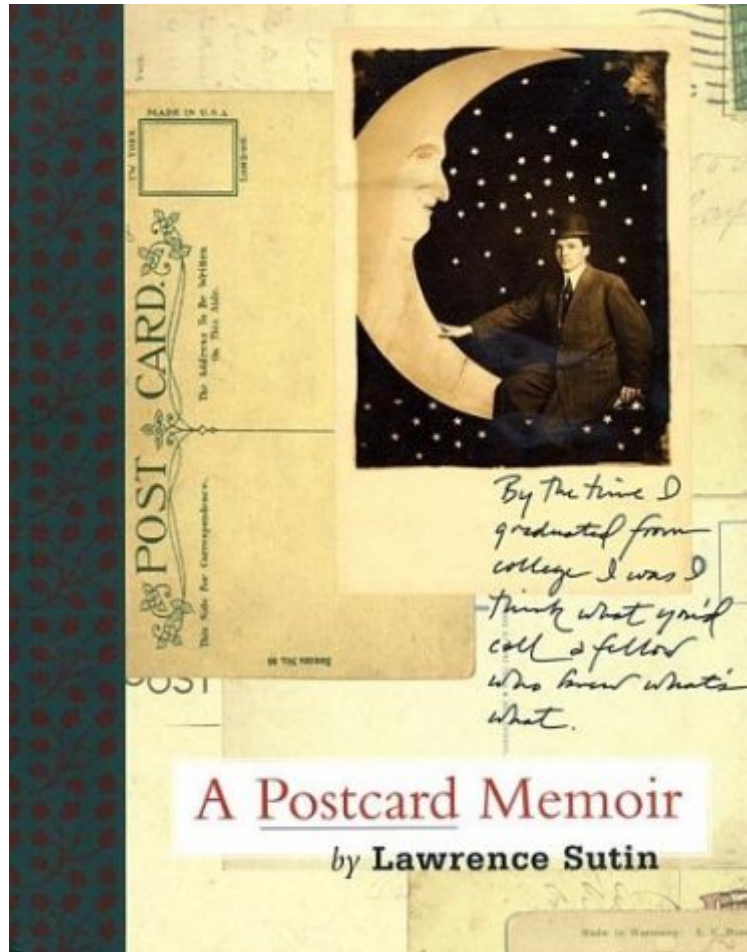


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A Postcard Memoir

Lawrence Sutin

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#588077 in Books Graywolf Press 2003-04-01 2003-04-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 226.31 x 14.22 x 7.011, 1.16 #File Name: 1555973043224 pages | File size: 52.Mb

Lawrence Sutin : A Postcard Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Postcard Memoir:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An absorbing memoir and an absolutely BEAUTIFUL book By Timothy J. Bazzett I loved this book for a couple reasons. First of all, Lawrence Sutin is a great writer - one of those guys that probably very few have ever heard of outside his home turf, which is primarily the twin cities. But the guy's been around, worked various jobs, got educated and read some of the great thinkers and thinks a few pretty deep thoughts of his own as he ponders things like reincarnation, the Dalai Lama, and the unexplainable mysteries of life. But I probably enjoyed most the short vignettes about his youth and young manhood wherein he speaks of baseball, dogs, friendships and the like. Best of all perhaps are his sometimes mirth-making meditations on fatherhood and step-fathering which he came to at a relatively late stage, in his thirties. For example, on his relationship with his two young stepdaughters he comments, "In matters of parenting, I try to imitate their mother. They've come to listen to me a little.

I fart a lot and they think that's funny." Not quite what you'd expect from a guy who, not too many pages before, talked of "reading Evans-Wentz's translation from the Tibetan of the LIFE OF MILAREPA, the ascetic poet, illumined one of the Himalayas." So of course I laughed out loud. Because most guys never quite outgrow laughing at farts, perhaps not even the "illumined one." And of course there are all these odd, cool old picture postcards on nearly every other page of the book, artifacts that acted as catalysts to Sutin's memories. Sutin confesses to being a compulsive collector of these cards. The other reason I absolutely loved this book was for its physical beauty. Yeah, I'm a booklover, and books like this one make me nearly weak in the knees, with its heavy glossy pages and its French fold cover, all beautifully designed by Jeanne Lee. While A POSTCARD MEMOIR is technically, I suppose, a paperback, it has all of the beauty and appeal of a very expensive coffee table book. I loved holding this book, feeling its weight and perfect smoothness. It was a tactile, voluptuous adventure for a true booklover like me. It's also a perfect example of why the whole idea of e-books makes me sad. Bookmaking can be an art, and A POSTCARD MEMOIR is a perfect example of that art. I loved Mr. Sutin's sly, funny wise memoir. But, nearly as much, I loved the way Graywolf Press put it all together. Bravo! - Tim Bazzett, author of the memoir BOOKLOVER4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great, sorta. By T. Porges Sutin has great ideas for books. I've now read four of his books, and finished all but this one because the topics were so good -- Buddhism in America, biographies of Aliester Crowley and Philip Dick, and this one, the postcard memoir, should have been a terrific book and I can't really see why it's not, except in all this time I've never warmed to Sutin as a writer, and can't quite figure out why. This is a great book to get just because it's a great idea for a book, realized pretty well. Searching for one's lost family in the pile of crap that mounts up at the feet of the angel of History is another version of Dick's I-Ching driven narratives, or other books written with the Tarot or the Ouija board as coauthor. Whether you regard this as purely a chance operation or an embrace of synchronicity will have a lot to do with the outcome. I guess I wish Sutin had gotten more into the game of the thing than he did, but he had a memoir to get off his chest, and a family story, and kids of Holocaust survivors are always lugging that extra ton of inherited survivor guilt and whatnot: it makes them difficult, as friends. I have the same difficulties with Sebald. If you like Rings of Saturn, I'm pretty sure you'll like Sutin's memoir. Most people will find this small caveat pointless, and will enjoy this book for its multiple virtues. Highly recommended. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Book By Mr. Books The life of the writers is told through his collection of postcards, fascinating in themselves. He takes you through his childhood in Minneapolis, his solitary years in St. Paul, to adulthood of being a father and husband. You are constantly changing angles and given vivid glimpses of a life built from a collage of memory and reverie.

Drawing upon his collection of quirky antique postcards, Lawrence Sutin has penned A Postcard Memoir--a series of brief but intense reminiscences of his "ordinary" life. In the process, he creates an unrepentant, wholly unique account about learning to live with a consciousness all his own. Ranging from remembered events to inner states to full-blown fantasies, Sutin is at turns playful and somber, rhapsodic and mundane, funny and full of pathos. Here you'll find tales about science teachers and other horrors of adolescence, life in a comedy troupe, stepfathering--each illustrated with the postcard that triggered Sutin's muse--and presented in a mix so enticingly wayward as to prove that at least some of it really happened.

From Publishers Weekly Sutin's ingeniously constructed memoir uses duotone reproductions of postcards--by turns nostalgic, quaint or exotic--as Rorschach blots to evoke his deepest memories and feelings. In his previous memoir, Jack and Rochelle, Sutin chronicled the relationship between his father, a hero of the Jewish anti-Nazi resistance in Poland, and his mother, who escaped from a Nazi ghetto into the Polish woods where she hid and fought Germans; both emigrated to America at war's end. As the son of Holocaust survivors, Sutin, who was born in 1951 and grew up in Minneapolis/St. Paul, carried a special burden of grief and pain--and an urgent need to give his life meaning. Here he writes about typical events--Little League, his discovery of sex, bar mitzvah, past loves--but imbues his reminiscences of adolescent insecurity with a rueful, forgiving wisdom. After attending experimental Antioch College in the late '60s and a stint as a starry-eyed aspiring writer in Paris in 1973, maturity came with marriage, fatherhood and stepfatherhood. The postcards, which range from Michelangelo to Hollywood midgets to scenes of Bolivia, Idaho, Bombay and Bethlehem, are a screen on which Sutin projects his recollections, dreams and musings. But here's the catch: none of the people depicted in the postcards, and very few of the settings, are from Sutin's own life. Between each image and the corresponding text, odd juxtapositions and eerie or hilarious disjunctions fly like sparks, amplifying Sutin's memories and puncturing his wild fantasies. The past is what we make of it, he insists in this evocative if elusive postmodernist hall of mirrors. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Taking an unusual approach to memoir writing, Sutin, an award-winning memoirist and biographer, organizes episodes of his life around his antique postcard collection. An avid collector since a postcard of a mosque caught his eye in 1973, he sees the postcards as entries into his unconscious. Each one triggers a memory from Sutin's life, revealing a warm, reflective, and quirky personality. His wide-ranging subjects include such vignettes as a fifth-grade trip to a potato chip factory, visiting his father's place of business, working as a railroad lineman, and trying to

quiet his crying infant daughter. These brief reminiscences, playful yet serious, sound realistic sometimes, fantastical at others. In their brevity, they reveal Sutin's considerable skill in capturing an incident or feeling in an enticing way with a witty, poetic sensibility. This book will appeal to those interested in exploring an innovative approach to the memoir. Recommended for public and academic libraries. DNancy R. Ives, SUNY at Geneseo Lib. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Sutin, a memoirist and biographer, began buying old postcards on a whim and found that they "offered a way to shatter the mirror of the everyday." Portraits of strangers and buildings, landscapes, and oddly contrived scenes, these frozen moments blazed in his imagination like drive-in movie screens on otherwise pitch-black summer nights, eventually prompting him to create this funny, lyrical, and quirkily illustrated memoir. Each postcard faces the vignette it inspired, and the back-and-forthing this juxtaposition engenders is pure pleasure, as is Sutin's resonant prose. The child of Holocaust survivors, Sutin is intimate with sorrow and fear, but he is also blessed with a supple sense of humor. As he sets out each enigmatic postcard like a personal tarot, he inventively reimagines the story of his fantasy-rich boyhood, at-sea adolescence, and slowly liberating adulthood. Rich in unexpected associations and genuine wisdom, Sutin's episodic memoir is a travelogue through the growth of a mind and a journey to love. Donna Seaman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved