

After Niedecker

& other postcard poems by Paul E Nelson

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Heat is your favorite color.

- John Olson

267. to David Abel, Portland, OR—
Nerve Thoughts or Gall
Ilalqo, WA 2.2.09

David —
“Say the time of moon
is not right for escape.”
L. Niedecker

Say a choice between
Lorine’s nerve thoughts
or the gall of a menstruating
teen daughter, a cloud-burst
on the tongue or one rung
up Jacob’s Ladder. No time
for revision each night watch the
hunger moon slip further from
Venus.



268. to Avis Adams, Auburn, WA –
Ancestral Stomping Grounds
Ilalqo, WA 2.13.09

Avis!

“Wade all life backward
to its source which runs
too far ahead.”

L. Niedecker

Before we die
we might tread upon our
ancestor’s stomping grounds. Maybe
we take on an ancestor - poetic

look for the source of the Rock
River near Theresa think of
Lorine doing all she could
to float a few poems
downstream.

Sweet pastry: 350g/12 oz self raising flour, 150g/6oz soft margarine, 80g/3oz sugar, 6 tbs cold water.

Apple filling: 450g/1lb Bramley apples, 75g/3oz sugar, water, lemon juice, 50g/2oz sultanas, ½ tsp mixed spice.

Take half the flour, and cream with margarine until nice and light. Dissolve sugar in water, add to creamed mixture and mix until fully absorbed. Add rest of flour and mix gently until a smooth paste is formed.

Roll out half the sweet paste and cover the bottom of a 25cm/10" pie plate. Sprinkle mixed spice and sultanas over base. Add peeled and sliced apples. Sprinkle with sugar, lemons juice and a little water. Roll out remaining pastry, make slits in centre. Damp edges of base, place pastry on top and seal edges. Brush with egg or milk, dust with castor sugar and bake at 375°F, 190°C, Gas mark 5 until golden brown.



Famous Spicy Apple Pie from the
Apple Pie Eating House & Bakery

269. to Lynn Alexander, Beacon, NY –

No One

Ilalqo, WA 2.13.09

Lynn –

“The satisfactory emphasis is on
revolving. Don’t send steadily;
after you know me I’ll be
no one.” L. Niedecker

No one postponing yoga til
an itch’s resolved; no one
taking café space to write
poems only one will read;

no one keeping vigil or
admiring charms until the spell
wears off.

Misty autumn morn



272. to Aaron Anstett, Colorado Springs, CO –

More Than a Footnote

Ilalqo, WA 2.17.09

Aaron –

“To give / heat is within
the control of / every human
being.” L. Neidecker

Borges says he needs
a week to think abt
it. (Almost wrote “wink.”
Almost wrote “weak.”)
Working to see this be
more than a footnote
to Plato (make a place
memory) an omen of what
lingers longer than graves.

Blessings –



273. to Eve Anthony Hanninen, Abbotsford, BC –

Still, a Heretic

Ilalqo, WA 2.23.09

Eve –

“To give / heat is within
the control of / every human
being.” L. Niedecker

For a heretic still
that gift heat rises
from somewhere dirty
and holy and

here is the control we’ve
been seeking heat
seeking missile seeking
silk, say Amen.

Blessings –



276. to Geer Austin, New York, NY –
Tibetan New Year
Ilalqo, WA 2.25.09

Geer –

“If you circle / the habit of
your meaning, / it’s fact and
no harm done.”

(Lorine Niedecker)

Augustine hung up on lust
(it gets the best of
us) and Dr. King too.

Today take a Tibetan
New Year vow skillfulness
in all things. Maybe

the woodfrogs hear my
plea. Maybe circle the
meaning of my habit.



277. to Lana Hechtman Ayers, Kingston, WA –
Carla's Bent Wrist
Ilalqo, WA 2.25.09

LANA –

“Laymen / due to the stars / around 1910 &
erudition even / set backwards
on diaphragms / kept for the
female so /long without / flowers.”

L. Niedecker

& we circle around again
for some cheese-less
maze, some a spiral

of scents and longer days
(nights shorter.) Carla's bent
wrist on the mic & the
spike of annuals coming up
because this universe's rigged

in yr favor.

Blessed Be –



278. to Andrea Bates, Wilmington, NC –
Hummingbird Feeders
Ilalqo, WA 2.25.09

Andrea –

“You will / arrange to / better me when
the pastry / comes and / cherries are
such double- / days.” L. Niedecker

Rigged
in yr favor this universe where
the flavor of hummingbird feeders
is azucar.

Perhaps their joy’s
the same kick we get from
Havana Club. The days ARE
doubling and getting sweeter.

The New Year’s here
let’s not repeat
mistakes of the last eight.

Best to you w/ all that bettering.



279. to James Belflower, Albany, NY –
How She's Boned
Ilalqo, WA 3.3.09

James –

“Her under- / standing of him
is more touch- / ing than intelli
gent; he holds / her knees with-
out her knowing / how she's boned.”

Lorine Niedecker

Carol knows how she's boned
& me too each time she dips
into the adhesions my achilles
clings to or them it (him?)

Ninety percent energy, ten
percent meat & who knows
how far this branch goes
& if it's part of river,
family or tree.

Blessings –



280. to Elizabeth Bennefeld, Fargo, ND –
Woodfrogs, Never Apathy
Ilalqo, WA 3.3.09

Elizabeth –

“I can always / go back to
fertilization / kimonos, wrap
arounds and / diatribes.”

L. Niedecker

Or dialogs and woodfrogs
but never apathy. Maybe
the aortic whirl of
liberated plum blossoms

or clouds of crows rec
tifying slaughter’s diminished
ecosystem always @ sundown.
& yet no crow never called
me ‘cabrone’ yet.



281. to Linda Margaret Benninghoff, Lloyd Harbor, NY –
No Buttonhole Flower
Ilalqo, WA 3.3.09

Linda Margaret –

“...it’s always / just a flower in
the buttonhole / but insipid con-
nections count / for a day...”
L. Niedecker

Crows don’t call me
‘cabrone’ cuz they know
my wife’s satisfied.
(Ex shd be w/ the house!)

No flower in the buttonhole
no woodfrogs in the runoff
pond no way to tell yet
if Spring’s got legs, yet
I’ve mine & today they’re more
energy than meat.



282. to Emily Benton, Charlotte, NC –

Melody for Emily

Ilalqo, WA 3.9.09

Emily –

“Don’t worry / about the comma,
darling; nobody / ekes out a more
facile distend- / bathroom
luxury.” L. Niedecker

More energy than meat.
More extended dialog w/
selves than single poem.
More snow in March

first pellets, then some
scatter’d flakes, then full-on
fat ones. Everything happening
happened already. Slight change
in shape, tone, melody, weather,
pole shift.



283. to Ella Berkowitz, Birmingham, AL –

Spoon up Some Climate Chaos

Ilalqo, WA 3.9.09

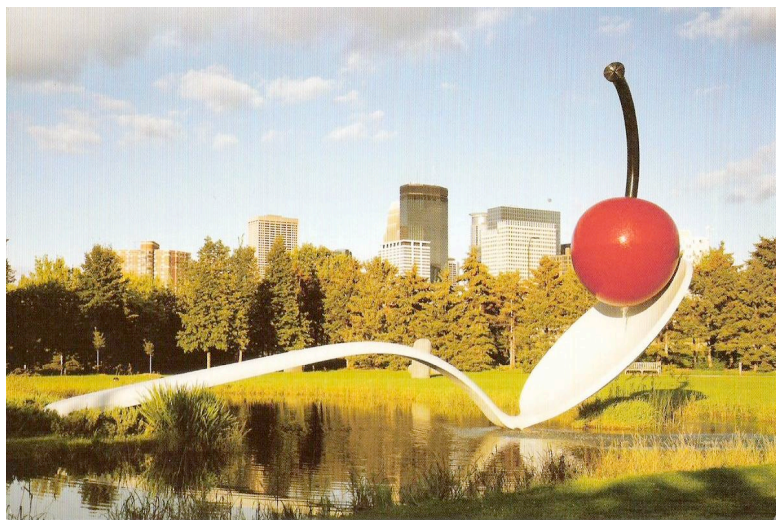
Ella!

“Bring an ear- / drum up to a
laughing order / at spittle point.”

L. Niedecker

Make melody out of the pole
shift an antiphon island
indeed & we'd limbo to it
if were so limber. His

crash, our restructure made of
Madoff & Dow 500 sell-offs.
Made of Spring snowrainhail
who'll bail us out of Mother
Naure's well-timed
wrath?



284. to Mary Rose Betten, Camarillo, CA –

Grounding

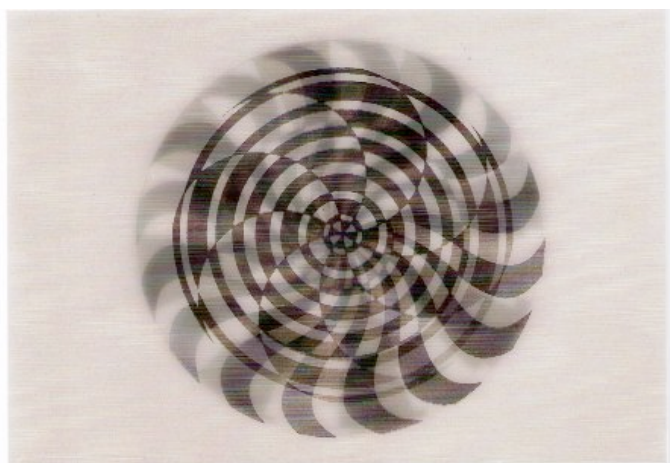
Ilalqo, WA 3.9.09

Mary Rose

“The trouble / is: this stirs
a real mean- / ing
Humanity / is engaged –
on equal burial.” L. Niedecker

The ground that eats
us all the charge
that grounds us all
equal footing – six feet

until then writing
a body, (writing) a
body of work (body)
@ work. March snow
don't stop the daffodils
can't stop the dance
just slickens it.



285. to Marike Beyers, Grahamstown, South Africa –

Krokus Flow

Ilalqo, WA 3.16.09

Marike –

“English singers -
They came in sing –
ing and went / out walking.”

L. Niedecker

We went out a body
writing. (Not writhing).
Daffodils (krokus too)
showed us flow. (Don't

fence me in. I won't
advertise you out.) ‘Vehoe’
is the Cherokee word for
white man. His fences
reminded them of spiders.



286. to Gary Blankenship, Bremerton, WA –

Weave

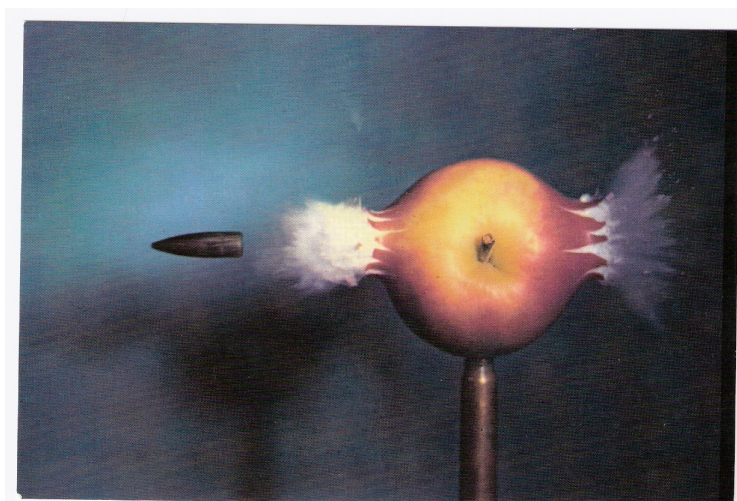
Ilalqo, WA 3.16.09 Gary –

“The monster died / of his last breath
ate a honey / and grew waxen.”

L. Niedecker

To the first folks, fences
akin to spider webs. What’ve
we weaved in 400 yrs?

I’m w/ Lorine, eat honey
hope to go out in song
not in the perennial
grumble of Pop. Take my
lifetime, too, to “weep a
deep trickle.”



287. to Meredith Blankenship, Portland, OR –

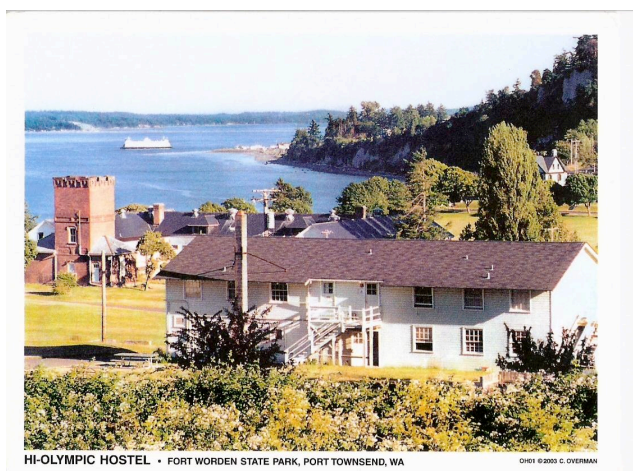
Slaughter Sanctuary

Ilalqo, WA 3.16.09 Meredith –

“I talk at the top / of my white
resignment.” Lorine Niedecker

Weep a deep trickle write
at the top of my lungs,
spleen, watch

the careen of syllables
as they cascade out my ear.
Here (Ilalqo) the body
battered as it can be.
The condensery still
a sanctuary in Slaughter.
Frog rattle. Freight train
whistle. Energy makes a scaffold
holds up the stars.



HI-OLYMPIC HOSTEL • FORT WORDEN STATE PARK, PORT TOWNSEND, WA

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288. to Silke Liria Blumbach, Heidelberg, Germany –

Another Scaffold

Ilalqo, WA 3.27.09 Silke–

“What a / white muffler / in a
dark coat / will do for a
dull man.” Lorine Niedecker

What a scaffold our eyes
create hold up stars.
What a sound a white
wave makes crashing

Cape Flattery below yr feet.
What a mist the sun
makes pulsing through
all that wet.

Which brings us
back to stars.



289. to Madelon Y. Bolling, Seattle, WA –

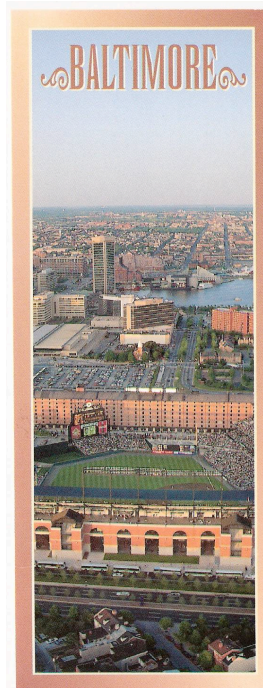
Shimmering Dignity

Ilalqo, WA 3.27.09 Madelon –

“Good deed, my / love, the element
of folk – / time. Nerves / are my past
monogamy, / said her arms / going farther.
Rock me out.” L. Niedecker

Starfish, an element of folktale, and
resentment no good deed gone and
Indo-Fijian neighbors gone, never did
bring me a bib for crab cakes & other
Charm City memories. Ones made this
Thursday migraine the shimmering
dignity of this postcard Friday.

Blessings



290. to Jim Boring, Margate, FL –

Fire's Star Shape

Ilalqo, WA 3.27.09 Jim –

“Summer - / I don't hum / the least of my
resistance, / I give it a fly.”

L. Niedecker

In this Friday postcard moment, see
explosion over iconic Domino Sugar sign,
see fire in the shape of stars, wish
the earth was our witness then
as it was & Blue comes on

o Joni & her shimmering melancholy.

o the thick heat of one

Charm City summer. This explosion
was a rainbow of agony charmed
into action.

Ciao



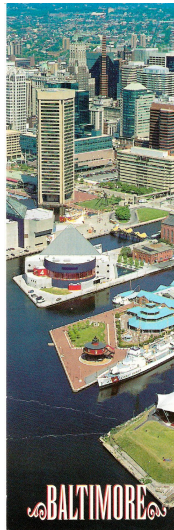
291. to Helen Cannon Brandenburg, Charleston, SC –

Sweet Ears See Shape

4.2.09 Ilalqo, WA Helen–

“Sweet ears, / attentive, not / too loud to risk,
rest them in a / madrigal bal- / cony above
any purpose / for not.” Lorine Niedecker

From the thick heat of one Charm city
summer to this Spring of no spring plum
trees (patient) ache for a sun break.
Purple buds dreaming to be pink blossoms,
 (Seek, ike me in '84, they own
 'splosion.) How to shape it the question
 (or how recognize its shape as it forms
writing carlessly guided by my sweet ears.
 Cheers!



292. to Kerri D. Buckley, Beaverton, OR –
Stanley's Invisible Guests
Ilalqo, WA 4.2.09 Kerri –

“All night, / all night, / & what is
it on a post- / card.” L. Niedecker

It's guided by your sweet
ears. It's soft as
Pop's seventh September
& it's Lorine with a needle
& pen shaping the mind
of Black Hawk Island.

“Unless he knows how to
welcome invisible guests
to his solitary musings...”
George Stanley says, might as
well be the urping cat
burrowing to make the day
pass or hiding from the rain.



293. to Wendy Call, Seattle, WA –

Stuck Commons

Ilalqo, WA 4.2.09 Wendy –

“All night, / all night, / & what is
it on a post- / card.” L. Niedecker

It's the shape of Ilalqo
(the shape of water striped)
or ghost conjured by a mind
seeking guests (invisible) to
his solitary musings.

Or the mind's shape
(definitely non- local) on
one day I don't want
to burrow like the urping
cat. One day the mind

less a street, more a river
at one time Stuck & now
a common space for the whole
congregation.



294. to Ute Anna Carbone, Nashua, NH –
More than Paint/Stories
Seattle, WA 4.12.09 Ute –

“Van Gogh’s / “Bar” – / In all free states
the selves un – / mix and walk
the table’s length.” L. Niedecker

The congregation gathers in
the common space - not a
bar but some other drug (elixir?)
served here (claritas.)

Van Gogh’s brush strokes
leave more than paint;
paint more than stories
engage a state more

shapely than solitary musings.
Wet blossoms under the Easter
plum tree. Who notices
the shape they leave behind?



295. to Christopher Caruso, Denver, CO –

Freak Ass Weather

Seattle, WA 4.12.09

Chris –

“That’s sweet / on a target –
nobody’d know – / the ham line.
Holes are too / late nowa –
Days. One / freak ass to / wire”

L. Niedecker

Nothing wrong w/ humans, but
the shape humanity leaves
behind makes for some freak
ass weather. Some wd say

somnabulant. Maybe just another
Easter dream of plum tree
blossoms falling - do the shapes
made divine our future or are
these holes here also
too late
?



296. to Laura Cherry, Watertown, MA –
Shape Enticing
Seattle, WA 4.12.09

Laura –

“Balcony scene in / *Romeo & Juliet* – / a white kerchief
comes into a / pocket shirred / onto a blue silk / gown. Or from Row
L in the balcony.” L. Niedecker

Sure, to recover holes
left here for your a
musement. On this Easter
I wonder, will this shroud
steady any corpse against
lateral sway? From this
free state, this life
play, this stage, how may
I make my shape enticing
as those April blossoms;
how find the hole we all
fall thru? Ciao –



298. to Kenneth Clark, Dothan, AL –

Brown Clouds

Bowen Island, BC

4.27.09 Kenneth –

“Sweet ekes / of soft drips /
bathroom / luxuries.” L. Niedecker

Bathroom luxuries for
animals = nature, like the green
pollen cloud the crow
releases, or seagull atop

the ferry gate. Humans,
so much more intelligence
shit in a small room
release the brown clouds
set the whole damn rock
aflake. Who knew?



299. to Marilee Rose Clement, Seattle, WA –

Any Shapely Bystander

Bowen Island, BC 4.27.09

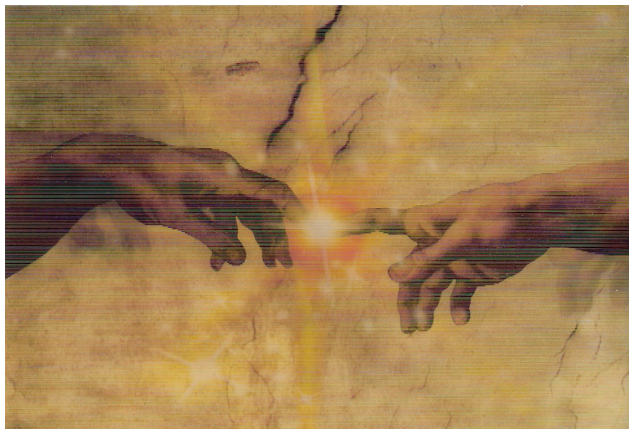
Marilee –

“Smooth out the / substance
of your / acetylene worry.” L. Niedecker

Takes quite a torch
to burn a rock yet
we try try try
our acetylene love on

any shapely bystander
watch the snow melt
in the indispensable
kitchen. In this, the

year of Swine Flu I
see green pollen clouds, watch
Heather sneeze, enjoy the
April breeze
on my neck
‘til the ferry comes. “Til we sell this car.



300. to Julia Cousineau, Tacoma, WA –

Say Goodbye Lorine

Bowen Island, BC 4.27.09 Julia –

“Jesus I’m / going out
and throw / my arms
around.” Lorine Niedecker

Say goodbye Lorine (goodbye)
selling the car turning
a perfectly healthy car
away from Slaughter.

(Ilalqo too) to make it
new hang that sign, back
that swine flu impulse
into a corner the terriers
won’t even venture even
for meat
or that mask of fat we wear (were).



301. to Allison Lee Creighton, Richmond Heights, MO –

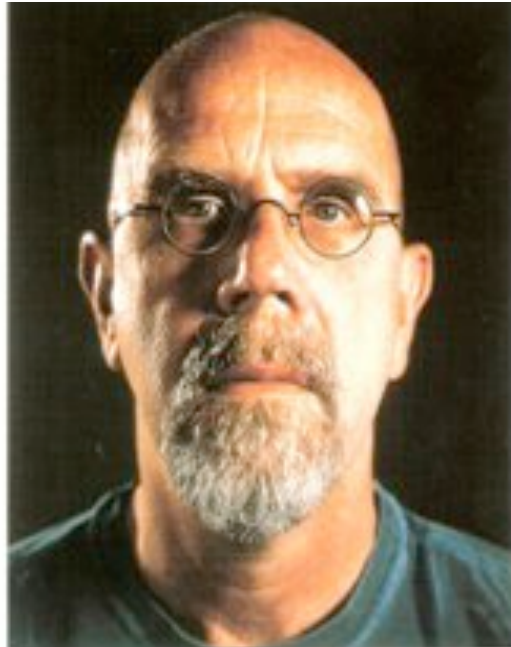
Wordclouds .33¢

Ilalqo, WA 5.7.09

Allison –

That mask of fat I
hide behind also's
obscured now by
word clouds (3 for
a dollar.) Had to save

up for the parts made
an invisible meat
scaffold erected in Lorine's
mem'ry. *Interdependent*
origination but if this
kid throws that wood block
on the floor again...



Afterword

It has been over a year since I finished the poems that make up this selection. They were part of a poetry postcard project I helped create. In most of the pieces here I used Lorine Niedecker's series of poems written on calendar pages both as epigraphs and as entryways for poems of my own, each one written to a specific participant in the poetry postcard series. That she was from the Midwest, like me, is certainly part of the kinship I feel. Her dedication to her craft is another part of what I find inspiring about her life and work, along with the absence of self-promotion. But the subtle turns in her verse, the sensuality and dedication to place are all part of what makes Niedecker unique and important to me.

Most of the poems in this series feature some kind of links with those adjacent to them. References allude to disparate sources such as Hua-yen Buddhism, Thelonious Monk, Joni Mitchell, Charles Olson, Roxy Music, Subud, Nate Mackey, Native American culture, the many artists whose works were represented on postcards and some of the remarkable landscapes of the Pacific Northwest, including Bowen Island, Port Townsend, Cape Flattery and the elusive Ilalqo. In fact, the sense of melancholy that pervades a good deal of the poems comes from the notion that I wrote as I knew I'd be leaving Auburn (formerly Ilalqo in the Native parlance) not too long in the future. It turned out to be just over a month after the last of the poems was completed.

Organic composition for me has become a lifeway; at once a window into deeper realms of self and a mindfulness discipline. In re-reading them, I find a line that surprises me or makes me laugh and I can with a true humility because there is a sense the source of the line is beyond me. You've heard that expression, *beyond me!* Jack Spicer said it's a good sign when you get that quick take. There are fewer more satisfying feelings than the recognition of a strong poem coming though from that place John Hogue calls a Buddhafield and some Buddhists believe is the actual Buddha. The language used in Subud suggests it is a surrender of self to an experience of divinity and these poems came a year after I reconnected

with that organization and the regular practice of latihan. I hope that there are strong poems in this series and that any difficulty in these poems can be overcome by the reader first through a focus on the rhythm and musicality and then through a similar surrender of the *irritable reaching after fact or reason*. It is when this is achieved that a tone, resonance or what might be construed as meaning comes through. These poems work more like craniosacral therapy than by allopathic dosage. It is a field I am creating. More subtle, yes, but whose effect I hope lingers longer than a quick fix. Poems that reward repeated readings. May they work at a deeper level and create similar openings in the reader that Lorine's work has created for me.

The grouping of the poems, too, is organic. There was no cherry-picking the "best" poems, but a surrender to what came and what is from one date in my life to another. This surrender to process has been more fully accomplished by some of the poets mentioned above and my eternal gratitude goes out to them and to unmentioned others.

My gratitude goes out to Lana Ayers for coordinating the poetry postcard fest for so long and to my companion in these 3rd Millennium days, Meredith A. Sedlachek, the wily Almondina.

peN – 5.29.10
10:41P –
Seattle, WA



Paul on Desolation Peak, North Cascades, Mt. Hozomen behind him.