecker. "This foundation contributes to the PBS Newshour and Garrison Keillor's "Writer's Almanac" on NPR. The Poetry Foundation does not accept solicitations. We are not sure how or who or when we came to their attention. We suspect the Wisconsin Poetry

Festival might have helped but we really don't know. We feel this grant validates our poetry activities on behalf of Lorine Niedecker and Wisconsin poetry. We are grateful for the recognition. \$5,000 will help us achieve some of our programming goals much sooner. Specific plans for the grant money will be announced this spring."

This year the Lorine Niedecker Wisconsin Poetry Festival will be held September 25 and 26, 2010. "This was originally meant to be a biennial event but the board felt that the success and momentum created last year should continue," Amy Lutzke, Dwight Foster Public Library explains. "Poetry is generating some excitement in Fort Atkinson. We look forward to continuing the trend here and throughout Wisconsin."

a pencil for a wing-bone

First Lorine Niedecker Wisconsin Poetry Festival A Success

The first Lorine Niedecker Wisconsin Poetry Festival was held in Fort Atkinson on October 3 and 4, 2009. The Friends of Lorine Niedecker consider the festival a huge success. Approximately 130 individuals attended the various workshops, poetry readings and landmark tours, in addition to a presentation by Lorine's step-daughter, Julie Schoessow and the showing of Cathy Cook's film "Immortal Cupboard."

This issue of the Solitary Plover is dedicated to the festival. Poems in this issue were written by the participants of the Blackhawk Island Writer's Workshop held on the morning of October 4. The temperature was a lovely, damp 50 degrees and the skies were gray but that didn't keep a hearty group of poets from converging on Lorine's place to draw inspiration. Attendees were treated to a reading of these poems at the lunch break on Sunday. In addition to the poems, see pages 7 - 12 for photos from the festival.

Many people and organizations helped to make this festival possible. The Friends of Lorine Niedecker would like to thank our sponsors, partners and participants for a successful first Wisconsin Poetry Festival. This festival was made possible in part through a generous grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the State of Wisconsin. The WI Humanities Council's sponsorship enabled the Friends of Lorine Niedecker to bring all three current poets laureate to Fort Atkinson: Marilyn Taylor, Poet Laureate of Wisconsin, Susan Firer, Poet Laureate of Milwaukee and Fabu, Poet Laureate of Madison. In addition, these funds helped bring the current and past winners of the Lorine Niedecker Poetry Award which is given annually by the Council for Wisconsin Writers. These award winners included: Susan Elbe of Madison, Karl Elder of Sheboygan, Michael Kriesel of Wausau, David Krump of LaCrosse and Alison Townsend of Madison.

Other sponsors and partners included: the Council for Wisconsin Writers, Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets, Isthmus, Daily Jefferson County Union, Dwight Foster Public Library, Wisconsin People & Ideas Magazine, Café Carpe, Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce, Kwik Trip, Fort Atkinson Pick N Save, Vos Sentry and Jefferson Walmart. A volun-

teer crew consisting of Mark Bardenwerper, Nancy Rafal, Joan Hyer, Mary Gates, Carol Keleny, Sylvia Sippel, Kathy Kauffman, Donna Kay Kohls, Cynthia Holt, Sue Hartwick, Mary Linton, Janice Redford, Kim Ehlers and Tammy Doellstedt helped each event run smoothly. We especially want to thank the Hoard Museum, their staff and volunteers for facilitating the festival at the museum.

Finally, this festival would not have been a success without our participants. Thank you everyone who helped or participated. The 2010 Lorine Niedecker Wisconsin Poetry Festival is scheduled for September 25 and 26. Planning is currently underway.



Niedecker Archive Now Available Online

In December 2008, the Dwight Foster Public Library was notified that they would 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 involved scanning the handmade books, typed letters, handwritten notes, watercolor paintings, photographs, scrapbooks and other important Niedecker papers and making them available online so that anyone on the planet can view them. In addition, the project digitized the taped recordings of interviews with local residents who knew Lorine and the text transcripts of the interviews. The videos of Gail & Bonnie Roub, Mary Gates & Marilla Fuge and other video material are included in this project.

The funding came from federal money through the Library Services and Technology Act. A joint project between Wisconsin's Dept. of Public Instruction and the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center at UW-Madison, the digitized archive is being hosted on the UW server with the UW Digital Collections interface.

There are a variety of ways to access these materials and there is definitely a learning curve involved in figuring out the organization of the materials. Here are some pointers. The URL for the collections that have been digitized by the Dwight Foster Library, including the Niedecker archive, is <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WI.FortAtkinsonLocHist>. On this page you will see that we have divided the archive into 3 categories. The "Documents" category contains 113 items that

From the secret notes I must tilt

include scans of handwritten notes, typed poems, letters to friends, transcripts of interviews and the pieces of music Lorine wrote. In the "Photographs" category are 80 snapshots. The "Audio/Video" collection includes recordings of interviews with Lorine's friends and acquaintances, radio and television broadcasts about Lorine and her poetry and two short home movie clips. When you click on one of these categories, all of the items included in that selection will appear as a list for you to browse.

It is also possible to search for materials in the archive. Closer to the top of the page, under the heading "Historic Fort Atkinson" are the options to "Search the collection" and "Search only the full text." Ignore the full text searching since most of the items in this archive are not searchable by the text in the documents. When you click on "Search the collection," a search interface page will open. This search page is for ALL of the documents in the State of Wisconsin collection so it is important that your search be limited. Look for the "Limit search by: Sub-collection" box and make sure it says "Historic Fort Atkinson." The Niedecker archive is part of this larger collection. Some of the documents that were scanned will only appear through this search process. The small, handmade books that Lorine created will only appear if you conduct this search and use the "Limit search by: Type" box to select "Text." Hopefully, in a future update we can change that but you will miss some great items if you don't look for them in this way.

The Friends of Lorine Niedecker are excited about the opportunity to provide this level of access to the materials in our collection. If you have questions about the project or about finding materials in the archive, please contact Amy Lutzke at (920) 563-7790.

In related news, the Dwight Foster Public Library is about to embark on an expansion and renovation building project. The Hoard Historical Museum has graciously agreed to house the library's archive, including Lorine's personal library, during this project. The items will be moved on Feb. 4, 2010 and will remain at the Hoard Museum until the project is complete, sometime in early 2011. All archive visit requests will need to go to the Hoard Museum during this time. You can contact them at (920) 563-7769 or info@hoardmuseum.org.



POETRY

Fire on Water

Campfire on the riverbank
Warms the cold grey breeze
stirs the fire
warms my feet.

Speed boat
stirs the cold grey water
laps the shore
drowns my feet.

Water extinguishes fire.
Fire evaporates water.
My feet dry.

Vicky Daniels Bardell



One White Gull, Overhead

In the gloom prone gray
Of an October Sunday,
Upon a witches finger of land,
An isthmus in a bathtub, yearly washed.

So sadly, it would be trespassing
If I had the courage
To follow the poet's path.
I am calling upon
A ghost of a ghost,
Begging for treasure,
Begging for word,
Begging for bite of brilliance, to sooth the bitter.

Why was I not born Lorine's daughter?
Forgive my selfish nature.
This would be mine alone.
My charcoal and rocks,
My waves to lullaby me to sleep.
My water, always water
To curse me, to bless me,
To baptize me, cleanse my life

upon the pressure

Of useless things,
Leaving behind riches
Of wind and wet and a witches wisdom.

Donna Kay Kohls
(from the steps of the Lorine Niedecker cabin)



Visitation

The old man watched the river wrinkle silently
appearing as Saran Wrap
Wind from the west
Shots of hunters pushing him outward
near the shore.

He remembered only on foot
in childhood
testing the water
this new baptism – of choice.

Then, taller in waders
descending
and in this River
he cast out his Lenord bamboo
before the rocks became too slippery
so, he stayed on shore
because the big boulders let you
lean into their old pockets.

His driftwood hands unwrap the bread
from the wax paper – as he nudges the
nuscience dried dead skeleton of a fish –
over the shore scabble
seeing its avian bloodline as a solitary
gull shocks the waterline
into the sky.

Elaine Barrett



114 Blackhawk Island Road (a haiku sequence)

autumn rain –
taking shelter
at Lorine's

shotguns
and wood stove
popping

found in the water
near Lorine's cabin:
percolator

Lorine
is not here;
boat's wake

birdhouse
and Lorine's house,
unoccupied

Michael Nickels-Wisdom



The Idea of It

Unmade bed
a desk
a window
pump for water
wood for heat
footpath soft
with dead damp leaves
wind through still-leaved trees
fire-smell and
distant barking dog
live green river moving

Jean Preston

In us sea-air rhythm

Cipher

I'd escape days
extended family busy
each with each
at our grandparent's farm
kitchen table and porch
bolt across the chicken yard
climb the scrub maple
out back of the coop
and drop from a branch
onto the wooden shingles
where I would peer
over the ridge
and listen
trying to decipher
the life of others.

Michael F. Latza



Adrift

On hearing of Aunt Cora's death (1917-2009)

Things get lost. One day coffee
perks on the stove. Then your doctor
swears you off acidic food
and you lose track of grounds,
pot, earthy wisps of steam
trailing from the spout, the whole
shitteree. Now here is the pot lying
in a low spot next to the house,
screen of grounds basket clogged
with river mud, lid jammed
with organics. Lying here next
to a Michelin XZ4 perched
on a silver maple root. How
does love and need end like this?
Half mired, swamp odds and ends.
God, you could use a cup.

Mary Linton

Tool Shed

*- the Sharp metal figures are arranged by shape,
weight and purpose.*

We build complex architectures
that require small, soft metal tools
which always bend & fold. Someone made
the nuts & therefore the wrench. Wrenches
of all sizes & screwdrivers with red & clear-
striped handles: barber shop poles
stuck mid-rotation so the stripes stretch out.
The tools fall into line like a family portrait
taken at Sears, arranged tallest to shortest,
most children at the bottom of the wall near the floor.
Hierarchy by age & height. The children
think this is unfair and throw screws. Tools lined up shoulder,
to shoulder also stacked layer above layer,
pressed flat against the board.
Lines on the river bank outside that mark the wakes,
lines above that on the shore measure
with ruler ticks the rise & fall of water,
which is also the rise of leaves through the bark
surface of branches, their slow ripening,
eventual letting go. Even the light lets go
early in winter. Sun, you automatic bulb, go out!
And when it rises again, the wrenches, screwdriver
tips, the serrated edge of a saw all light up
like bars of silver from some shipwreck's failed exchange.
Water pushing them around among the rocks
to sink with channel catfish. Their dead silver eyes
chiseled out by the end of a heavy file, rattle to the floor
when a door slams and the wrenches fall
along with the last cup of sun that opens a hole
of brown water in the river and splays the river bed.
On the bank the tools holding tightly onto light
all turn to rust.

Ashley Gorham



Relative Movement

You know the river is moving, though upstream or down
isn't obvious here, and you aren't thinking about that
anyway, just watching the wavelets break on the shore,
listening to their slap, the brush of wind through foliage.
Even when a boat buzzes past, you wave without thinking,
as a matter of course.

Lester Smith

"We live by the urgent wave"

FESTIVAL PHOTOS



Tom Montag emcee's the Friday poetry reading.



The mirror in the women's bathroom at the Café Carpe



Poets chatting



Visiting the Niedecker-inspired art exhibit

of the verse "



Sarah Busse and Wendy Vardaman of Verse Wisconsin



Panel discussion on "The Nature of WI Poetry"



Visiting Lorine's cabin



Solitary Plover Winter 2010



Lunchtime at the Poetry Café



Bookmaking workshop



Saturday dinner at the Café Carpe featured recipes from Lorine's cookbook.

Solitary Plover Winter 2010



Blackhawk Island poets



Lorine's view



Inspiration fish



Solitary Plover Winter 2010

NEWS

Verse Wisconsin Premier Published

Sarah Busse and Wendy Vardaman, Co-Editors of Verse Wisconsin are excited to announce that the first issue of Verse Wisconsin will soon be in the mail. We believe the contents reflect the diversity and dynamism of the poetry community in Wisconsin, and we look forward to working together on many future issues to explore and expand our scope further.

We would like to invite all of the poets and writers who contributed to our first issue, online and print, to share their Verse Wisconsin poems at our launch reading at 7 PM on March 20, at Avol's Books in Madison, WI. This announcement is a special invitation to you, our fellow poetry lovers, friends, donors, celebrants and supporters who have helped us reach this point, and who contribute so much in so many ways to the poetry community of this state. Won't you please join us at Avol's and help celebrate poetry in Wisconsin?

Verse Wisconsin Launch Reading
Avol's Books
315 W. Gorham
Madison, WI
Saturday, March 20
7 PM

RSVP to editors@versewisconsin.org. We hope to see you there!

You can read the premier issue online at:
<http://versewisconsin.org/issue101.html>

Immortal Cupboard Showing

IMMORTAL CUPBOARD will be screening at the Beloit International Film Festival on the following dates:

Friday Feb. 19th 5:00 pm
Saturday Feb. 20th 7:30 pm

Both showings will be at the Beloit Public Library at 605 Eclipse Boulevard. The film is also a finalist for the Best Documentary Award which will be announced on Feb. 18th. Filmmaker Cathy Cook will be attending both screenings and conducting a Q & A afterwards. Ticket INFO and more:
<http://www.beloitfilmfest.com/index.html>



ABOUT US

The Friends of Lorine Niedecker is a non-profit corporation. There are no staff, just devoted volunteers. Our goals include preserving and expanding the legacy of Lorine Niedecker, as well as, offering educational materials, access to archives, a semiannual newsletter and events as time and resources are available. We are supported through donations and grants.

The Solitary Plover is issued twice yearly, in winter and in spring. Sign up for the email version on our Web site.

Friends of Lorine Niedecker
102 E. Milwaukee Avenue
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538
(920) 563-7790
contact@lorineniedecker.org
www.lorineniedecker.org



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102 E. Milwaukee Ave
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538*