



Nodin Press
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So Surprised to Find You Here

Bart Sutter

Bart Sutter's new collection presents us with surprises at every turn of the path. Why should a walk through a woodland bog evoke the names and faces of first-grade girls? What's it like to be a one-year-old who crawls under a grand piano while it's being played? Or an arborist high up a tree who's suddenly attacked by killer bees? Why does a Lutheran congregation worship in front of a boulder deep in the woods? But isn't this what poetry is for—situations, people, moments that combine the familiar and the unexpected, taking us by surprise and challenging us to see things in a new light?

Now in his seventies, Sutter is haunted by lost friends and places, and some poems have an elegiac tone, but a celebratory mood tends to dominate, figuring in both the music of the poems line by line and the experiences being recounted: examining kelp on a California beach, a narrative of a sexual awakening or a grandson's messy mastery of solid food. The book is rich with stories set in the poet's home ground in northern Minnesota, but he also takes us to the backroads of New Mexico, the forests of Sweden, and on to Ireland and Spain. Whether near at home or far afield, Sutter brings to life those transcendent moments that keep us going, comparing, for example, the movement of his own heart while fishing for trout on a foggy day to the movement of the migrating swans: laboring but taking flight.

Bart Sutter 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*. Among other honors, he has won a Jerome Foundation Travel & Study Grant (Sweden), a Loft-McKnight Award, and the Bassine Citation from the Academy of American Poets. 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. Bart lives on a hillside overlooking Lake Superior with his wife, Dorothea Diver.

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