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Joyce Sutphen

A Way to Survive

One night, in the middle of it, when I could not sleep, I began to think about failure and how to accomplish it: how not to succeed in business without really trying, how not to win the lottery, how to take each highly unrecommended step as carelessly as possible, how to lose friends and influence no one.

Then I thought: Perhaps I am working too hard at missing the beat, perhaps some unconscious, but calculating, Darwinian sense is leading me, against my worst judgment, into choosing the surest way to survive, if nothing else.

National Council for the Social Studies National Science Teachers Association Phi Delta Kappa Whole Language Umbrella

Joyce Sutphen

Possibilities

What I mean to say is that I love oats when they spill into the back of a pickup. I watch corn stalks turning the light into silk.

That is why I go to the jack-in-the-pulpits, trilliums, shelf mushrooms, bloodroots and violets. I run the barefoot paths again, I find the deer track.

Among other pleasures, I have stood on hills sailed over with blue and yellow, and I have lived in treetops, birds always at my feet.

Cloud to ground, lightening to tree, the sky is dropping its apron full of rain. Let me tell how the blue walks backwards in the wind.



The Word Behind the Word

This morning I can remember a word that was lost last night, hidden behind some other words: shy child, slipping out of the photograph, leaving only the shadow of a shoulder behind, unnoticeable unless you knew she was there.

Lonestar. I said it and thought how different it was from the word Texas, which had smiled into my mouth last night and made me think of ten-gallon hats and steaks on a grill.

And how different also from Lodestar or Star of the North: not guiding, but lonely in its state of mind.

Transportation

This morning I heard a cicada, just the one, and later the drumming of muffled engines on the street above my eyebrows.

About ten, as if it came from within, I heard the reedy throttled steam-boat whistle out on the lake. The town

circled down the hill and settled behind my right shoulder. Noon, and heavy trucks were shifting gears along a sharp incline. I felt

them rumble up the roof of my skull, airplanes buzzing around one ear, and words leaving my mouth like yellow taxis.. literature is introduced by voices such as Alice Walker, N. Scott Momaday, Maya Angelou, Louise Erdrich, Gary Soto, Martin Luther King, Jr., Tillie Olsen, Dwight Okita, and Victor Hernández Cruz. Six Units explore universal themes and help students connect the literature they read to the world around them.

The Teacher's Guide features a wealth of response-based activities that deepen students understanding of the selections in the Anthology and longer literary works. Meaningful activities encourage personal and social discovery through a myriad of topics such as poetry, writing, classroom publishing, film critiques, debates, and more.

Finally, a supplemental annotated *Bibliography*, organized according to themes found in the *Anthology* and *Teacher's Guide*, present nearly 200 classic and contemporary entries by authors from a wide range of cultures throughout the United States.

Joyce Sutphen

Your Luck

When, after many luckless years, you stop entering contests and every sweepstakes envelope—even the ones that address you by your full and correctly spelled name—goes unopened into the trash,

then, of course, your number comes up, waits around a while, and goes on without you.

Little houses.

² Bear hugs.