



# PRISONS HAVE A LONG MEMORY

## LIFE INSIDE OREGON'S OLDEST PRISON

*"Like a fish in a net, but still in water."* LE'VAR HOWARD

In 2019, Dan Wilson and Tracy Schlapp assembled the storytelling group Ground Beneath Us at Oregon State Penitentiary. For three years, they have mentored men in writing about life inside, using questions posed by middle and high school students as a springboard. Prison life requires a person to do difficult personal work and redefine oneself. This writing is testimony to that work. The result is a rich anthology filled with poetry, essays, and memoir that together present a picture of life at OSP and an exploration of the internal struggle to atone, find peace, and create community.

The social life of the book includes community members in towns across Oregon who will gather and listen to the testimony of the OSP writers and learn more about the conditions of our fellow Oregonians who are incarcerated. As part of the tour, editors Schlapp and Wilson will present in neighboring prison facilities for readings, conversations, and writing workshops. When possible, writers who have been recently released will join the podium. *Prisons Have a Long Memory* received support from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Oregon Humanities, the Oregon Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

### ABOUT THE BRIDGEWORKS OREGON TEAM

*Executive Director Dan Wilson is a musician/songwriter who leads **Luther's Boots**, the band formed to play concerts in prison. In 2019, he was awarded a Regional Arts and Culture project grant to produce **Darkened Road Ahead**, an album of his original music which he recorded with Luther's Boots. Two songs on the album include backup vocals sung by the Warner Creek Correctional Facility chapel band. Wilson lives and works in Portland, Oregon where he leads the band Mr. Wilson — playing his original music and the occasional Cash cover in local venues.*

*Creative Director Tracy Schlapp is a visual artist, writer, and founder of Cumbersome Multiples, a press and design collective. She collaborates with other artists to produce prints, artists books, and performances. She received a master's degree from the Breadloaf School of English, Middlebury College. In 2020, she received an Arts Matter artist fellowship and in 2022, she was awarded the Joan Shipley Individual Artist Fellowship by the Oregon Arts Commission. This fellowship is in support of a new body of visual work influenced by the incarcerated writers. She lives and works in Portland, Oregon.*

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