



Nodin Press

5114 Cedar Lake Road, Minneapolis, MN, 55416

Contact Norton Stillman (952) 546-6300 / Fax (952) 546-6303

Crossing the Water

poems

Norita Dittberner-Jax

Norita Dittberner-Jax's new collection, *Crossing the Waters*, chronicles the daily triumphs and setbacks, fears and recollections, that arose when her husband, Gene, was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease. Her first response is *a shock so deep / the dreaming shut down...* But the poet, adept at exploring the range of emotions from wistfulness and joy to panic and desperation, regains her bearings to capture details of the roller-coaster days and weeks following the diagnosis. Taken out of context, many of the poems could stand alone as reflections of lost love, memories of excursions shared, and praise for a fleeting moment of laughter or glancing sunlight. Yet other details return our attention repeatedly to our heartbreaking role as witnesses of a loved one's decline. The measure of Dittberner-Jax's success as a poet lies in the fact that she does full justice to the awfulness of her husband's condition in such a way as to simultaneously underscore how deep and rich their relationship has been—and continues to be.

There is nothing formulaic about these vivid episodes and reminiscences. From the chaos and pain of private ruminations bearing titles such as "What I Will Miss," "Leaving the Garden," "A Psalm of Lament," "The Clinic Waiting Room," and "What the Counselor Said," an element of universality emerges. We're all crossing the river. As the opposite bank approaches, things become more immediate, and more precious. In *Crossing the River*, Norita Dittberner-Jax shows us the way.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY: Norita Dittberner-Jax was born and raised in the Frogtown neighborhood of Saint Paul, the sixth of seven children. She was educated in parochial schools and graduated from the (then) College of Saint Catherine. After her first marriage and the birth of three children, she began to write poetry, just as the Twin Cities area was becoming a center for creative writing with the emergence of the Loft. She taught English in the public schools of Saint Paul, and creative writing for the Writers-in-the-Schools Program and at the Perpich Center for the Arts. Her second marriage to Eugene Jax brought international travel and a great interest in art. In retirement from teaching, she returned to academic life, earning an MFA in poetry from Hamline University. Norita is one of the poetry editors for Red Bird Chapbooks. *Crossing The Waters* is her fifth collection of poems.

Crossing the Waters

ISBN:978-1-935666-98-1 / \$17

◆ NODIN PRESS : MINNEAPOLIS ◆