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# Paper Camera

*poems, poets, and poetry*

Joyce Sutphen

In her new collection, former Minnesota poet laureate Joyce Sutphen shares a collection of musings full of insight and whimsy on the conundrums of poetic art. She begins by asking herself why poetry exists, what it does for us, and why we're afraid of it, and concludes, many poems later, with one in which she thanks those who have driven through the dark to attend a reading. In between, there are many unexpected shifts in mood and focus. Some of the poems are deeply personal, as she reminisces about good times with friends and fellow poets—a few of them no longer with us. Other poems take the form of an instruction manual, suggestive rather than dogmatic, offering advice on “the basic plot” and “the art of revision,” for example.

Sutphen touches on the pleasures of writing poems and the value of memorizing the poems of others. It's a world of words in service to observation and emotion, conveyed with the light touch of a late-night fireside conversation at an artist's colony. But it's also a world of microwaves and crossword puzzles, birthdays and praying, funerals and memory loss, wildness and mystery.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joyce Sutphen was raised on a farm in Stearns County, Minnesota. She is a professor emeritus of English at Gustavus Adolphus College and served as Minnesota's poet laureate from 2011 to 2021. She is the author of numerous books of poetry, among them *That Other Life*, *This Long Winter*, and *Carrying Water to the Field: New and Selected Poems*.

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