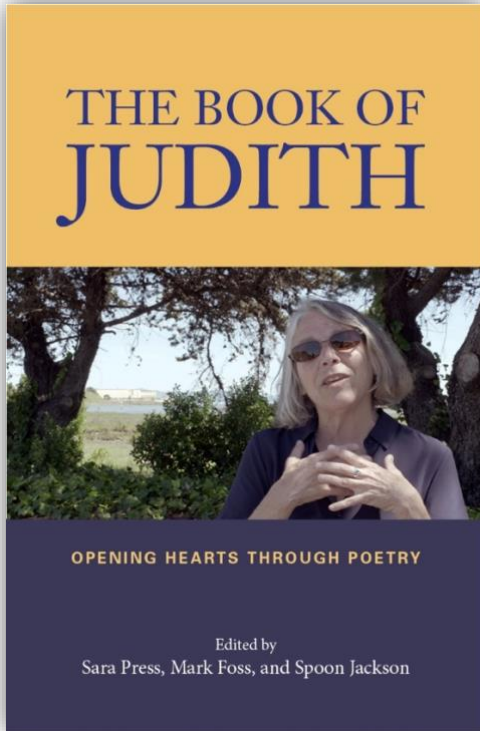




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Title: **The Book of Judith**
Subtitle: **Opening Hearts Through Poetry**

Editors: Sara Press, Mark Foss, & Spoon Jackson
Publisher: New Village Press
Distributor: NYU Press
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Pages: 176
Trim: 5.50 x 8.50 inches
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Subjects: Poetry, Art Education, Prison Issues & Reform

Friends and relatives of the late poet Judith Tannenbaum honor her legacy with a collection of personal writing that reflects, reminisces, and meditates on her teaching

An homage to the life of poet, writer, and teaching artist Judith Tannenbaum (b. 1947 – d. 2019) and her impact on incarcerated and marginalized students. The book presents different aspects of Judith through a collection of original poetry, prose, essays, illustrations, and fiction from 33 contributors who knew her. Each piece of writing spotlights a voice that Judith’s teachings once touched, and these combined memories help form a clearer picture of her legacy.

Five pencil drawings, inspired by those serving life sentences in prison without possibility of parole, separate the book into the following sections: Unfinished Conversations, After December, Looking and Listening, and Legacy. In Unfinished Conversations, contributors share their bond with Judith Tannenbaum through prose and excerpts from letters both real and imagined. In the second section, After December, poets reflect on the life, artistry, and legacy of Judith. The third section, Looking and Listening, focuses on the truth-seeking qualities that Judith brought to her work. The fourth section, Legacy, features work from winners of an award and a fellowship bestowed in her name.

ABOUT THE EDITORS



Sara Press is Judith Tannenbaum's daughter, who grew up listening to her mother's raw stories about teaching poetry in San Quentin. Sara witnessed how her mother shared her convictions about teaching, writing, and social justice. Continuing her mother's love of the natural world, Sara is now a professional conservationist for a land trust in Sonoma County, California.



Mark Foss is the author of two novels, *Molly O* and *Spoilers*, as well as a collection of linked stories, *Kissing the Damned*. His short fiction and creative non-fiction have also appeared in Canadian and American journals and anthologies. In 2020, his unpublished work *Borrowed Memories* was a finalist for Canada's Guernica Prize, which recognizes ground-breaking literary novels. In 2015, Foss became friends with poet Spoon Jackson. He lives in Montreal.



Spoon Jackson is a poet serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole in California state prisons. It was through Judith Tannenbaum's poetry classes in San Quentin State Prison that Spoon discovered the power of words. In addition to his own extensive list of published work, Spoon co-authored a double memoir with Judith, *By Heart: Poetry, Prison, and Two Lives*.

ADVANCE PRAISE

"The ecosystem left in Judith Tannenbaum's wake is a colorful network of creative minds, burning hearts, and artists who walk through walls, literally and metaphorically. Judith set the path for many of us working in prisons—her legacy is a gift, inspiration, and teacher."

— **Caits Meissner**, writer and Director of Prison and Justice Writing, PEN America

"Closing love's circuits and facilitating its flow was truly Judith's thing. All too often, women who nurture and bring forth the beauty in the world go unsung. Thank goddess, in this book, that is not the case."

— **Ani DiFranco**, singer, songwriter, founder of Righteous Babe Records and author of *No Walls and the Recurring Dream*

"*The Book of Judith* contains remembrances of someone who gave so much to so many. And it is more—a call to action, a call to community, and a call, in so many ways, to our soul-making. The people who were touched by Judith Tannenbaum give testimony to what one person can do — with persistence, patience, and passion. It is a diverse record with poetry, memoir, storytelling, and love letters. As Spoon Jackson said, Judith waited and 'found wisdom in silence' and then 'she ignited our fire.' The giant of California literature, Luis Rodriguez, was enlisted by Judith, in the work of prison arts and finally knew 'I am in her revolution, a rhyme warrior, who also teaches the forgotten ...' This book is in many ways a map to our own change as well as to transforming a brutal world."

— **Laurie Brooks**, Executive Director and Arts Administrator, William James Association

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