



Nodin Press

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# Nordic Accordion

Poems in a Scandinavian Mood

*Bart Sutter*

All of Bart Sutter's grandparents spoke Swedish. In his earliest years, he heard old people talk Norwegian in farm kitchens and on the streets in town, and there were Finns, Danes, and Icelanders in the neighborhood, too. The music of these Nordic languages got inside Sutter's head; he also inherited the homesickness of old-timers who spoke about a legendary land they called The Old Country. In *Nordic Accordion* Sutter fulfills the covenant he made with his elders long ago—to dramatize, critique, and honor their struggles, their culture, their peculiar ways. The book explores the experience of Scandinavian immigrants, their ancestors, and their descendants.

A few of the stories to be found in *Nordic Accordion*:

- A Swedish runaway listens to Italian opera while gutting fish.
- Two old Norwegians meet at a funeral, and romance results.
- Icelanders drop over a cliff to collect seabird eggs.
- An American writer speaks to a dead Finnish poet and invites her home.

At the heart of the book lies a cycle of dramatic monologues by old women about their half-pagan younger years as cowherds in the mountain pasture camps of Sweden. "This," says David Ray of Sutter's work, "is poetic storytelling at its best."

**About the Author:** Bart Sutter has received the Minnesota Book Award for poetry with *The Book of Names: New and Selected Poems*, for fiction with *My Father's War and Other Stories*, and for creative non-fiction with *Cold Comfort: Life at the Top of the Map*. The recipient of numerous other fellowships and honors, in 2006 he was named the first Poet Laureate of Duluth. He has written for public radio, he has had four verse plays produced, and he often performs as one-half of The Sutter Brothers, a poetry-and-music duo. His work is featured in the documentary *Pretty Much 100% Scandinavian* by the Swedish film company Camera Q. Sutter lives in Duluth with his wife, Dorothea Diver, on a hillside overlooking Lake Superior.

paperback / 114 pages

ISBN: 978-1-947237-04-9 / \$17.00

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