



# *Hanging On Our Own Bones*

POETRY BY  
Judy Grahn

Through seven narrative poems, Grahn weaves real-life conditions with goddess mythology to construct modern interpretations of lamentation in nine parts. Here Grahn's steadfast and rhythmic verse directs our eyes to crucial yet often buried tribulations of our times by critiquing white supremacy, honoring battered women, exalting the powers of menstruation, conflating all labor with birth imagery, and revealing lateral hostilities among potential allies—all in order to arouse a meaningful social critique.

## ADVANCE PRAISE

"*Hanging On Our Own Bones* collects over forty years of what Judy Grahn calls her 'ninepart poems,' and here clearly identifies them as 'lamentations.' All the poets I know look upon Judy Grahn with admiration and awe, convinced that she's leagues ahead of us, superhuman in her power and insight. But the poet of these chants of grief and frustration—and hope—is human for sure, torn by the same powerlessness and disgust at prevalent social conditions as the rest of us—it's only that she has lightning at her command—a magic of writing that illuminates, shreds darkness like confetti, and lets us see past the end of each page, past all our histories, a magic that lets us glimpse a previously unimagined future."

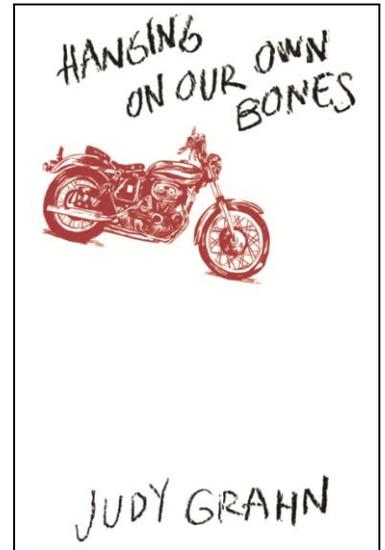
—Kevin Killian, author of *Impossible Princess*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Judy Grahn** is an internationally known poet, writer, and social theorist. Her work has won numerous awards and honors, including an American Book Review Award, two American Book Awards, a Stonewall (American Library) Award, the Bill Whitehead Lifetime Achievement in Lesbian Letters Award, and two Lambda book awards. She is currently Associated Distinguished Professor, Integral and Transpersonal Psychology, California Institute of Integral Studies in SF, where in the 1990s she earned her PhD in Integral Studies. She served as co-director for an MA program in Women's Spirituality for thirteen years, and for an MFA in Creative Inquiry for five years.

## ARKTOI BOOKS

**Arktoi Books**, an imprint of Red Hen Press, publishes high-quality literary fiction and poetry by lesbian writers. It was established in 2006 by Eloise Klein Healy. The mission of Arktoi Books is to give lesbian writers more access to "the conversation" that having a book in print affords. The imprint is named for the arktoi or "bears," young girls in the service of Artemis who lived for a year at her sanctuary at Brauron, east of Athens. *Hanging On Our Own Bones* will be the Arktoi's final book.



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**FROM “WOMEN ARE TIRED OF THE WAYS MEN BLEED”**

**ONE**

*“I know it’s irrational,” he said  
“but after the Loma Prieta earthquake  
I sat up in bed with my pistol  
loaded and cocked.”*

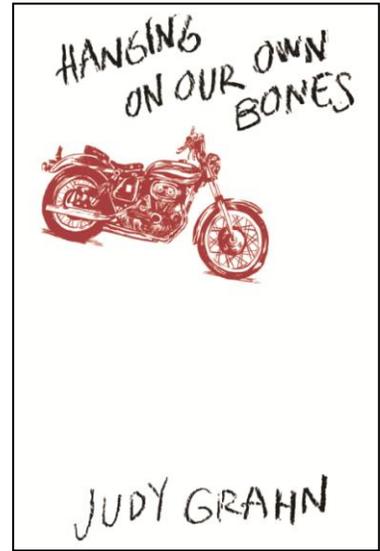
imagine a war  
of “shoot the sea—  
prevent tsunamis”

imagine if war were seen  
as dysfunctional behavior  
like child abuse or the many problems  
in families, and say, if we wouldn’t shoot  
our mothers and fathers  
even when they terrify or mortally wound us  
why would we drop bombs upon  
the possibly not even dysfunctional strangers?

imagine if war were seen as just as  
vengeful as any vengeful practices,  
like, say, after the hurricane we lock up  
everything that flies for having brought  
the bad wind.  
or we blow up the houses of those related  
to those supportive of those who live with the drivers  
who cause automotive accidents

imagine it’s ok  
to know humanity  
as we might know our dopey, dangerous, loveable  
amazingly adaptable and talented family  
even those whose love we continue seeking  
even those we have tortured or neglected  
even those who have hurt us, who oppose us  
even those mysterious as water

imagine it’s ok  
to know the earth  
exactly as a person.  
imagine Armageddon  
already happened  
now we’re into  
reconstruction.  
imagine a god named  
it’s ok.



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