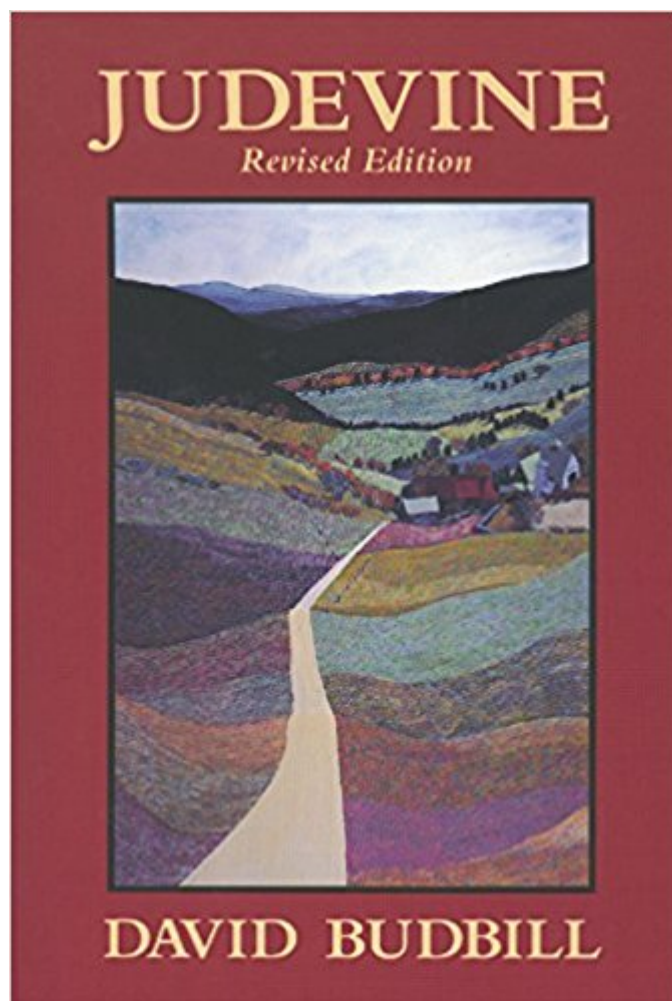


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# Judevine



## Synopsis

The stage is Judevine, an imaginary town in northern Vermont. This is a small stage, sometimes cold and darkened, but filled with characters so finely etched that they stand out as clearly as steeples against the sky. David Budbill plunges into the soul of New England to find characters and stories with lessons for anyone wanting to find the intrinsic nature of the region that has been called "all of America's backyard." These dark, lyrical, funny narrative poems portray the hopes and joys, pains and despair of people who have been bypassed or bruised by the twentieth century. Budbill has written a song of the down-and-out or overlooked, a song of the unsung. This anthem of the rural renaissance is microcosmic in setting, but universal in scope.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Judevine is an extremely various, wide-ranging collection of stories and memoirs--in effect a novel. With Chekhovian insight, Budbill uncovers, through the American lives of the people of Judevine, the whole extent of his concern for the world, for peace, for love and justice, for understanding. To do so much he must be very resourceful-lyrical, exalted, funny, sometimes mean, always colorful--and he is."--Hayden Carruth"Unlike ninety-eight percent of living American poets, David Budbill has a subject. Judevine is full of loving interest in other people and in what I still insist on calling the real world. Budbill both informs and moves and he is, in short, a delight and a comfort."--Wendell Berry

David Budbill is the author of six books of poems, eight plays, a children's book, and two works of fiction for young adults. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in poetry and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in play writing. His play, *Judevine*, has been produced in twenty-six states. His most recent book of poems is *Moment to Moment: Poems of a Mountain Recluse*, forthcoming in 1999 from Cooper Canyon Press. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, but has lived for several decades in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. For more information on Budbill and his work, please visit [www.davidbudbill.com](http://www.davidbudbill.com).

I first stumbled upon *Judevine* just over 10 years ago as assigned reading in a poetry class. I have kept it nearby ever since. The town of Judevine, its people, and their experiences are woven together beautifully. Characters resurface in various poems. Through the characters' eyes and Budbill's words, the outside world slows down. Budbill captures the beauty of the everyday experiences that in real life may be overlooked or dismissed. The descriptions are so vivid, heartwarming (sometimes heartbreaking) and grounding. *Judevine* can be relished in a single sitting or in bits and pieces--the poems seem to improve over time with each additional reading. It's a book I pick up again and again when I want to remind myself to slow down and appreciate the simple beauties that I sometimes forget to notice. *Judevine* is a part of some of my favorite moments. The slow ones--reading while sitting by a fire or in the woods. And the memorable ones--explaining my feelings about life and love to my husband by sharing the poem, *Raymond and Ann*. It was my "favorite" collection of poems when I first discovered it. And it still is.

David Budbill captures the essence of rural small town America where longstanding traditions and person to person relationships are still the ties that bind. *Judevine* is a fictional place in northern Vermont. Budbill has spent years in the area, and he describes it in lyrical detail. He weaves verbal snapshots into a tapestry that is magnificent. Hardy characters who some might push aside as poor, less educated, or thoughtless come to life as astoundingly profound individuals with a wealth of personality that is a fading but still wonderful characteristic. "Some people look at *Judevine* and only see decay because they don't remember necessity or need. The words are lost somewhere inside them, pickled in the sauce of affluence, atrophied in the tenure of security. They don't remember that the decay they see is need and need is the ground in which necessity gives birth to the imagination." *Judevine* is near the top of my list of all-time favorites.

i discovered judevine in a class that almost beat the warmth out of this spectacular poetry. But, fortuneatly i had the good fortune to hear david budbill do readings from judevine. I have been hooked ever since. His style is so friendly and engaging, and when combined with the rich texture of character and landscape, it quickly became my favorite book of poems.

Budbill's "Judevine" captures that poet's region and personas in the same way Masters' "Spoon River Anthology" or Beecher's protest lyrics embodied American regional consciousness. With each piece of the American quilt, and "Judevine" is one, we piece together America through literature. If you haven't heard read Budbill's poetry or heard it on "Writer's Almanac" you really are missing out on great poetry and great storytelling.

David Budbill's story-poems are beautiful, heart-warming (and occasionally heart-breaking). They are best read aloud, and that may be why he's also such a great playwright. I believe these characters really exist, although David swears he made them up. Judevine is a song cycle, an epic, perhaps, of real people and real life--ennobled but not sugared over. Rich with sound, image, humor, and love.

Judevine is a must have for any avid reader of poetry. Budbill has a unique ability to capture the momment and freeze it in time. You'll Love it! He has become one of my favorite writers.

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Judevine Judevine: The Complete Poems, 1970-1990

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