



I was the solitary plover

FRIENDS OF
Lorine Niedecker

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All One In The End Water, or Lorine Niedecker: Poet of Outer Place, Inner Life by Lauren Carlson

NOTE: On Saturday May 13, as the inaugural Lorine Niedecker fellow, I offered a public presentation at the Hoard Historical Museum in Fort Atkinson. It would have been the day after Niedecker's 120th birthday. What follows is a written summary of the public remarks given that day. They've been edited and revised to fit the format of a written essay for the Solitary Plover.

This story begins almost ten years ago, in 2014, the year I finally admitted to myself I was a writer. I had long buried my desire to write and write poetry. But my admission was the result of a two-year discernment process undertaken in my training as a spiritual director. During the training process, it became clear that I'd been resisting my work as a writer and poet. In order to hold space for others, I first had to commit to my own creative calling.

I met regularly with a neighboring writer, Saara Myrene Raappana, who offered excellent reading recommendations to develop my writing. She proposed I look at the work of a poet named Lorine Niedecker. Next, I applied to an MFA program and began working with experienced faculty. My first year, after reading some of my poems, supervisor Reginald Gibbons insisted I read the *Collected Works*

of Lorine Niedecker edited by Jenny Penberthy. To his delight, I confessed that I'd read much of Niedecker's work with an earlier mentor, and that I felt Niedecker to be a strong influence on my own poems. Last, after graduating, I was in a writing workshop at the Napa Valley Writers' Conference. Our workshop leader was Victoria Chang. While discussing a draft during workshop she looked up at me and asked, *have you read much Lorine Niedecker?*

Third times a charm, as they say. At this point, Niedecker's influence on my own writing became impossible to deny. Which is how I found myself, nine years later, as the inaugural Niedecker fellow, staying in Lorine's former cottage on Black Hawk Island for an entire week mid-May, immersing myself in the



Photographer: Ann Engelman

sights and sounds of her precise geographic place. As a fellow woman writer from the rural Midwest, I've long been inspired by Niedecker's fierce commitment to her craft, and how she drew from her surrounding geography to become a singular force and presence in American letters. Lorine's writing cabin itself was a source of connection and inspiration. Just inside the door, a corkboard where readers could leave notes to Lorine or share fragments. One read, *You and your place reminds [sic] me of something unknown, but with a comfort not anxiety.* –Sandrya. I don't know Sandrya, but I felt a twitch of recognition when I read her comment.

That "something unknown" I'll suggest is the interior world, to which Lorine was oriented via the specificities of exterior place. Until this spring I'd never been to Fort Atkinson, much less Black Hawk Island. Though Black Hawk Island is only a seven-minute drive away from the heart of downtown Fort, it's hard to deny the noticeable change that occurs once one turns under the overpass on Black Hawk Island road. The river threatens the residences, the trees rise up.

If one is sitting on the screened porch where Lorine lived with her husband, it is almost as though no other people are near at all. In some way, this is an illusion of the marsh surrounding the home. The wetlands prevent any neighboring buildings from being built within sight of the porch. The birdsong is immense. The geese relentless. Wildlife, constant. Speedboats and fisherman troll the river. Saturated in a place that affords one unmixed attention to the external environment, the inner world flourishes. It is a place of continual imagination, curiosity, playfulness, discovery, obsession, grief.

This kind of stillness, reflection, and silence are rare, so rare in our contemporary world, perhaps they could be thought of as luxury. Lorine writes in *Wintergreen Ridge*

Nobody, nothing
Ever gave me
Greater thing

Than time
Unless light
And silence

Which if intense
Makes sound

*You and your place reminds me of something
unknown...but with a comfort.*

In the absence of artificial and mechanical noise, arises active silence. There's a literal intensity of pitch: birdsong, geese honk, leaf rush, racoon chatter, muck splash, insect buzz which in turn mirrors the intensity of the internal world (imagination, curiosity, playfulness, discovery, obsession, grief)—heard when one retreats from interruption, demand and noise. Again, an active silence. As Lorine writes in her letter to Mary Hoard,

*It is my belief objects are
needed only to supplement our
nervous systems. I have said
to Z. (and he says: is it logic?
Which he would say) that the most
important part of memory is its
non-expressive, unconscious
part. We remember most and
longest that which at first
perception was unrecognizable,
though we are not aware of this.
We remember, in other words
a nerve sense, a vibration, a
color, a rhythm...*

Here we can see how the objects (whittled clean, as she'd say) stand in for what's otherwise unrecognizable.

The goal of the poem, then, isn't to annotate or explain, or even document, but to associate. To invite the reader to be re-cognizant, to recognize their perception; the nerve sense, the vibration, color, rhythm. *The unknown but with a comfort.*

...all things move toward
the light

except those
that freely work down
to an ocean's black depths
in us an impulse tests

the unknown

The richness of Lorine's work is born out of her uncanny talent for approaching the sense, vibration, color, rhythm, the non-expressive unconscious part via the actual and precise. Niedecker's style of transcendence doesn't loft hazily toward the heavens, it is palpable, rooted mucky. She reaches deep into the particularities of place and simultaneously, of our emotional being. Critic Elizabeth Arnold writes, "hers is a disciplined but alert curiosity, open to what might swim into view while remaining on the lookout for wanton fantasy."

Niedecker's writing can be characterized as fragmented, difficult, elusive and abstract. I'd venture that those are the same qualities which compel the reader or listener to root into, or sit with, their own inner depths while engaging her text. The reader's imagination must participate alongside the poem, one must offer their own unknowns in the spaces, or depths, Lorine casts into on the page. Let's take for example her well-known poem, *When Ecstasy Is Inconvenient*.

When Ecstasy Is Inconvenient

Feign a great calm;
all gay transport soon ends.
Chant: who knows—
flight's end or flight's beginning
for the resting gull?

Heart, be still.
Say there is money but it rusted;
say the time of moon is not right for escape.
It's the color in the lower sky
too broadly suffused,
or the wind in my tie.

Know amazingly how
often one takes his madness
into his own hands
and keeps it.

The opening stanza of this poem is multi-layered and speaks to the private world within. First, the text begins with an implicit instruction to the self or reader. The title *When Ecstasy Is Inconvenient* has been whittled down to what's most essential for the reader to know, rather than adding an additional clause such as 'how to act or what to do...*When Ecstasy Is Inconvenient*.' The mind of the reader fills in this implicit omission as the poem moves down the page.

As the poem begins, it instructs: "feign a great calm." The second line, "all gay transport soon ends" sounds like a restatement of the familiar idiom "all good things must come to an end," but this familiarity sets the reader up for surprise and connection both. It's the "all gay transport that soon ends" which provides a clue that the poem is a kind of 'how-to' cope with overwhelming emotions.

Now we understand how the title's use of 'inconvenient' is ironic in its clinical assessment of ecstasy. This is a poem about passion, and the cost of suppressing a passion upon which one may never act.

In this case, ecstasy is more than inconvenient, it is transgressive, forbidden.

Note how Niedecker next uses supplemental “objects” to reveal the underlying “nerve-sense.” The gull, resting. Is this at the end of, or beginning of flight? The gull stands in for the individual before or after, great passion. Is ecstasy’s potential, and one’s resistance to it, the end or beginning of desire? Is passion prolonged or thwarted by this so-called resting?

Know amazingly how
often one takes his madness
into his own hands
and keeps it.

There are private worlds within all of us, she seems to suggest. I want to call attention to her deft turn to the third person (one, he) rather than the implied second-person in the final stanza. Here Niedecker asserts (reveals?) that desire, ecstasies, fantasies which are kept, tended, as madness in one’s own hands—are paradoxically experiences which connect us to each other, veiled though they may be.

Once again, Niedecker is playing with idiom. In the first and second stanza we read “all gay transport soon ends”—a play on “all good things come to an end.” In the second stanza “Heart, be still” is a syntactical inversion of the common phrase “be still my heart” and last, “one takes his madness/ into his own hands” is sonically close to “taking matters into his own hands.” That false sense of stability and control we all purport to have, relies on repressed passions, i.e. madness.

The last stanza, though abstract “...takes his madness/ into his own hands” is delightfully concrete. The image of a person holding their madness, makes madness into a material noun. Rather than a state of being, madness is something that can be “kept” in the hands. Madness, however, indicates a mental state. This evokes an image of a

person holding their head in their hands, --a gesture of despair or grief. Madness, in this case, standing in as a synonym for mind or head. From Elizabeth Arnold’s essay on Niedecker’s collected:

The knot between the accessible earth and what may lie beyond it is Niedecker’s discipline and signature; it allows her to take things as far as she can without losing her foothold on the ground, and orientation that adds something akin to centrifugal motion to the pull and swing of her words, something akin to the tuning of a stringed instrument...

We can access the gesture of holding our head in our hands, we can access the common idiom “matters into his hands,” the object of the resting gull. We are plunged also, into the immaterial, inner emotional landscape with Niedecker’s rhythms “Chant: who knows” “know amazingly how” as words, textures, and nerve-sense resonate, “...in us an impulse tests/ the unknown...”. “You and your place reminds me of something unknown, but with a comfort...”.

In her copy of *Net of Fireflies*, Niedecker enclosed an annotation she’d made for her own research. She writes:

T. said “Poetry must not be so-called poetry. It must be accurate reports, and honest diaries relating happenings in the author’s emotional life. Poems, therefore, should not be thorough and complete, but piecemeal and fragmentary.”

“T.” in this case refers to the Japanese poet Takuboku as translated by H. H. Honda, who wrote at the end of the nineteenth century. Niedecker uses fragmented objects of the external world, rooted in her alert unmixed attentiveness, to correspond with a vast emotional interior life. Her work approaches the unknown but cannot access it completely, hence the fragment. And yet, there is enough to cross the synapse, enough to hold, that the root may furrow.

Again, from Niedecker:

Remember my little granite pail
the handle of it was blue
think what’s got away in my life
was enough to get me through.

I see the outer ‘place,’ the signature geography for which Niedecker is well known, like the bucket’s little blue handle. Vivid, palpable. Something of which we take hold. Yet, the concrete and precise images of a specific place, carry along the depths of our interiors, our reveries (what’s got away). Within each of us is a great inaccessible mystery, but the ‘handle’ is that fragment, the grounded gesture, an access point: a boat, a bridge, a marsh that can be crossed momentarily before it’s overtaken, once again, by the depths of water—our unconsciousness, non-expressive, interiors. To quote Paean to Place:

O my floating life
Do not save love
for things

Throw things
to the flood

ruined
by the flood

Leave the new unbought—
All one in the end—
water

This then is Niedecker’s challenge. To take the floating object of our lives, that which stands in for an emotion, impulse, or feeling, and rather than save them, throw them into the latent, unexpressed, unknown. Here, in the vast mystery of our interiors, which are both shared and isolating, “all one in the end” we are both new and ruined. As much as Niedecker is a poet of place, she is also a poet of the inner world. Her fragments lend the reader a little handle, from which we lose just enough to carry us through.

Lauren K. Carlson is the author of the chapbook *Animals I Have Killed* (Comstock Review’s Chapbook Prize 2018). Her work has recently appeared in *Crab Creek Review*, *Salamander Magazine*, *Terrain*, *The Windhover* and *Waxwing*. This year she was awarded the inaugural Lorine Niedecker fellowship from WriteOn Door County and Friends of Lorine Niedecker. In 2022 she won the Levis Stipend from Friends of Writers for her manuscript in progress. Her writing has been supported by Tin House, Napa Valley Writers Conference and Sewanee Writers Conference. Lauren currently serves as editor for *Tinderbox Poetry Journal* and holds an MFA in poetry from the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers.

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LORINE NIEDECKER

River Cabin Blackhawk Island, WI By Shanley Wells-Rau

This essay was previously published online in The New Territory Literary Landscapes feature.

I was the solitary plover
a
pencil
for a wing-bone

What more solitary place than a small off-grid cabin on an island that's not really an island jutting into a lake that's not really a lake. The cabin was a writing sanctuary for Lorine Niedecker (1903-1970), said to be America's greatest unknown poet, who will forever be linked to Blackhawk Island in southeast Wisconsin.

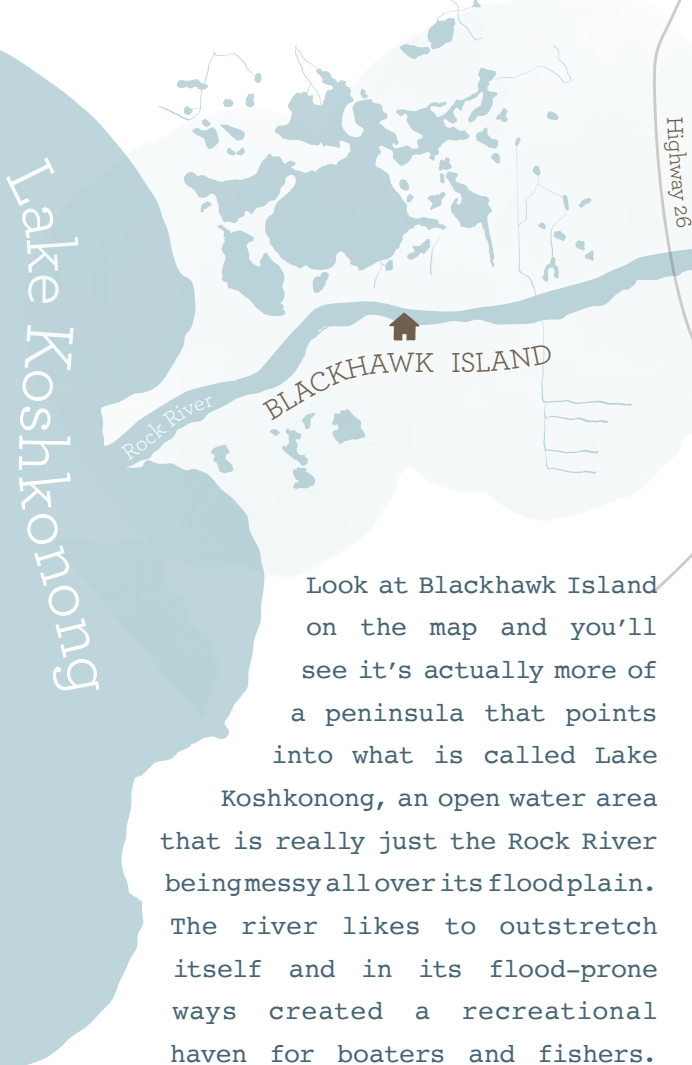
Placed less than 100 feet from the Rock River, Niedecker's cabin was bought as a kit from a catalog and assembled by her father in 1946. He sited it closer to the road than the river in hopes of preventing displacement during the regular floods of spring. Elevated on concrete feet, the 20×20 one-room house hovers over four cement steps. The front and only door faces east, away from the river, as if to shrug off the idea of annual flooding.

Fort
Atkinson
WISCONSIN

This one room contained her life: bed, books, table, typewriter, sink, pencils, hand-held magnifying glass. With no running water, she hauled buckets as needed from her parents' house across the road. That was the house she grew up in. The house she needed to escape.

Her father, a congenial carp seiner and fisherman's guide who was inept with finances, was carrying on an affair with a married neighbor close in age to his daughter. This neighbor and her husband were milking Henry Niedecker of property and money. Her mother, Daisy, had lost her hearing after her only child's birth and turned her head away from her husband. Her "big blind ears" couldn't hear what her eyes couldn't see. A lifetime of fighting flood mud, "buckled floors," and increasing poverty seem to have settled around her like a mourning shawl.

Niedecker left the area a few times-for college until the family's finances made her quit (early 1920s), for artistic and romantic companionship with a fellow poet in NYC (early 1930s), for work as a writer and research editor for the WPA in Madison (1938-1942), and finally for Milwaukee in 1963 when she married a man who lived and worked there. But that spit of land brought her back after each exodus. Once married, Niedecker and her husband, Al Millen, returned to the



river every weekend, eventually building a cottage riverside just steps from her cabin. They moved into the cottage for good in 1968 when Millen retired. Niedecker lived there until her death on Dec. 31, 1970.

In the opening lines of her autobiographical poem “Paeon to Place,” Niedecker submerges herself deep inside a location she said she “never seemed to really get away from.”

Fish
fowl
flood
Water lily mud
My life

in the leaves and on water
My mother and I
born

in swale and swamp and sworn
to water

Photographer: Jim Furley

Painted green when built, the cabin today is chocolate brown. Sturdy wood, unfinished inside. A brass plaque by the door shines with the lines: “New-sawed / clean-smelling house / sweet cedar pink / flesh tint / I love you.” Her signature is embossed below. When I visited, it was hot and dry. The riverside window was open, allowing a breeze to push stifling July heat into the plywood corners. A lovely space. I could see myself writing there. I told myself I could even manage life with “becky,” as she called her outhouse.

It’s not hard to imagine the constant cleanup from the river’s yearly ice melt and flooding. Tall maples and willows accustomed to watery life block the sun over a dirt yard that would easily mud with rain. The only access to sunshine seemed to be on the riverbank or in a boat on the river itself. The tree canopy jittered with life, a “noise-storm” as Niedecker once wrote to a friend. I looked to see what birds were holding conference, hoping to meet one of the famous plovers so linked to her work. I saw none. Just movement, shadows, and chittering, and I thought of her technique to overcome her own failing eyesight by memorizing bird song. She could see birds as they took flight. Sitting still,



they were invisible to her except through their calls and conversations with one another.

I grew in green
slide and slant
of shore and shade

Neighbors saw her walking, always walking, stopping to peer in close at some flowering plant. She bent in-nose distance-to see past her own bad eyesight. Before her marriage to Millen, she worked as a hospital janitor in Ft. Atkinson. Her failing eyes required that she work with her body, no longer able to serve as a librarian's assistant as she did in in the late 1920s or a magazine proofreader as in the late 1940s. Her eyesight wouldn't allow her to drive. If a ride wasn't available, she walked the four miles to work. Four miles home again.

Out-of-place electric guitar riffs float past underbrush the afternoon of my visit. Someone is listening to Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir," seemingly not at peace with bird song or tree breeze. The blaring music makes me think of Lorine's struggle with disrespectful vacationers and rude neighbors. She persisted in centering poetry inside her hardworking life in a community slowly turning blue-collar loud. Her neighbors didn't know she was writing her way into the poetry canon.

The current owners are descendants of the couple who bought the property in 1986 from Millen's estate. They kindly allow poets on pilgrimage, and they seem to care lovingly for the property. As I walked to the river to meet it up close, the owner appeared with a genial greeting. He asked if I'd noticed the 1959 flood marks on the wall inside the cabin. I hadn't. Eagerly, he guided me back to Niedecker's "sweet cedar pink" to show me that and other details. After friendly conversation, I decided to head back to town. I didn't need to meet the river up close. I've already met it many times in her poetry.

After a career in the oil industry, Shanley Wells-Rau earned her MFA in poetry at Oklahoma State University, where she served as an editorial assistant for *Cimarron Review*. Her poetry has been published or forthcoming in *The Maine Review*, *Bluestem Magazine*, *Poetry Quarterly*, and *Plants & Poetry*, among others. She teaches literature and writing for OLLI and OSU and lives with her husband and a clingy dog outside town on a windy hill, where she wanders the prairie to visit with native flora and fauna.

For further reading, digital archives, and more, please visit the Friends of Lorine Niedecker. Special thanks to Amy Lutzke, who spent a very hot day driving me around and showing me Niedecker's personal library.

Photograph by Jim Furley, April 1979. Permission granted by Dwight Foster Public Library.



Our poetry editor Tom Montag, has initiated a new feature.

Each issue he will select a few poets
to share Niedecker's influence on their work.

In this issue look for this addition from
Linda Voit and John Levy.



I can't remember when I was introduced to Lorine Niedecker's poetry, whether it was the first time I visited Kyoto in the summer of 1971 and met Cid Corman (Cid may have told me about her at that time) or if Cid mentioned her in one of his aerogrammes after I was back in the U.S. What I do remember is how her poetry moved me right away and remains so fresh, deep, evocative, inexhaustible and inspiring for me more than 50 years later. It isn't "only" her poetry that means so much to me, it is also who she is in her poems and what I've learned about how she lived her life. She is a poetry hero for me, along with Charles Reznikoff (who I started reading around the same time). Both poets have a genuineness, aliveness, humility, care, compassion, originality, genius, and many other qualities that have continued to shine, untarnished, in all these years I've returned to their poems and to what I know about how they chose to live, and to respond to their friends, and to welcome the environments they so closely observed and loved.

John Levy

Lorine Faith Niedecker

married Frank Hartwig in late 1928, when she was 25. They separated in 1930, permanently, and finally divorced when she was 39.

She married Albert Millen, soon after turning 60, moved into his home on Blackhawk Island.

She wrote her friend Cid Corman, near the end of August 1969, that she had

"no room of my own

but I have the bedroom
pretty much any time of the day

with small table and comfortable chair. North window there

with a lot of sky—river

is on the opposite
side of the house."

The sole

recording of her, made by Corman
at her home on Blackhawk Island (four seconds
less than 16 minutes long), taped in 1970,
when she was 67:

her girlish voice, such a contrast

to what she wrote.



John Levy lives in Tucson. His first book of poetry, *Among the Consonants*, was published by The Elizabeth Press in 1980. In 2023, Shearsman Books (UK) will publish *54 poems: selected & new*, a collection edited by the Australian poet Ken Bolton from poems written over a 50 year span.

Poet of place superior after Niedecker

Poems in her collections,
simply, a crown jewelry of verse.
Every place on the landscapes,
from *The Granite Pail* to Blackhawk Island
to *North Central* as in,
“Lake Superior” and “Wilderness”
are place and verse, one-on-one,
shine together as poems on the same page.
Her world through her experiences crisscross
nature and human nature, as in:

*The wild and wavy event
now chintz at the window*

was revolution ...

.....

*How are the children?
If in danger run to the woods.*

*Evergreen o evergreen
how faithful are your branches.*

and her Paeon to Place, as in:

*And the place
was water*

....

in the leaves and on water

My mother and I

born

*in shale and swamp and sworn
to water*

The arc across her poems moves the reader.
as vividly as the wide array of places
portrayed in them.

As I read page after page,
I too feel sing ‘place’.
Each poem echoes like the sound of seasons,
and opens up,

I can’t but need them
again, and again, and again.



Lakshman Bulusu is an international poet, author, and educator based in Princeton, NJ. He is published in over thirty five poetry journals in the US, Canada, UK, Ireland, and others. He has contributed to *The Solitary Plover* earlier. He invented the STAR poem genre and MIRACLE STAR poem genre in 2016 and 2021 respectively.

Psychotherapoeticus

companion muse
since 24 now 72

what to do,
with you, and with-
out you, smelling

the end is near
mostly ignoring
Spring passing

rarely on the porch
as the light changes
to November, in me



Donna Fleischer is the author of < *Periodic Earth* > from Casa de Cinco Hermanas Press and *Twinkle, Twinkle* from Longhouse. Her poems are in over 60 anthologies and journals worldwide, including *A Vast Sky*, *EOAGH*, *Kō*, *Marsh Hawk Press Review*, *The Fortnightly Review*, and *The Solitary Plover*.

Samaras

Bent over
picking up samaras
from our ash, boxelder,
and the neighbor's maple,
after high winds
disbursed them all over the yard,
I find myself wondering
where the chipmunks are.

If only they'd open the hatch
to one of their burrows,
I could drop a load
into their granary.



Christel Maass grew up in the Wisconsin countryside and now lives in Fox Point. She enjoys gardening, hiking, and exploring her beautiful home state. Her nature-inspired writing and photographs have been widely published in print and online.

The Pause in Between

Yesterday I heard the tug of spring; the blackbird's shrill
rising squee and gurgle much like the drip of the ice
from the eaves, and the chickadee's *dee, dee*.
The cardinal was overly talkative, chiding the robin
for showing up too early.

The morning was laden with snow. All was hushed.
The sun was lost, swathed under a white veil.
The pine branches, like old sages, bowed low towards hope.
Every now and then they would release a dusting,
sifting and scattering blessings, whispering, *now, now*.



Angela Hoffman's poetry collections include *Resurrection Lily and Olly Olly Oxen Free* (Kelsay Books). She placed third in the WFOP Kay Saunders Memorial Emerging Poet in 2022. Her poems have been widely published. She has written a poem a day since the start of the pandemic. Angela lives in Wisconsin.

Ox-eye Daisies

When ox-eye daisies
lose their
innocence
have their lashes plucked
cannot blink but must
stare up at
unimagined sights
their color deepens
yellow-gold to bronze

Lightning strikes
blinding shafts of sun
probing
insect tongues
predatory owls and hawks
haunt their days
and nights

Like the round-eyed ox
who gave his
name
they gaze unblinkered
at the world and see
too much



Georgia Ressmeyer, a three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, is the author of two published chapbooks and two full-length poetry collections. Her most recent is *Leading a Life* (Water's Edge Press). Others include *Today I Threw My Watch Away* (Finishing Line Press), *Waiting to Sail* (Black River Press) and *Home/Body* (Pebblebrook Press). Her poetry has won numerous awards.

Lorine

All lights are advertisements

good news
tonight!
a man
stepping off
onto connolly coach-
station pavement.
waiting
for his suitcase
from the gut
of the bus. he
feels air,
thick and moth,
feels the full
of the city,
on his cheek
which turns up
and about.

it's holy, to get
somewhere new. at night
all lights are advertisements – all advertisements
lights. all something to go toward
while you're tired in the clanging
of loud brakes and buses. he is getting
a coffee now, lit up by plastic.
he is checking the address
where he's staying on
his phone. the city has gained
something. trams pull the world like a drag-
bag, drawing everything closer.



DS Maolalai has been nominated eleven times for Best of the Net, eight for the Pushcart Prize and once for the Forward Prize. His poetry has been released in three collections, most recently *Sad Havoc Among the Birds* (Turas Press, 2019) and *Noble Rot* (Turas Press, 2022)

Your poem house,
honeycomb
of earth tones,
your life by water,
grainy in a photo
I would print
then hang
over my table,
if I owned
these condo walls,
and if
I wasn't moving.



Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

older now
the diary's next page
blank with winter

first cowslip
at the near side
of God

holding a receipt
for potato salad
chamomile lane

the honey locust lot
messy with pods
of shoulds



Dan Schwerin's poetry comes from life on a farm or making his rounds across thirty plus years as a pastor in Wisconsin, and now as the bishop of the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church. His debut haiku collection, *ORS*, from red moon press, won the Haiku Foundation's Touchstone Award in 2016. You can find him on Twitter @SchwerinDan.

The Song of the Old Tower

The wind whistles
through vacant windows
and a verdant vine
climbs the old tower.

Two hawks glide across
the blue dance floor
of the sky, sailing high
to the tune the tower makes.

The birds know there are seeds
clustered in the vine
and they will pause here
to rejuvenate.

If only
I could sing like the tower
when a cold wind
fills my ancient hollow.



Lisa Vihos's poems have appeared in numerous poetry journals. She has four chapbooks, two Pushcart Prize nominations, and organizes for 100 Thousand Poets for Change. In 2020, she was named poet laureate of Sheboygan. In 2022 she published her first novel, *The Lone Snake: The Story of Sofonisba Anguissola*.

Fluent Flyers

sandhill cranes
high above

wolf lake trail

wingbeats
and wind

in unison

quickly beyond
our eyes reach

with ease



Michael Staeger was first exposed to writing poetry through the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee outreach, Summer of the Writer Program poetry workshop taught by Marilyn Taylor. He lives in Waterford, Wisconsin with his wife Karen and is a member of the Author's Echo Writer's group that meets in Burlington, Wisconsin.

Receptivity

A leaf twists
on the stem

of a weighty
branched Aspen

first a turn
to sky's light

then a bow to
rocky shores

designed as
square oddity

giving forth a
leafy go-round

alive with wind flashes

one dark shape
in the shadows.



Mary Wehner writes from the shores of Lake Winnebago. Her poetry leans toward both the natural and the philosophical world around her. Her poems have appeared in various journals and in a recent chapbook by Red Hydra Press and a recently published Collection of her work.

O florid sandstone composed
 mostly of quartz
 plus feldspar, mica, chert, ferromagnesian minerals
 & red oxide that makes
 the exuberant glow
 you wear as you wear
 away, your grit
 lodging under our nails, between
 our toes, salting
 the floor & bedsheets, the shower stall
 down the hall at Greunke's Inn
 circa 1863 built
 as a "summer boarding place"
 by Nazaire LaBonte, sawyer & filer
 at Red Cliff Mill, 6000
 board-feet a day, the mills giving
 way, the trees
 gone, to the mining of ore
 for steel



Sara Burant's poems and reviews have appeared in various journals, including *Ruminate*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Spry* and *Quartet* Journal. She is the author of a chapbook, *Verge*, and the grateful recipient of a 2023 Oregon Literary Fellowship. A native of Wisconsin, she's lived in Oregon for almost 40 years.

Rain spatters roof top
 Red Wings whistling north
 signaling return .



Carol Lee Saffioti-Hughes is a retired college professor and former librarian in a northwoods log cabin in Wisconsin. Member of Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets and Root River Poets, poetry has been anthologized, recent poetry appears in *Dos Gatos Press*, *San Antonio Review*, *Moss Piglet*, *Poetry Hall*, and many other journals. Her most recent book of poetry is *When Wilding Returns*, published by Cyberwit Press.

summer stretches along a drystone wall
 where so much depends
 it seems
 on cobwebs;
 above a heron;
 its flight a cross
 nailed
 to the sky
 higher still a moon

trying
 so hard
 to be full
 loosely
 loosely
 moored
 to the pier




Julie Warther Schwerin (she/her - Sun Prairie, Wisconsin) is an associate editor at *The Heron's Nest* (www.theheronsnest.com) and a member of the Red Moon Anthology Editorial team. Her most recent chapbook is *Walking Away From the Sunset* (Brooks Books, 2023).

Found, walked
 Trees that were aloof to my purpose
 More comfort in
 Enormous singing shales
 And whipping wind

In the city homely Oaks sit silent
 Shrieking walls of glass built just to shake.



Harriet Rose is a poet and student from Sussex, England, currently studying literature at Beloit College, Wisconsin. Her poems have been published in *Snow Lit Rev* (2023) and *Fatberg Magazine* (2022). Her research interests include transatlantic Late Modernist poetics, Ecocriticism, and Enclosure



This morning, the rainbow
before the rain
the sky a diffuse light




war, illness, mass shootings, a world in flame

leaving behind a home, bank accounts, family
photos and grandmother's needlework

in that moment, none of it matters,

only the hand in
your hand
as you pass death
on the street





epigenetics now tells us
what some already knew,
for seven generations trauma is imprinted
on the soul

Bishop


I have taken a breath from Elizabeth.

I have taken a breath,
and it is full
of sunset reflections
off the tin siding
of an Iowa silo.



Some are turned toward leaving,
taking intergalactic space,


rockets burning through
the atmosphere



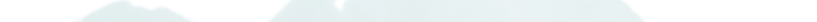
And those that always have, love
the Earth anyways

the song, the dance, the tears
penetrate that greedy ash

the rain



Nancy Shea lives near to confluence of the Rock
and Crawfish Rivers. She enjoys growing sunflowers
in her garden.



Peter Whalen teaches Creative Writing at
Milwaukee High School of the Arts. His poetry
has appeared in *Barrow Street*, *Bramble*,
Modern Haiku, *Poetry Motel*, *The Southeast
Review*, *Reed*, *The Solitary Plover*,
and the *Wisconsin Poets Calendar*.

Mating Season

Perfect circles on Teal Pond
Some bubbles

On shallow sandbars American Bullfrogs
Puff and croak

Wild turkeys, a line on the prairie
Fanning and preening

Red wing males arrive early
Females make them wait

A goose sits high on a nest in Tiedeman Pond
Regal and patient

When I pass by later, she is gone
Nest wrecked.



Mary C. Rowin writes from her home in Middleton, WI where she observes nature in her back yard and on walks around the kettle ponds across the street.

Last Morning at the Cabin

a soft buzz of humming birds sipping
sugar water the surface of the lake
pulled to the point of ripples
by the same breezes enticing poplars
to sing their rustling song
birch and aspen to harmonize
a bullfrog makes its baritone gulp
for anyone or no one to hear



Poetry by Linda Voit (Madison, WI) has appeared at/on/in *Wisconsin Poet's Calendar*, *Whispering Shade*, *Ariel Anthology 2014*, *UWEC's NOTA*, Alaska Public Radio's *One Poem a Day Won't Kill You*, *Lyrical Iowa* (2nd place in the 2010 adult general category), *Country Mouse*, *finchandrose.org* and *Strange Cage*.



Though I am a Wisconsin native and a poet since childhood, I did not learn of Lorine Niedecker until I took an online poetry course in my 40's. I immediately appreciated Niedecker's sparse and powerful work and was proud to be from the same state. I have since visited Niedecker's cabin a few times, attended a meeting of her Friends of Lorine Niedecker poetry group in Fort Atkinson, attended a poetry event at the library there, experienced her story in the museum and even glimpsed some of her personal papers in the library in Fort Atkinson. These interactions with her place in the world inspired me to read more of her work. Finding "Poet's Work" has been especially gratifying. I like to think of myself down the conveyor belt from her in the same condensery. I think we'd go out after a shift and talk about that feeling she captured in "In the great snowfall before the bomb," how all of us at the condensery, whether novices or masters, wonder the same about others' perception of our time spent on six lines.

Linda Voit

Call of the Wild

Like a woman screaming,
high-pitched, urgent, painful.
Neighbors wonder
what, whether to call 911.

But it's only a she-fox,
vixen in high heat,
come calling
under your window, asking
for a rusty-colored male
to put her out of her misery.

I go out on the porch,
flash my light, rap on the railing
in discouragement,
much as my mother did
half a century ago
when I stayed out late,
on the cement stoop
in front of the house,
kissing Jimmy Rose.



Queer Bird

Your sound water
gargled gagged or glugged
in big swallows
not exactly musical
no scales or shaped notes
no lullaby
or morning song

yet we are both content
in our trees
being here
spreading news



Ronnie Hess is an essayist and poet, the author of six poetry collections, the most recent, *Tripping the Light Ekphrastic* (Kelsay Books, 2023). She lives in Madison. Visit her website at www.ronniehess.com

over our mountain
a partial moon running out of time
in the dark

thinking
we are safe
a leaf falls without warning



Gary Hotham currently lives in Maryland. He has had a number of chapbooks of haiku published since his first: *Without the Mountains* in 1976. Some recent awards: *Mannequins Dressed for the Window: Haiku Secrets* received an honorable mention in the Haiku Canada Marianne Bluger Book and Chapbook Awards for 2022 and *Rightsizing the Universe: Haiku Theory* received an honorable mention in the Touchstone Distinguished Books Awards for 2019. Most recent chapbook: *Soft Serve: Haiku Remains* was published in 2023 by Pinyon Publishing.

Write on the River

In Lorine's honor, Fort Atkinson celebrated all things writing and poetry-related along the banks of the Rock River with a series of "Write on the River" events from May 11-13, 2023. The schedule of events included a presentation from Wisconsin Poet Laureate Nick Gulig, a reading from Lorine Niedecker Fellowship winner Lauren Carlson, and an Open Mic poetry event for all participants at the Cafe Carpe. Lorine's 120th birthday was celebrated on May 12. Details of the event can be found here: <https://explorefortatkinson.com/write-on-the-river>

Partners: Fort Atkinson Tourism, Friends of Lorine Niedecker, Dwight Foster Public Library, Hoard Historical Museum, Cafe Carpe, Write On Door County

Upper left: Lauren Carlson and Nick Gulig

Right: Paul Wiegel, Street Poet

Bottom left: Participants in the Sidewalk Chalk Poetry event



FoLN Poetry Readings

Hear the Solitary Plover

Thursday, August 24 at 6 pm CST. Listen to some of the poets published in this issue read their poetry.

Virtual Only Zoom Link is available at lorineniedecker.org.

North Central

Sunday, October 1, 2023 at 5pm CST. October readers will be Tirzah Goldenberg (Puget Sound, WA) and Joshua Beckman (Red Hook, NY). Virtual Only. Watch the Niedecker website (lorineniedecker.org) or our Facebook page for the Zoom link.



A Very Veery Lorine Niedecker

A Series of Events

Sunday, September 10 at 2 p.m.

Hoard Museum, 411 Whitewater Avenue,
Fort Atkinson WI

Trim Green Thought

A public discussion of Lorine Niedecker's
published fictions featuring Jenny Penberthy,
Kate Colby & Flora Coker

This discussion at the Hoard Museum will feature a rare discussion of Niedecker's fiction. There will be a taped reading of her story *The evenings automobile's* followed by a public discussion on the relationship between her prose writings and the composition of her poetry. This will be led by Jenny Penberthy, preeminent Niedecker editor and scholar and the poet/scholar Kate Colby, and the actress Flora Coker.

Jenny Penberthy's research and publications have focused on the poetry of Lorine Niedecker. She has edited Niedecker's poems – *New Goose* (Listening Chamber, 2003), *Lorine Niedecker: Collected Works* (University of California Press, 2002), and *Harpsichord and Salt Fish* (Pig Press, 1991) – and her letters – *Niedecker and the Correspondence with Zukofsky 1931-1970* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). She has also edited a collection of essays, *Lorine Niedecker: Woman and Poet* (National Poetry Foundation, University of Maine, 1996). Poetry and poetics, textual scholarship, print culture, modernism, postwar literary history, postcolonial literature of Africa.

Flora Coker was a founding member of Theater X. For 35 years she kept company with the likes of actors John Schneider, Willem Dafoe, Deborah Clifton, Victor DeLorenzo, John Kishline, Marcy Hoffman and Rick Graham. She has played in nearly 200 productions over the course of her acting career, but Coker describes herself as a quiet person.

Wednesday, September 13, 6 p.m.

Carthage College - Kenosha
Niemann Theater in Hedberg Library
Kate Colby and Richard Meier

Poetry Reading and Class Discussion

Kate Colby's nine books of poetry include *I Mean*, *Dream of the Trenches*, and, most recently *Reverse Engineer*. She has received awards from the Poetry Society of America, Rhode Island State Council for the Arts, and the Woodberry Poetry Room at Harvard University. Her poems and essays have appeared recently in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Conjunctions*, *Fence*, *Lana Turner*, and *The Nation*. She lives in Providence, where she teaches and works as a copywriter.

Richard Meier's most recent book is a selection of poem/essays, *A Duration* (Wave 2023). A related book, *A Companion*, will be published by Wave in Spring of 2025. These were preceded by four books of poetry: *February March April April* (Oxeye Press, 2017), *In the Pure Block of the Whole Imaginary* (Omnidawn 2012), *Shelley Gave Jane a Guitar* (Wave Books 2006), and *Terrain Vague*, selected by Tomaz Salamun for the Verse Prize and published by Verse Press in 2001. He is Professor of English and Writer-in-Residence at Carthage College and lives in Somers and Madison, WI.

These events are cosponsored by Woodland Pattern Book Center, The Friends of Lorine Niedecker, The Hoard Museum, Dwight Foster Public Library, Carthage College, The Ridges Sanctuary, and Write On Door County.



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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.