



Lines of Defense: Poems

Stephen Dunn

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“[Stephen Dunn] has taken his place among our major, indispensable poets.”—*Miami Herald*

In his seventeenth collection of poetry, Pulitzer Prize winner Stephen Dunn confronts the lines we fight against and the ones we draw for ourselves. *Lines of Defense* poignantly captures the absurdities of modern life, expectations derailed, the lived life juxtaposed to the imagined life, and the defenses we don to make do. The poems in *Lines of Defense* are wry and elegiac, precisely observed and wide-reaching. As with the best of Dunn’s work, they take stock of the quotidian aspects of life, of the essential comedy of getting through the day: finding a lost cat; not being invited to a party; taking a granddaughter to a carnival. The lines of defense are the lines of the verse itself, as poetry forms a stronghold against mortality. This essential volume showcases a poet writing at the height of his powers.

From “Before We Leave”:

Where are we going?

It’s not an issue of here or there.

And if you ever feel you can’t

take another step, imagine

how you might feel to arrive,

if not wiser, a little more aware

how to inhabit the middle ground

between misery and joy.

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