

**READING POEMS
(1996-2016)**

Reading Lorine Niedecker
Reading Tomas Tranströmer
Reading Olav H. Hauge
Reading Wallace Stevens

READING LORINE NIEDECKER

Her example –
right word

from life's
work – that

seemingly
simple –

pot scrubbed
and put on

table – so
presidential

who shunned
debate to

speaks fact – her
certain place

Footnote

“Al, burn these,”
she wrote,

her life
going up

in smoke –
what she said

or felt
withheld

except for
rock like work

READING TOMAS TRANSTROMER

I have never heard a nightingale sing.
What does that mean? One a.m.

I sit in my room, windows shut.
The only sound the air conditioner's hum.

If time exists, it has sprung its trap,
I am pressed between the pages of a book.

READING OLAV H. HAUGE

Even in translation I think
how alike we are

with our preference
for words like plate, cup.

Simple men, grown
Indifferent

to what's not at hand.
Sharing friends—Li Po, Tao Chien.

READING WALLACE STEVENS

1.

I imagined how I would walk up the narrow
concrete strip by the side of your house.
You would make no attempt to greet me but
leading, point to the forsythia in the back.
“Yes,” I would say, “I have a yard like that.”

2.

So the mind makes up its past. Our mothers
talk under the butternut, hanging the wash,
sun bright on their cotton-print skirts.
Holding on to their hems we fidget,
Half-listening to what might have been said.

3.

I once believed that the round world was safe.
The sky was blue, the grass green and wet.
You sat on the porch, grasping your hat,
while you talked about cause and effect.
How could I write as it we had never met?

David M. Eberly