Charlotte Wilder's Uncollected Poems c. 1940-1945

Caroline Maun, English, Interim Chair and Associate Professor

Tuesday, April 16, 2019 12:30PM-1:30PM Rm. 2339 Faculty Administration Bldg

Charlotte Wilder (1898-1980) was an enigmatic American modernist poet who enjoyed a brief celebrity in the mid-1930s. Her professional accomplishments included publishing two volumes of poetry, placing poems in leading journals, and winning national visibility for her writing. She left a teaching position in order to write in New York full-time; she worked for the WPA and did freelance editing work, although she could not consistently make ends meet. In a 1940 application for a Guggenheim Award, she described her current project as a third book of observational lyric poetry focusing on her experiences in New York City. As a poet whose career was characterized by very different aesthetic approaches to her art, this book anticipated a synthesis of sensibility. She was not awarded the Guggenheim, and in February of 1941 was hospitalized after a psychotic break, from which she never fully recovered. As part of the larger work of editing her complete poems, the rough outlines of a third book of poetry have emerged from the many unpublished poems from 1940-1945 that remained in manuscript. This talk will focus on poems from this late period and in what ways Wilder advanced her aesthetic and thematic concerns through this unfinished project.

Caroline Maun is an associate professor of English at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She teaches creative writing and American literature and is the Interim Chair. She is the editor of The Collected Poetry of Evelyn Scott, and author of Mosaic of Fire: The Work of Lola Ridge, Evelyn Scott, Charlotte Wilder, and Kay Boyle. Her poetry publications include the volumes The Sleeping, What Remains, and two chapbooks. Her poetry has appeared in The Bear River Review, The MacGuffin, Third Wednesday, Peninsula Poets, and Eleven Eleven.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

For more info about the Humanities Center, call (313) 577-5471 or visit www.research2.wayne.edu/hum