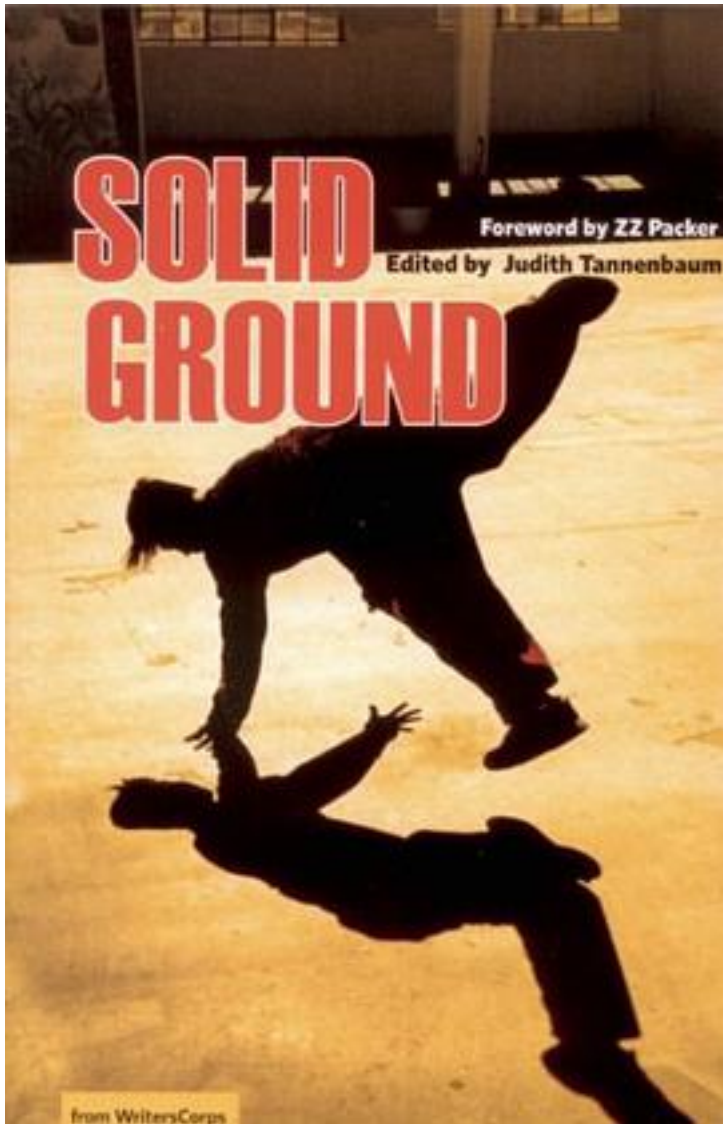


Solid Ground



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"Upheaval," "violence," "chasm" and "split." Such words describe San Francisco's Great Earthquake of 1906, and other temblors on the San Andreas Fault where the Pacific and North American Plates slide and grind. "Stress," "displacement," "turbulence," "rupture": these words also describe the lives of many contemporary youth who live along the metaphoric fault lines of immigration, economic inequity, turf wars, broken families and broken hearts. In commemoration of the 1906 earthquake, this volume gathers 150 poems written by WritersCorps youth over the past twelve years. These young writers have much to say about their individual experience, and about the world we share. They describe the stresses that impact their lives, and the tension that results. They express, as well, the strength and compassion born from their efforts to stay steady as the ground beneath them shakes. Since 1994, WritersCorps teachers have met with thousands of youth in public schools, detention centers, halfway houses, after-school programs, and many other community settings. Its teachers offer encouragement and skills to young people writing about their lives, visions, hopes and fears. So much is required of youth today. They are asked to grow into healthy human beings and productive citizens, often without being given requisite support and respect. To better the conditions our children face, we must first listen to what they have to say—to themselves, to each other, and to parents, teachers, police and presidents. This volume provides just such an opportunity.

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