

JODY ALIESAN

Jody Aliesan, poet, writer, and feminist, passed away on January 14, 2012, of ovarian cancer. She died in Vancouver, Canada, where she received her citizenship last July.

Jody lived a life dedicated to “telling the truth, and speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves. My community, my culture, is our common humanity. I aspire to speak for that.”

The most recent of her eleven books, *True North/Nord Vrai*, was published in 2007 by Blue Begonia Press. Her poems, stories, articles, essays, reviews and songs are found in international periodicals, anthologies and recordings and have earned grants and awards including a literary fellowship from the NEA. She served for many years as contributing editor for *The Raven Chronicles*.

Born on the Midwestern prairie in 1943, Jody earned her B.A. from Occidental College and her M.A. from Brandeis University. She was teaching in Alabama the year Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered, worked as media representative with the Vietnam Moratorium Committee in Washington D.C. and Chicago, and co-founded and directed the PCC Farmland Trust in Washington State. Jody also taught writing at colleges, universities, and conferences. Deeply involved in the second wave of feminism, she worked against war and for social justice all her life. A recent project was her blog, <http://asweweresaying.blogspot.com>. Her papers are collected at the University of Washington library.

Jody is survived by her brother, John Armstrong, his wife Judy, and their daughter Brecken Armstrong-Kelsey (Matthew Kelsey), and a great niece Gwyneth Kelsey, all of Altadena, California. Her many dear friends will keep in their hearts memories of her wonderful spirit and powerful voice. Remembrances may be made to *Greenpeace* or the *PCC Farmland Trust*.

“The poet is the wick in the lamp of the community. Not the oil, and not the flame; but the simple piece of cloth that unites the two so that the people can see their own light.”

from an old Irish manuscript