

I was the solitary plover

FRIENDS OF
Lorine Niedecker



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Notes on the 2025 Lorine Niedecker Fellowship

by Caryl Pagel

Bacon jokes, ham jokes, songs about beef and vegetables. A play about cabbage and rutabaga. Beer brats as linguistic props. Onions! At the Hoard Museum I page through copies of Lorine Niedecker's handmades, giggling as I go. These are small collections of anecdotes or recipes she made in the '60s as holiday gifts for her new husband Al's kids and friends or relatives. They include details of their Midwestern travels. Common banter. Notes about how she cooked before and after marriage. Lorine's humor touches every bit of it, her wit synthesizing a kaleidoscope of contexts to an instant, humor a folk form of condensery. Here's a recipe:

Cherries Jubilee—you set fire to hot cherries after pouring on kirsh, cognac or grand marnier. Then carry to the table blazing.

Humor as surprise. Mind on fire! Humor as a way of playing with what doesn't always line up. The handmade books—copied out in cursive in small pre-bound notebooks—read like a script in which Lorine and Al are characters in their own lives.

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I'm here for the 2025 Lorine Niedecker Fellowship: a week in Door County and another in Fort Atkinson. Two weeks of writing and research. I meet with Ann, Clara, Karl, Sharon, and Nick. I participate in the Write On Door County conference. I spend time in the archives and drive out to Blackhawk Island a few times, once on her birthday.

I'd been to the Hoard before to look at Niedecker's extensive notes for her great later-in-life long poem "Lake Superior." This was months before I drove around the lake with my family, following in Niedecker's writing's wake. This was years before I took a second trip—in reverse!—as Colin and Nick filmed their PBS Wisconsin documentary. This week, at her cabin, I walk to the river, look out her windows, and make a recording of the racket: geese, insects, frogs, boats, wind blowing through the treetops and grasses. For years I've been writing a book about Niedecker. I want to put everything in it. It circles and expands.

*

At the Write On conference in Door County I lead a discussion on "Wintergreen Ridge." Niedecker preferred it to "Lake Superior." "Wintergreen Ridge" centers the Ridges Sanctuary in Baily's Harbor which she visited in fall 1967. Here you can walk through rusty golden swales—low points of the "rollercoaster" ridges—formed over centuries by hard waves knocking against the peninsula shore. In "Wintergreen Ridge," Niedecker notes pitcher plants, sphagnum moss, and limestone cliffs while positioning her and Al as "gawks / lusting // after wild orchids." It's a research poem confirmed by experience. It's a spiraling collage energized by the trance-state of walking. The poem turns from observations on the microclimate's biologically diverse particulars to the history of land trust activists and the sudden (surprise!) apparitional cry of her long-passed mother, ending in a description of re-entry into the city, a union man's suicide, violence in the news, and that fall's anti-war protests.

*

That morning in Door County we'd listened as the journalist Dan Egan discussed the process of writing his two brilliant books on the Great Lakes. They're both about the current and historical circumstances of the country's greatest sources of freshwater. I look for something he said in my notebook: the key to conducting great interviews is to talk less.

*

For Niedecker, starting a poem like "Wintergreen Ridge" was a "reverie-memory-out of sleep-delirium kind of thing," she tells Clayton Eshelman around the time the poem was published in his journal, *Caterpillar*, where "before you know it I'm making a short and sharp whole i.e. frame." She calls it a "let-it-go" poem, the first in which she achieves a kind of loose associative flow alongside the linguistic precision of her earlier poems. Niedecker writes to Eshelman that she begins "to wonder if it isn't reality—natural—to be beautifully lost for a time and to me that's poetry." Nature was refuge, home, and a source of strength for her in contrast to the difficult social intensity of the city (Milwaukee), where she had recently moved in with Al, staying in Blackhawk only on the weekends. She continues: "One thing I must be correct

on—we now find ourselves in a deeper strata of the subconscious, not only that but we are somewhat driven into it by the horrible state of the conscious world.”

The letter notes the problems of the present moment for a poet. The complex urgency of a horrible human now. In “Wintergreen Ridge,” Niedecker writes that the greatest gift she ever received was silence, which to her evokes nature and “if intense / makes sound”: poetry.

*

At the Hoard, we're quiet. The archives are housed in a cool and lovely room in the back of the museum. I peek at the Margot Peters Collection for the first time. In 2011 she published a Niedecker biography and here is the research. A few years ago, in the University of Buffalo's Poetry Collection, I got to read letters between Jenny Penberthy and Kenneth Cox when she was first beginning her Niedecker scholarship in the 1990s, a treat to discover traces of others' inquiries. Earlier I peeked at the Niedecker archives' guest book and saw the names of friends and heroes who'd sat in the same spot, over decades, pouring over the same papers—Lorine's mysteries demonstrably evergreen.

Peters' interviews are rangy, gossipy, revealing the dynamics of a small town's collective recollection as various individuals strain to recall details about a person most of them barely knew at all. Gail Roub's interview reports that Lorine didn't really like Milwaukee. Clarence Langolff remarks that there used to be a bus that ran from Fort Atkinson to Madison twice a day as well as a train from Fort to Chicago. During the flood of 1950, says Aeneas McAllister in conversation, the waters rose so high that he had to rescue Lorine from her cabin in a motorboat. Mythology stoked by memory and rumor—people talking, an eternal chat—the whole of the gathered materials as proof of a distinct communal dynamic.

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Karl and I head out to the observation deck at Dorothy Carnes Park to see what Niedecker's swampy woodsy land might have looked like in her time. Here there's prairie, marsh, woodland, and wetland. Nearby, a turtle-shaped indigenous effigy mound. Karl points out the birds and I admit that, like Niedecker, I have trouble seeing things that are moving that fast. The next day Nick and I talk about how to summarize a poet's life over coffee. How to balance the brilliance of her thinking with biography. What is the plot of water, I wonder. *My life*, says the mural I walk by repeatedly this week before crossing the olive-colored river.

*

The practice of writing about place is the chronicling of an ordinary strata, a fathomless palimpsest of the common past's seasons and ruptures. Attention to the materials of the world, what it's made of, what has and hasn't endured. In Door County, I'm on a panel discussing the definitions and potentials for ecological poetry in contemporary times. Ecopoetics explores relationships between humans and nature. Ecopoetics is poetry that documents the multiple histories of a single place. Ecopoetics studies climate change, land change, and lives over time. It's interested in duration and form. Humility and mystery. Ecopoetics shares the stories of all bodies, any self equal to all others. An owl is not the sign of, as Niedecker wrote. It's an owl. After the panel I write the following books on a piece of paper and hand it to a new friend: Justin Cox's *Stock Pond*; Pam Rehm's *Small Works*; Jed Munson's *Commentary on the Birds*; Rick Meier's *Duration*; Hannah Brooks-Motl's *Ultraviolet of the Genuine*; and Ed Roberson's *MPH*.

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A sunflower sturdier than man. A water lily as grand as a space-rocket. After reading “Wintergreen Ridge” out loud, our discussion group notes a series of wild particulars. An ethics in specifics. Scale of care. We list the voices in Neidecker's head: DH Lawrence, Aldo Leopold, Henry James, Basil Bunting, and the “women / of good wild stock” who protected Wisconsin's first land trust are some. To Niedecker, the self was not the central source of poetry. The “I” less useful than the eye or ear, her own psychology less compelling than nature's forms until—in “Wintergreen Ridge”—she starts aiming for a way of turning consciousness's routes into poetic frame.

*

Clara walks into the reading room where Ann and I sit chatting. The scanners, they say, are called Lorine and Al. I pull out a new file. A letter about her death to Al's daughter. I look at another. WPA drafts, famous state profiles she'd helped edit. Kooky conversations, she calls one of the handmade books. She's writing in a new prose style: nonlinear casual anecdotes. Shards of her days. Play-like social prose notes. A gift to be reading her experiments in this room with other reading women. Ann has wonderfully thought to pack us lunch. We pull a picnic bench into the shade and laugh about Lorine while sharing squares of chocolate.



Caryl Pagel is the author of four books, most recently *Free Clean Fill Dirt* (poetry) and *Out of Nowhere Into Nothing* (essays). She is a publisher and editor at Rescue Press and was the 2025 Lorine Niedecker Fellow.

Placing Lorine: Some Reflections on *Place*

by Sara Burant

Last summer, Canadian poet Ross Belot and I, along with Ann Engelman, visited Lorine Niedecker's cabin. August in south-central Wisconsin, *beastly hot* as my mother used to say. Meaning muggy, sweaty, close.

Out on Blackhawk Island you almost don't feel the heat's pressure. Instead: a cadence. The muscling river, the rustling trees, chirring insects, a heron's stillness, a warbler's alarm. Shshsh. Even the shifting light and shadow speak. And the ground, its greenness, its pulse, its give. “Down in the grass.../sora's eyes.../stillness steps.” (p. 137) Sound and stillness move and breathe. They are the feet, and eyes, the music of place, the placed music Lorine tuned her poetry to. As Lauren Marie Cappello observes, “The rhythm of her [Niedecker's] words, and her silences, perpetuate motion.” Motion of water, of leaves, of Lorine's words, our voices reading “Paeon to Place” to each other, to the land, water, and air.

*

I've begun to wonder if insisting on the primacy of place in Lorine's work diminishes its dimensionality and reach. Lorine herself wondered which “region” her work belonged to: “London, Wisconsin or New York?”

What exactly do we mean when we use the word “place”? How or in what ways is Lorine Niedecker's poetry actually *placed*? How do the poems explore or assert place? What kinds of places? Can the poems in fact lead us to extend, to broaden our understanding of place, being placed, placed-ness, our place?

*

Following Lorine's own interest in histories and origins, we might trace the word “place” from its roots. From the PIE roots **plat* or **pletə-*, to spread, extensions of the root **pele*, flat, to spread; to the Greek *plateia*, broad, perhaps broad way; to Medieval Latin's *placea*, place or spot, and *platea*, courtyard, open space, avenue or broad way; and Old French, *place*, place or spot.

Beginning as verb, action—to spread—the word's meaning itself spreads, to an adjective perhaps associated with spreading and dimension, the dimension of spreading—flat—to a noun with qualities of both the action and the description: a broad way, an open space. Moving through time and space, the word and its meanings broaden, deepen, extend, like a river, or a poem.

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place /plās/*noun*: open space in a town, gathering place, market square.

As in: locations many people have access to, locations marked by sociality. For instance, a laundromat: “Casual, sudsy/social love/at the tubs.” (p. 202) Or a bar:

Then we entered the lily
built white on a red carpet

the circular quiet
cool bar

glass stems to caress
We stayed till the stamens trembled (p. 196)

Shared, communal experiences allow a sense of “we-ness” to inhabit these poems. They evoke communal experiences, where the speaker both observes and perhaps is observed. Being in relation to others in a space is a way of being placed, of experiencing placed-ness.

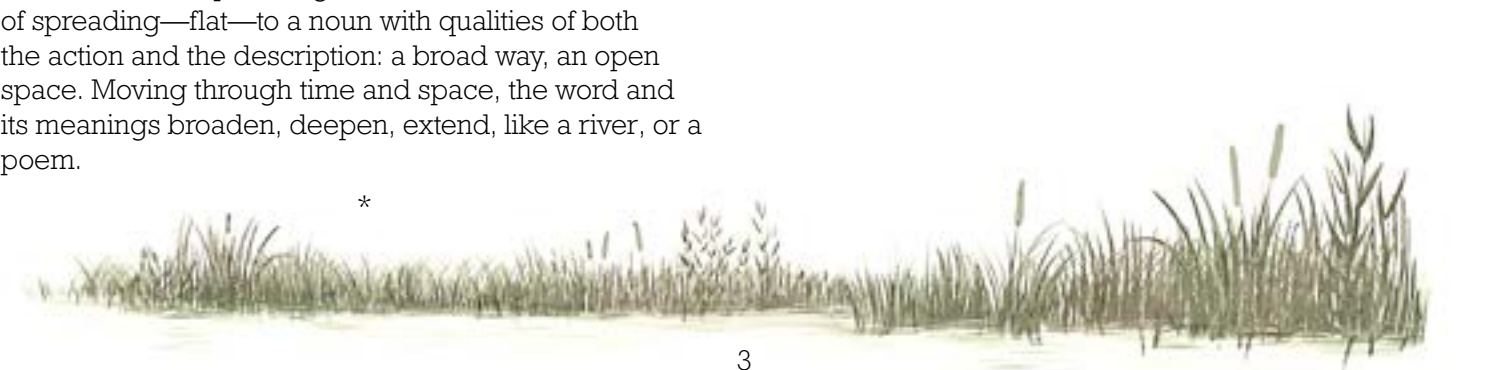
Such places open space for encountering the other, for observation:

Beautiful girl—
pushes food onto her fork
with her fingers—
will throw the switches
of deadly rockets? (p. 185)

A simple perception, the girl is beautiful and surprisingly uses her fingers to eat. The abstract adjective, beautiful, coupled with concreteness, the fingers, somehow allows the poem to zoom out, to the public square, what loomed over everyone in the 1950s and '60s: would there be nuclear war? The poem places itself in a specific restaurant, then expands, both local and global in reach.

History and time itself are gathering places. In public spaces, in a museum for instance, history and time together encompass us: “here is man/Leafing toward you/ in this dark/deciduous hall.” (p.238) As human beings we are enfolded by what's come before, whether we recognize it—as Lorine did—or not.

*





place /plās/*noun*:: particular part of space, extent, definite location, spot.

The Rock River and Blackhawk Island, certainly. The local flora and fauna, inseparable from their location: “algae, equisetum, willows,/sweet, green, noisy birds and frogs.” (p.170) Lorine’s family’s presence there, the extent and diminishment of their holdings, “Anchored here/in the rise and sink/of life—” (p. 264) The placement of the family, locatable, both in memory and on the land:

Great grandfather
under wild flowers sons
sons here now I
eye
of us all (p. 210)

Place, too, as function of voice, resonance. Voices (both human and non-human) place the poems, and the poems place the voices, allowing both poem and voice speak to extent, extension of place through time. A mother: “I took cold/on my nerves.” (p. 287) A father: “you laid out with your hands glazed/to the nets.” (p. 154) The voices of historical figures: Asa Gray by way of Increase Lapham, Joliet, Father Marquette, the Voyageurs who “sang, rowed/their canoes full of furs.” (p. 117)

*
place /plās/*noun*:: inhabited place, town, country.

Sites of human habitation: homesites, dwellings, property. Lorine’s work both celebrates and describes this particular manifestation of place: owning property. She writes a love poem to the cabin whose “flesh tint” is an extension of her body. The poem itself becomes habitation, a place. And yet, “Property is poverty.” (p. 194) Owning imposes a kind of displacement of energy, a loss of money and time, the latter which mattered most in terms of her work as a poet.

The poems themselves, the act of writing, extend both body and mind: “a pencil for a wing-bone.” (p. 265) The structural element of mineral and marrow, wood and lead, is paired with the feather’s lightness, flight, imagination, a well-grounded ecstasy.

*
place /plās/*noun*:: social standing, status or position in a family.

Lorine as descendant, granddaughter, daughter, observer, the “eye/of us all.” Her place in the family, the family’s place in her psyche and on the land, inextricably woven together: “born/in swamp and swale and sworn/to water.” (p. 261) Often I misread these lines: “born to swamp and swale,” hearing the word “born” as “borne”—transported, carried to, into, by, within. “Sworn to water,” allegiant to, in service to, her place: acolyte of water.

Lorine as wife, a position, a place, with its own tense reality: “You are the man...//the sudden violent storm// the torrent to raise the river/to float the wounded doe.” (p. 283) Here, social position, location, emotion and motion coincide, and meaning extends, spreads, floods, and emotion, crisis, subside.

Social class or standing—where to place her? Middle class, working class, well-read, intellectual class. All of the above. Perhaps, then, outsider. Neither wholly of one, nor the other. Neither confined nor defined by class, she moves between, listening, taking note from the interstices, spaces of tension, returning “the night women’s/gravy//to the cleaned/stove.” (p. 205)

*
place /plās/*noun*:: situation or appointment, one’s work
Lived experience, the situations people find themselves in, choose, or are assigned. A sharecropper: “most folks, like me,/make a home out of barrel and stave,” (p. 98), piecing together a situation for oneself, holding life and limb together with the materials, the circumstances at hand: “job-certified/to rake leaves/in New Madrid.” (p. 114) What one does and where one does it: J.E Thorp who “Coopered at Fish Creek/farmed at Egg Harbor/ teamed on the ice from Green Bay to Death’s Door.” (p. 115) If lives, circumstances, are signs, like the “monster owl” they are signs only of themselves, of the practice and art of living, being situated and in situations, both.

*
place /plās/*noun*:: place on the surface of something, portion or part of something.

What occupies a niche, what little or a lot we can see, hold or hear, an agate, a “very veery on the fence,” portions of the whole, of the immensity “the seas/have made us.” (p. 240) We occupy a fragment of time, and yet encompass all of what came before us: “In every part of every living thing/is stuff that once was rock.”

(p. 232) Our portion: both on the surface of time, and deep inside it. Our portion: what we are given, where we reside, what we achieve, aspire to, believe: “Let each man hope/and believe/what he can.” (p. 299)

*
place /plās/*verb*:: to put something somewhere, to determine the position of, to arrange or put in order.

Returning to origins, place as verb. Lorine putting *the best words in the best order*. Arranging and re-arranging, draft by draft by draft. Letting words and silences create motion. Letting words and silences spread, extend—beyond the page, through time, to us.

In order to place words, displacing white space, filling it, shaping it. Poem as force, as river.

Placing/displacing, a dynamic, a flow, the way a flood reshapes the land, its elements and structures. The water devours the flower and itself and in turn evanesces into air. Lorine understood the dynamic of place, of being placed, that place is a function of time, history, memory. To be rooted is yet to be in flux. To be in flux is yet to be rooted. Perhaps time is the ultimate place, the original place, outside of which nothing exists. And yet the poems speak to the paradox of memory, of what outlasts the shifting, for a time.

Works Cited

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Sara Burant lives with her dog Penn in a converted garage in Eugene, Oregon. Her poems, collaborative translations of the poetry of Paul Éluard, and reviews have appeared in journals such as *Canary*, *One Art*, *periodicities*, *Ruminate*, *The Denver Quarterly*, and *omniverse*. Her work has been honored with a fellowship from Oregon Literary Arts and a residency at Playa. She’s the author of a chapbook, *Verge*.

Lorine Niedecker
for Jenny Penberthy

Difficult for me to imagine Lorine Niedecker writing in one of her poems that anything

is inferior.

In “Lake Superior” she

writes about what is

on

her mind

while

between my toes
agate

Back at home she also observed and observed, as when she wrote

(during the second day of August in nineteen-fifty) to Louis Zukofsky

“What’s more wet looking when it’s wet than a rat?”

This was when another flood was subsiding. This was home.



John Levy lives in Tucson. His most recent book is *54 poems: selected & new* (Shearsman Books, 2023). He is married to the painter Leslie Buchanan.



In-between

Ice Age Trail:
Clover Valley Segment

I grew up on a gravel road connecting
a dirt road to a paved road, the space
between wild and civilized. A compromise
I walk today down this Clover Valley
fencerow where fields of cut corn stalks split
for a tree line of trail. Tidy round bales stop
at rusted barbed wire trying to hold back
burdock and hounds tongue, their seeds lick
my pants legs, stick like thoughts I don't want
to carry to a new place and strip away
before I traverse moss boardwalk over water
hovering minnows between roots
in sand and seaweed-bottomed stream
that flows this crack in the land with life
for the happy chickadee and hunting hawk
the blue sky over us all. My steps do not disturb
the half-tame doe's gleaning—
no kernel is wasted in this narrow place
where scraps of civilization transform
into the something wilder I've been missing.

Acorns

Ice Age Trail:
John Muir Park Segment

fall flips cold
to warm and lazy
seeps into my walk
sandy-toe slow
under oak canopy
acorns thunk
awake my instinct
to harvest, gather
up the happy
for harder days
I collect picture
after picture
looping lake
trail views, toast
my skin in sun,
savor seed-baked
air, squirrel away
today to hold
warmth through
the cold season



Reminder to Self

Ice Age Trail:
Scuppernong Segment

Think through
the soles of your feet.

Drink deep breaths
to climb Scuppernong

hummocky hills
that hold humidity, deer,

turkey family depressions
scratched clean.

Stop and write in the shady
logbook by the bench.

Look into layers
of leaves and leaves.

Don't move too fast
or the poems can't

catch you.
Let yourself be caught

in the lure of side-trails.
Take the extra trip

to Paradise Springs.
Marvel into dolomite-

blue reflections of rainbow
trout and try the peppery

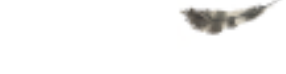
watercress wild in the stream
and crisp in your mouth.



You are most likely to find **Katrina Serwe**
foraging poems on Wisconsin's Ice Age
National Scenic Trail. You can find some
of her trail poems in *First Steps*, released
this spring with Brain Mill Press.

the haybales unspooling

their thread ends breaking
i might have taught you soing
we might have soed to gather
lambs in the fields
& on the ledges & no one
was a frayed if they fell
& they might there was one
more they counted



Wendy Vardaman, PhD
(wendyvardaman.com), works as
a web & digital media specialist. The
author of four poetry collections, her
creative practice includes editing,
prose writing, printing, and book arts.
She served as Madison, Wisconsin
poet laureate from 2012 to 2015 and
volunteers as a graphic designer.
She received the 2024 Dick Scuglik
Memorial Fellowship and residency
for writing about art at Write On,
Door County and a 2025 residency at
Ragdale. Her most recent book, *thread
me an exit* (2025), is available from Brain
Mill Press.

who says dark skies
cannot stir
an open soul



Mary Wehner writes from the shores of
Lake Winnebago in Fond du Lac, WI and
is inspired by what she sees in nature. She
has published in many venues including
books by Red Hydra Press. She has
recently published *Collected Poems* as well
as *Shadowed Spirits* by Red Hydra Press

III Haiku

1/

coffee before it's cold
space in our shadows
for the wind

2/

close by
in thought
thunder

3/

melting snow
a warning flag
for buried power lines



Gary Hotham currently lives in Maryland. He
has scattered a long trail of haiku in various
publications since 1967. His recent collection:
Soft Serve: Haiku Remains published in 2023
by Pinyon Publishing received an honorable
mention in the Haiku Canada Marianne Bluger
Book and Chapbook Awards for 2024.



Late Summer Notes

Lily pads on the river flap upright
in the wind, a flotilla of green sails.

Sticky withanolides on tomatillos
and ground cherries deter insects.

Wine grapes begin their change,
from green to red or pale yellow.

The fat of black bears drunk
on blackberries turns blue.



Meg Freer grew up in Montana and now teaches piano and writes in Ontario. Her photos, prose and poems have been published in journals such as *Ruminate*, *Arc Poetry*, *Eastern Iowa Review*, *Phoebe*, and *The Madrigal*. She has published four poetry chapbooks and is co-poetry editor for *The Sunlight Press*.

Gathering Last Year's Weeds

Shadows stretch over rumps of hills.
Awash in the grasshopper buzz
of clay-coloured sparrows, I walk
in the long evening light, my head
full of Thoreau's long thoughts
on the dispersal of seeds.

I wish I were wearing Thoreau, slipping
his knowledgeable hands like worn gloves
over mine. I'd use his fingers to snap
these brittle stalks—bone-smooth remnants
in extraordinary shapes, nameless ghosts
weathered to uniform grey-white.



Poet and essayist **Maureen Scott Harris** grew up on the Canadian prairies and lives in the watershed of buried Garrison Creek in Toronto/Tkaronto, Canada. *Drowning Lessons*, her second book, won the 2005 Trillium Book Award for Poetry. She's grateful for the sustaining presence of the more than human world even in large cities.

Her Name Has Germanic Origins:

A Tribute to Lorine Niedecker

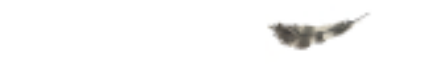
Niedecker:

Comes from the German
and of Pre-Volga origins,
with '*nie*' meaning 'never'
but '*was bedeutet Decker?*'
A person who covers a roof with tiles,
the way you laid a path with your poems:
writing your life in words,
quietly, both plover and poet,
in a cabin on Blackhawk Island,
your legacy forever imprinted
due to what you penned,
and your precise *paeon to place*.



John RC Potter is a Canadian who lives in Istanbul. His story, "Ruth's World" was a Pushcart Prize nominee, and his poem, "Tomato Heart" was nominated for the Best of the Net Award. He is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Recent Publications: "Heimat" in *Overgrowth Press* (Poetry) & "Clara Von Clapp's Secret Admirer" in *The Lemonwood Quarterly* (Prose) Website: <https://johnrcpotterauthor.com>. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/JohnRCPotter>

mist
drizzle
downpour
on the fifth September
day of rain
comes a longing for December's
crisp glitter



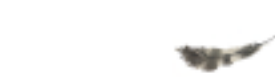
CJ Muchhala's work can be found in *Birdsong* and other anthologies, print and online journals including *JerryjazzMusician* and *Wordpeace*, and has been exhibited in regional art/poetry collaborations. A Pushcart and Best of Net nominee, she lives in Shorewood, WI.

FORT ATKINSON

Dear Nelson Ball,
I hope you are enjoying
being dead. I hope
it's a great place
to be observant. Speaking
of which, my friend
Lisa Fishman, a poet
whose work I hope you
once found, just called
me over to see a snake, maybe
half a metre long, its head
raised from the leafy ground,
still. Nelson, I am
sitting against a tree about
two and a half Nelsons length
from Lorine Niedecker's cabin
in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.
Lisa pushed the front door.
It opened. Niedecker lived
in this small one-room cabin
a short stroll over crunchy
leaves from the "gentle"
(Lisa called it) Rock River.

I'm not sure if
you'd agree, and I'm
surprised to say it,
but life can be remarkable.
I lost one brilliant friend
who devoted his writing
to observation and pure experience
and who loved Lorine Niedecker's
poetry, and then, just a few
years later, was gifted
another brilliant friend who
has devoted her writing to observation
and pure experience and who
loves Lorine Niedecker's poetry
and even spent a month once
writing in Niedecker's cabin.

Sometimes it's hard to find
good things in this world
but I'm sitting on the ground,
bugs landing on me and climbing
up on me and the spiderwebs
clinging to the logs of Niedecker's
cabin are quivering in the breeze
and towering trees are throwing
painterly shadows, but letting some
brilliant late-afternoon sun through,
and this poem is much too long
to have been written at
the condensery. Thank you,
Nelson, for making me know
Niedecker's poems and making
this moment possible. There
is the stuff of nature
stuck all over my clothes.



Stuart Ross is the author of a dozen or so books of poetry and too many chapbooks. The latest book is *The Sky Is a Sky in the Sky* (Coach House Books, 2024). He lives in Cobourg, Ontario, Canada, across Lake Ontario from Rochester, New York.



For Lorine Niedecker: A Golden Shovel

Leaving the leafy shore again, we
open to a field where spores are
ripening and the stars suggest not what
is going to happen, but instead the
now-liquid night, the lapping seas
ever-receding, and yet all that we have
[a way is thus made]
not of essence but a mere unfolding of us—
it's the song of a thrush, calling longingly,
each little note somehow immense,
dense the grass underfoot, the
evening dew our morning's map (very
clearly of the sinuous, swervy, veery
kind), the dew its own sort of sea on
every green blade, and, wet in the
rinse of it, we sink under the fence

Michael Begnal is author of the collections *Future Blues* (Salmon Poetry, 2012) and *Ancestor Worship* (Salmon Poetry, 2007), the chapbooks *Tropospheric Clouds* (Adjunct Press, 2020) and *The Muddy Banks* (Ghost City Press, 2016), and the critical monograph *The Music and Noise of the Stooges, 1967-71: Lost in the Future* (Routledge, 2022).

November 13, 1872, 7:35 a.m.

An astronomer has calibrated the exact
date and time of day when Monet
painted "Impression Sunrise."
I consider Earth's predictable
position in the Universe—
Morning sunrise, moon, waxing gibbous
still visible, milky, almost full.
A moment that if painted could be found
more than a hundred years later.

Mary C. Rowin's poetry, essays and reviews
have appeared in a variety of publications
such as *Hummingbird*, *Panopoly*, *Passager* and
Stoneboat. Mary lives in Middleton, Wisconsin
near Stricker Pond.

Is

This is not the start
of a question.
It just *is*.

Acquiescing,
in-giving, up-giving,
no and yes.

Malignant sky,
raindrop constellations
punched on a screen

then

clouds surrendering
to smears of blue,
also leaves—

gold, red, green—
switched on,
unaccountably lit.

The street gleams.
Everything, as always,
is—including this.

Georgia Ressmeyer, a three-
time Pushcart Prize nominee, has
published two poetry chapbooks
and two full-length collections. Her
most recent chapbook is *Leading
a Life* (Water's Edge Press, 2021).
Her poetry has received awards
from the Council for Wisconsin
Writers, Wisconsin People & Ideas,
the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets,
The Washington Island Literary
Festival, *Peninsula Pulse* and others.

Neoneurogenesis

Love!
me-e.
Love!
me-e.

Oh! they still
stop me in my tracks,

quicken
my wintered heart—

the melting crystal notes
of resilient chickadees—

their love and light and letting go.

Ingrid Andersson is the author of
Jordemoder: Poems of a Midwife (Holy
Cow! Press, 2022), winner of a Wisconsin
Writers Association book award. Her
poems have been nominated for Pushcart
Prizes and Best of the Net, and her writing
has appeared in *About Place Journal*, *Ars
Medica*, *Calyx*, *Literary Mama*, *Midwest
Review*, *Plant-Human Quarterly*, *The
Progressive Magazine*, *Wisconsin People
& Ideas* and elsewhere. A home birth
nurse midwife for 25 years, Ingrid writes
and midwives in Madison, Wisconsin.

my
one
bowl
this
hole
that
holds
the
moon

Julie 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 book, *fencing with the
moon*, is due out in November from Finishing
Line Press.

birds blurr
into the bluer
blue

wakening . . .
overhead window gone from
the wall

a small life
of great feeling
e c o s t a s y

Donna Fleischer has 8 poetry
chapbooks, including *Baby in Space*,
FLANEUR, and *Every Day Earth* in
2024. Her poems are in over 70
journals and anthologies worldwide,
in 2024 in *Half Day Moon Journal
no.2*, *Kō*, *Of Hartford in Many Lights*,
and *The Solitary Plover*. She blogs at
word pond.

DARK SPACES

We live in the same
Black closet
& call it home

We are often afraid
Of the dark
& want to come out

We never know when
Our monsters will rise
& find us palatable

James P. Roberts is the author of
six books of poetry. His most recent
collection, *One Hundred Breaths*, was
selected as the winner of the 2020
Portage Press Poetry Book Contest
and was published by Portage Press
in June of 2020. He lives in Madison,
Wisconsin.

Dream House

Falling down
Wood-shingled cottage
edge of the ocean
waves from disaster
one storm from being
swept away.

What possessed
the dreamer to bid
\$30,000 for it
no hesitation
a sea song
of no known
architectural significance
a workman's
nail and patch
some flowers planted
in window boxes
thriving in salt air.

Mother says
she's crazy
but she will have
her way.

All is motion breathing
washing casting up
casting away
impressions of days
equal in worth.

Ronnie Hess is an essayist and poet who lives in Madison, WI. She is the author of seven collections of poetry, the latest, *Eggphrasis*, about raising hens in her backyard.
ronniehess.com

RAINING

A dimpled, vernal pool...

How distant that cloud
to be seeding
these plosive thumbprints
far below
in this little
eye within
the forest.

So many languages write their miracles
upon the ordinary
and are never seen.

I take note to believe in them,
to believe I can learn them,
decipher this arcane language
ancient beyond all others.

Marc Harshman's collections of poetry include *Woman in Red Anorak*, winner of the Blue Lynx Prize, *Believe What You Can*, winner of the Weatherford Award, and *Following the Silence*. *Dispatch from the Mountain State* has just been published by WVU Press. He's also authored 14 nationally acclaimed children's books and has been poet laureate of West Virginia since 2012.

Trinket

Slope bedewed,
I dote amid:

One lone magpie
flummoxed in the trove

Adam Flint was born in London and is now based in Berlin. Previous poems have appeared in *Shearsman magazine*, *Reliquiae journal*, *Blackbox Manifold* and *Poetry Salzburg Review*, among others.

around
I can manage
but when
the river comes up
in full floodedness

that moment
taken
not deported
taken

*

yes your boat
tied to steps
but so much
flooding the zone
will never
flower

spring anemones
will not
SOS the stars
for courage
to brown cottage-turtle
this flood

*

fascism-flooded
the bishop's
full days
all proclaiming
some flood-damning thing

a dog at night
barking nonsense
as if Han Shan
a eucharist
through the window

*

Dan Schwerin and his wife Julie love evening walks and labyrinths. His 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-Wisconsin Area of The United Methodist Church. His debut haiku collection, *ORS*, from red moon press, won the Haiku Foundation's Touchstone Award in 2016. His most recent collection of American sijo, *lightly*, can be found from the author or red moon press. You can find him on X @SchwerinDan or on BlueSky @danschwerin.bsky.soci

A poet of and larger than place

childhood summers—
hopes fill in
for money's lack

Lake Superior and Wilderness fill in
for her verse to sing 'place'

beside the river—out of flood
wood, dog, daughter fill in
for warmth in the heart

In Exchange for Haiku
or *Haiku-like Verse* fill in
for the delicacy of her hokku

A paeon to place fills in
for her *space* and *quiet*

The Years Go By—
Old Mother, Dear Mona, Mary fill in
for *seeing light in dimness*, where *time is white*

Lakshman Bulusu writes micro-poetry and poetry based in Princeton, NJ, USA. His haiku, haibun, tanka, Haiga, monoku, and rengay; and poetry have been published in journals internationally. He invented the STAR poem genre which was a semi-finalist in Wine Cellar Press contest for new poetic forms 2020.

AFTER THE SERVICE

We sit at round tables with small cold plates,
speak words that suddenly we barely know,
while our hands feel blindly in the dark
for bits of pocket lint.

Beside the sanctuary door,
shoulder to shoulder on their white tagboard,
old photos from his long life are still chattering,
excited to see each other after so many years.

All these memories, hauled up and dumped out,
silver and flapping on the mossy planks,
while beyond us in the condensing fog,
far out, a troop ship plunges,
wave after wave, its back
turned to the harbor.

Note: We published this poem in the Winter 2025 issue with incorrect line breaks. *The Solitary Plover* is sorry for the error and presents it here as its author intended.



Scott Lowery’s collection, *Mutual Life*, won second place in last year’s Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets chapbook competition. Recent poems appear in *RockPaperPoem*, *Wisconsin People & Ideas*, and a winter show of ekphrastic poetry at the Trout Museum of Art in Appleton. Lowery and his wife live near their young grandchildren in Milwaukee. Find more: www.scottlowery.org

Hear *The Solitary Plover* Reading
The Friends of Lorine Niedecker will host a reading by the poets published in the Summer 2025 issue of *The Solitary Plover* on August 14th at 6:30pm CDT. Sharon Daly will moderate the reading.

Daly is a retired teacher and credits the Greater Madison Writing Project with opening her pathway to poetry. She values kindred companions in the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets and finds her muse in woodland walks, libraries, and teacups.

Sign up for FoLN News and Events:
<https://tinyurl.com/Niedecker>

Your Financial Support is Needed
The Friends of Lorine Niedecker is funded through donations and contributions and sometimes grants. We use funds to maintain the lorineniedecker.org website, produce *The Solitary Plover*, fund events and educational activities.

There are no paid staff, just dedicated volunteers.

Your contribution to the Friends is fully tax deductible. We appreciate your support.

You can make a donation through PayPal on our website:
<https://lorineniedecker.org/friends-lorine-niedecker/>

You can also mail your contributions to:
Friends of Lorine Niedecker
Hoard Historical Museum
401 Whitewater Ave, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538



WELCOME POETS



PBS Wisconsin videographer Zack Whitford films poet Nicholas Gulig on Blackhawk Island in late May 2025 for the upcoming web series “Welcome Poets.”

This fall PBS Wisconsin will present “Welcome Poets,” a six part digital series about the life journey of Fort Atkinson resident and former Wisconsin poet laureate, Nicholas Gulig, and how that journey has been affected and informed by the life, work, and legacy of Lorine Niedecker.

Lorine’s life and growing literary acclaim for her significant contributions to the landscape of modern American poetry have made her an important voice in American literature and an inspiration to a new generation of poets.

During Gulig’s tenure as Wisconsin Poet Laureate from 2023-2024, he was granted a major fellowship through the Academy of American Poets to complete a project exploring Niedecker’s contributions to American Poetry. Lorine’s poem “Lake Superior” was the first poem of Niedecker’s that Nick ever read, a poem that he credits with changing his relationship to his craft. Using her notes, poetry, and journal as a guide, he followed her journey around Lake Superior.

The series hopes to promote a greater understanding of the role that poetry can play in our personal experiences and in shaping our shared identities in Wisconsin and wider regions. It illustrates how the lives of these two Wisconsin poets, united by place, are intertwined across time.

Watch our Web site this fall for availability. To be sure you don’t miss it, sign up for our Newsletter and Poetry News and Events at lorineniedecker.org





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The Friends of Lorine Niedecker is a non-profit corporation.

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.

Request

If you are receiving a paper copy of The Solitary Plover please consider sharing this with another reader when you are finished.

To support the Friends of Lorine Niedecker, go to:
<https://lorineniedecker.org/friends-lorine-niedecker/>

