

Orphans

Joan Cusack Handler

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From the founder of CavanKerry Press, this delightful memoir in verse bears witness to a complicated family history of Ireland's Troubles, devout Catholicism, fierce maternal strength, aging, death, bitterness, and love. That Joan Cusack Handler's poetry is flawless serves to draw the emotional tension of her carefully measured remembrances even tauter. She is the author of two other collections of poetry, another memoir, and the recipient of five Pushcart nominations.

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Partners in this loss, Dad attends
mornings, I afternoons, but Catherine
gives all: two weeks' vacation sleeping on the stiff recliner
waiting
for the words that will
finally tell her that,
yes, her mother loves her.
My sister suffers a deeper grief;
this is the second time she's lost our mother —
convinced from childhood that she was adopted, no
other reason for Mom's refusal. But I pose
another: Catherine's Dad's favorite.
For our mother, our father loving his daughter meant he loved
his wife less.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Summer 2016)

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