

MONEY FOR WOMEN/BARBARA DEMING MEMORIAL FUND, INC.
GRANTS AWARDED
JUNE 2019 POETRY AND NONFICTION



Barbara Deming (1917-1984) was a feminist, lesbian, poet, writer, and nonviolent activist in the civil rights, anti-war and women's movements. In 1975, when she founded the Money for Women Fund, Deming said, "In my life I've been helped as a writer to do my work. I think it's fair that I try to help others." Now a memorial fund sustained by generous contributions from donors and former grantees, Money for Women gives encouragement and small grants to individual feminists in the arts (writers and visual artists). Our address is PO Box 717, Bearsville, NY 12409. Our website is www.demingfund.org.

Submission periods for applications occur once a year: January 1-31, 2020, for visual art, fiction and mixed-genre, and again in 2021, for poetry and nonfiction. Judges in 2019 for Poetry were Crystal Williams, Gabrielle Calvocoressi, Cathy Che, Diana Delgado, Jewelle Gomez and Faith Shearin. For Nonfiction: Lise Weil, Elvia Rosales Arriola, Roz Kuehn, Tsering Lama, Alice Templeton and Genanne Walsh. Grants totaling \$20,170 were awarded to 21 women.

Traci Brimhall _____ NONFICTION
(Manhattan, KS)

Studies in Darkness

An essay on chasing eclipses will complete this collection of essays, which draws on a wide reading of women's history of mourning, astronomy, zoology, and personal experiences storm-chasing and skull-collecting. Total solar eclipses visible from North and South America in 2017 and 2019, respectively, offer opportunities "to bring home a narrative and images of a sublime encounter with darkness" by weaving personal "grief dreams" with research on 19th-century naturalist Mabel Loomis Todd and other historical female eclipse-chasers.

The last time you saw your mother alive, she helped you heal from your C-section. It wasn't what you planned, with your careful study on the benefits of natural childbirth, your doula, your pelvic carriage the midwife called beautiful. Your own mother's births had been natural, her milk abundant. She always said that being a mother was the one thing she did right, even if she didn't always do it well. At first, you'd asked her not to come after the baby was born. You didn't want the interference or the fights. Now you think about how lucky it was that you needed her then. Now you can remember how she jumped out of the car and held your son before she hugged you. How immediate and consuming her love could be.

How unfailing and stupid and true. She forgave you every time you let her down, but you can't forgive yourself. Then you might forget how, when the tide of hormones changed in your body, your mother held you down with blankets until the shaking stopped. When your son spit up bloody milk, she rubbed lanolin on the scabs on your breasts. She swaddled your son and sang to him while you cried.

Award funds travel expenses to continue research and experience the 2019 eclipse.

Catherine Esther Cowie _____ POETRY
(Kenosha, WI)

Yellow For Teeth

This poetry collection examines the violence inflicted on women by both men and women, the way violence flows from place to people and from one generation to the next, and the dysfunction that continues to impact present generations. The collection is set on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, whose national identity was forged out of a history of genocide, slavery and cultural diversity.

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from Violence

I am the thing that comes before and after,
from the scorched soil, I am the rising fence
of hibiscus and bougainvillea,

I am a new people who eat green bananas and
salt fish,
dance quadrille above dead men and women
who painted their faces red, ate
cassava and iguana. I was
a faithful servant to them too. From Waitukubuli
to Hairoun to Hewanorra they took many wives,
we bludgeoned many.

I give rise to a bastard tongue,
shoved English into many mouths until
Cesaire begged for a language for his own soul,
I am the thief who stole the letters, so
he is always hungry for the unutterable.
I am my hand pressed
against my mouth with an ear
filling with dirt,
a woman known never
unknowing.

Award funds travel expenses to St. Lucia for a period of two weeks to conduct research.

Edith Daly _____ **NONFICTION**
(*Gulfport, FL*)

An Old Lesbian Memory Quilt

This memoir focuses on the lesbianism and activism of an “Old Lesbian,” compelled by having lived through the dark days of oppression to tell her lesbian feminist stories. Activism and art show us our human commonalities: “I look, write, and read, to bear witness, to understand, to remember, to mourn, and especially to heal.” The text accompanies a twelve-patch fabric quilt, with thoughts, reactions and reflections revealed through embroidery, picture transfers, and piecework.

Between us we have two husbands and seven kids
whose lives will also be changed with that kiss. When
I let myself melt into the kiss, the next one, and then
the next, I meet them with my full self. I allow my life
to unravel, let that tightly knit lie, that is my life,

dissolve. It is like coming home... coming home to a
place that I have never been,
yet-I know is mine.
Slowly, through the years, with a sure awareness, I
had internalized the homophobia. All those “crushes”
that I had on girls, all those feelings that I harbored
for women, that
I had pushed away, denied, and disregarded as a
phase, now-they all make sense with
that one kiss.
The veil falls away. I know that this love feels right.
In the few days that follow, I set
about to begin building the life that feels good,
honest, and true to myself.

Award underwrites research, supplies and travel expenses to complete this project.

Liza Flum _____ **POETRY**
(*Geneva, NY*)

Learn from the Bones
(*working title*)

Learn from the Bones explores questions of public visibility and legibility in queer women’s families. The collection is built around poems that explore queer, nonmonogamous relationships--a family structure that is subject to twofold erasure in a heteronormative, mononormative world. The manuscript challenges easy assumptions about visibility and invisibility, showing, for example, how a vital, necessary movement like a bird’s wingbeat can make a living thing seem to disappear.

from Tableau

On the back porch of the faded ranch house
we watched hummingbirds at the sun-washed edge of
the woods
dive at each other (almost at us— _their loud
chirring made me flinch), then vanish in eucalyptus.
You reached out to both of us
and held my hand and your husband's hand,
as I paused, briefly quiet. As eucalyptus leaves, in
wind,
settle first in one direction, then another.

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**A hummingbird loses
body mass each time it rests, till it nearly dies,
so fast do its small reserves burn in torpor.
So what I know to be good
has a half-life, and fades with disuse
if it isn't always moving, searching out new nectar,
disappearing into the leaves above my head.**

Award provides living expenses to cover a month of dedicated writing time.

Havilah Giannetta _____ **NONFICTION**
(Astoria, NY)

The Reclamation of Havilah
(working title)

This memoir weaves themes of gender, sexuality, race, and spirituality as a young woman of color seeks to live out her spirituality and artistic calling on her own terms. Using religion to subjugate women is nothing new, but in this coming-of-age memoir, the writer's candor and unapologetic sense of humor help her face barriers of abuse, racism, and religious patriarchal prejudice, emboldening others to do the same.

These women! I'd never known anything like them. The lush, soothing voices; the full thighs flexing with strength; the rich ombre of their skin, from pure cacao to yellow cream; the spicy-sweet accents and concupiscent silhouettes that seemed to embody the spirit of N'Orleans itself. Not just food, but *enjoyment* of food; not just sex, but *enjoyment* of sex. Their hair ranged from straight silver to tawny *bouclés* to jet-black kinks; African, French, Spanish, and Native blood ran through their veins, which was what gave each face, each curve such distinct Creole flavor. They weren't "hot" per se; compared to them, "hotness" is adolescent. They weren't trying to be vampy or parrot some tired old version of "Lady Marmalade"; they didn't need to. For them, pleasure seemed more elemental, simultaneously more elegant and more carnal, than anything push-up bras or pick-up lines could provide. Their bodies whispered "sex" more than "beauty," and although I didn't like it, I saw myself in them more than in my own mother.

Award covers travel and expenses required to complete the memoir.

Ynestra King _____ **NONFICTION**
(New York, NY)

***Barbara Deming Reconsidered: Feminism,
Nonviolence, and the Politics of Intersectionality***

Barbara Deming's life and work need to be remembered. This study will focus on the relationships between feminism, peace, anti-racism, gender nonconformity, and nonviolence as they evolved in her thinking and in her embodied practice. As an artist, a lover of women, a poet, and a theorist/activist in radical nonviolence, Deming exemplified a seamless commitment to feminism in the arts and in the politics of nonviolent activism.

In person, as she listened intently, Barbara's facial expression was always one of simultaneous bewilderment and amazement. She was the most focused listener I have ever known. As she listened she cocked her head sideways, and focused her piercing gaze on the speaker — always looking and questioning. She was a master practitioner of simultaneous radical humility and militant opposition. Her pageboy haircut would swing to the side, her bangs framing her pale, bony face. Grace Paley once said of Barbara that she taught us to listen. Also that she was stubborn. Maddening even.

Award funds wheelchair-accessible travel and lodging to continue research.

Alyse Knorr _____ **POETRY**
(Denver, CO)

Wolf Tours

This novel-in-verse imagines a wilderness-touring company run by a pack of anthropomorphized wolves in order to examine issues of eco-tourism, cultural appropriation, and popular representations of the West. As a hybrid form, the project builds on a long history of narrative, surrealist poetry while also engaging with non-traditional forms and innovative approaches to character and tone.

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from Day Five

**Footsore and cranky the clients
finally arrive at the picture from the pamphlet:
a vast secret wolf vista**

**where all seems suddenly clearer.
Sorrow, it seems, was never the problem;
sorrow was the answer.**

**The clients feel like Cheryl
Strayed or Elizabeth Gilbert or both, for
they have Found Themselves,
found what was worth the money.
Apart, mouths open to better smell the vista,
the wolves oscillate between**

pity and envy.

Award covers expenses to allow dedicated time to complete the manuscript.

Kristin Kovacic _____ **NONFICTION**
(Pittsburgh, PA)

Essays

In a feminist appropriation of the tradition of the classic essay, the short essays in this collection excavate the small moments of a woman's life that intersect with big ideas. What are the wages, in universal knowledge, that a woman garners in her particular, yet traditional roles—mothering, partnering, teaching, caregiving? This knowledge is “as subtle, rich, and important as the philosophy of centuries of self-satisfied men.”

**So here is where irony disappears, where what you
were expecting is exactly what
happens. And here is where I began to stop feeling
like an imposter.**

**Cowering with my students behind a pile of desks in
a corner of my classroom, lobbing copies of Mary
Shelley's *Frankenstein* at a man trying to slaughter
us, I was a real teacher, and my students were real
boys and girls—all of us in very real danger,
crosshairs on our chests.**

**And I thought, if we're behaving as though we expect
a real gunman is going to come into the classroom,**

**we should write as though we expect our words truly
matter—that our writing might push the world, as
George Orwell put it, in a certain direction. Or, as
Audre Lorde, dying of cancer, put it: that we might
save our lives by using our lives in the service of what
must be done.**

Award funds a one-month retreat with the goal of drafting a short essay each day.

Aurora Masum-Javed _____ **POETRY**
(Washington, DC)

The Body is an Archive

With a lens both nuclear and cosmic, these poems examine the tangled relationship between home and state. What model of collective justice might we find through our own familial healing? Women in family situations have long fought to escape circumstance, class, country, even each other as mothers, as daughters. “I want to write us a path toward; I want us to rekindle the power in our kinship.”

from Portrait of My Mother as a Mermaid

**When dawn broke and you rose
from the slip slit silk of my legs,
that oceanhome inside me, I felt
I'd been right to leave my country
of fish, of family, if only for this,
for you, a birth emerging.**

**How surprised I was to see you
finless, a girl
of feet. Oh my leglimbed thing,
how will you know me?**

**How will you remember
what I miss:
my brothers, the chime of seabells,
whales wailing their prayer, coral
red as the canal you came from,
my father's stories, fish who looked
me in the eye, the thunder of space,
knowing we're all just small things,
swimming.**

Award funds living expenses to allow the completion of the book.

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Sara McCartt-Jackson _____ **POETRY**
(Louisville, KY)

Calf Canyon

Calf Canyon challenges the master narrative of abuse and examines abuse's lasting effects on the body, memory, marriage, and unmotherhood. The manuscript examines how we all struggle to leave our abusive pasts, while never completely leaving. These poems are deeply rooted in place (landscape, homescape, culturescape, bodyscape) as they explore abuse, resistance to it, and its effects on women.

from | Estuary |

**How do I tell my unborn daughter that once
the riverbed sang in ice thaw and rainswell,
sang with the groan and splash of a glacier chunk
pushing through the North Pacific Drift
 goaded by the tidal bulge dragging from the
poles,
the edges of low tide delicate as paper wasp wings,
 the sea depths pulled up and swollen like a
lens
as if this world itself were a visual organ, pulsing or
squinting**

**sang with the groan contracting through the oval egg
tidewaters,
 a pool forming somewhere in arctic black
sand,
 an anemone sprouting in its wrackline,
fleshy-pink tentacles waving the sound along
 toward tributaries dilating like a beating
artery**

Award underwrites living expenses while completing the manuscript.

Joanne Mulcahy _____ **NONFICTION**
(Portland, OR)

Marion Greenwood: A Portrait

The National Museum of Women in the Arts describes Marion Greenwood as “arguably one of America’s greatest twentieth-century women artists.” But aside from being recognized by experts in mural painting of the 1930s, she is little known today and the evidence of

her life is fragmentary. Interesting questions arise: “How is artistic reputation formed? What had erased hers? Did being a woman make a difference?”

How do you quicken the dead? In an essay about historical novels, Hilary Mantel quotes St. Augustine: “The dead are invisible, they are not absent.” Richard Holmes calls the biographical quest “a haunting.” Trained as an ethnographer, I tried to reframe the process as an archeological dig, comforted by the rationality of turning evidence to story. But problems gathered like dust. The shards don’t fit together, the digging never ends, and the deeper strata hint at something ineffable – the spirit that animated the body.

Award covers transportation and expenses for a research trip to New York.

Hannah Oberman-Breindel _____ **POETRY**
(New York, NY)

Brides

Brides considers love, the solace and joy people can find with each other and in community. The manuscript asks questions about the need to create meaning through something permanent in the face of personal, national, and other kinds of loss: Is permanence a delusion? “And if nothing permanent exists, then what is the point of making or building anything; of, in a certain sense, trying to stay still?”

from The Final Game of the Season

**My hands make cups. I am trying
to catch fireflies, their tiny lights. On this field,**

**muscle is its own kind of faith. My sister catches,
then carries the ball. The audacious shadows of oaks**

**stretch across the grass. She outruns them.
The women celebrate in a pile on the goal line,**

**as the sun sinks, finally, behind the bleachers. This—
here, now— is what my sister will think of when
asked**

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**about happiness. The mud, the scramble,
the sweat, the try, how for once, what she wanted was
just**

at the end of a field, how her body took her there.

Award covers living expenses for a free summer to complete manuscript.

**Khadijah Queen _____NONFICTION
(Denver, CO)**

Not Anyone's Hero

This memoir—part travel narrative, part history of women at sea, part coming-of-age story—unmasks myths about what it means to serve one's country. In the late 1990s, a 21-year-old black woman joins the US Navy to earn money for college and flee difficult family circumstances, but finds herself in even more traumatic situations among strangers far from home. Surrounded by men, she tries to maintain her dignity but ends up falling into an abusive relationship while seeking protection from near-constant sexual harassment.

Female officers began to serve aboard submarines in 2011, more than a dozen years after I first dreamed of being a sonar technician on board a sub. I wanted it badly, foolishly, with so much fierceness I could hardly stand it.

But I was laughed at by my superiors, told that women would be a distraction and a hazard underwater for that long with a bunch of men. I felt so much anger at being denied opportunities because men couldn't keep their hands to themselves, furious that I was mocked for even imagining the possibility. Too bad technology and laws had advanced in the 200 years since Hannah Snell pretended to be James Grey; I might have done some pretending myself, just so I could get some goddamn work done.

Award funds a trip to the archives at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, for research.

**Candice Salyers _____NONFICTION
(Hattiesburg, MS)**

***Transformative Belonging:
Portraits of Feminist Dance Artists at Work***

Transformative Belonging explores the ways in which the dance practices of artists across the US carry the legacies of feminist thought and activism as well as embody possibilities for the future. The book contains written portraits of women of various generations, identities, and geographical locations, each with her own unique dance practice. At the conclusion of her chapter, each featured dancer offers a creative exercise for the reader.

Softly stepping backwards onto the stage, her hands gently cup an unseen source of light. The audience, still busy with their conversations, barely notices the beginning of this dance, but the subtle power of Rulan Tangen's presence quickly draws the entire room into her movement. Although she is clearly the center from which this dance offering emanates, she has invited a host of other souls, other lights, other dancers, other movements onto stage with her. I soon learn that this act of bringing people together, of inviting and including, is as much a part of her artistic work as any particular movement. Melding percussive strikes of her arms and slow sensual swimming motions of her cupped hands, she progresses in an almost imperceptible way from one side of the audience to the other.

Award funds expenses to complete five additional portraits within the next year.

**Susanna Space _____NONFICTION
(Santa Fe, NM)**

***Regarding Your Absence
(working title)***

This memoir offers a critique of second-wave feminist "liberation." A middle-aged daughter uses family papers and letters to trace the consequences of her mother's decision to abandon their family in order to claim a life of her own design. As the rigid, mid-20th-century forces of conformity facing her mother become clear, the

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daughter realizes that the mother's decisions have been costly but also courageous and necessary, and that her own life is circumscribed by ideals of womanhood.

My mother had all the advantages, which she won by being attractive and, perhaps more importantly, doing what she was told to do. She had hopped on a train at 16 that shuttled her from high school valedictorian to Smithie to marriage to a Harvard and Yale grad. She did work acceptable for women, first shelving books at the Yale Law Library alongside other the wives of other ambitious Yalies, later substitute teaching at my elementary school, which she hated. Was that a kind of oppression, or a kind of privilege? It was both, surely, but the emerging and dangerous dreams of my mother — a woman raised to measure her value by her ability to conform to the role of wife and mother — to have her own apartment, to not do her husband's wash, as Didion wrote, childish? Was she, a woman who did not come from wealth, but whose family money would take care of her after she left her husband, oppressed?

Award underwrites expenses required for the completion of the manuscript.

Adrienne Su _____ **POETRY**
(Carlisle, PA)

Substitutions

Scattered throughout various neighborhoods in the 1980s, Atlanta's early Chinese Americans families strove for local acceptance but had little political awareness of themselves as a group. In a place that had no term for anything other than black or white, they were lumped in with other Asians and Asian Americans who came during the rise of Japanese automobile industry. Now, with the aging of the original generation and the geographic dispersion of subsequent generations, that world is vanishing. This manuscript strives to capture the community created by their isolation.

from The Lazy Susan

**The lazy Susan, in antiquity, would have been a fire.
Drinking all night, the parents never get drunk.**

This is an ancient brew, with nuts, seeds, fruit to fuel the hours, to light a center.

The tea dispenser's orange light reminds us: they're in the dining room, laughing in Chinese while we play Scrabble or Monopoly out here. They're telling stories we don't bother to record because the nights are long. We've heard them before.

We don't comprehend the punchlines. They're tired. They live this way because of us.

We live this way because of them.

We don't comprehend the punchlines. They're tired because the nights are long. We've heard them before,

telling stories we don't bother to record.

While we play Scrabble or Monopoly out here, they're in the dining room, laughing in Chinese.

Award funds expenses for domestic tasks to free up time to complete book.

Mariya Taher _____ **NONFICTION**
(Cambridge, MA)

***The Hope We All Share:
Ending Female Genital Cutting***

Since 2015, the author's organization Sahiyo has collected hundreds of survivor stories from women survivors of female genital cutting (FGC), in particular, from the Dawoodi Bohra community, a Shia Islamic sect from India. The author is a member of that sect and a survivor of FGC. This non-fiction book examines FGC both from the author's perspective, as a leader of the anti-FGC movement, and from the perspective of survivors.

It had to be done, I was told, to decrease my sexuality. The idea of a promiscuous woman was forbidden, an uncut woman would become just that — a lover of sex with multiple men, something considered haram. My mother told me this...

But, in my reality, my mother had me undergo it because she loved me. She was taking care of me.

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She always took care of me. During childhood when I coughed, when snot dripped from my nose, when I whimpered because my body ached with fever and chills, she cared for me. The devotion and love she expressed when I was sick was of the same breed that led her to take me to a dilapidated apartment building where I would undergo my khatna and afterwards have her comfort me.

Award underwrites fees for writing space at the Writer's Room of Boston to complete manuscript.

Alison Wellford _____ NONFICTION
(Allentown, PA)

Essay Collection

This essay collection depicts the devastating effects of abuse and sexual assault against women through the ages. It includes passages collaged from texts such as Ovid's "Metamorphoses," anonymous Whisper app entries, and an account from a Kosovo war-crime victim. These experimental texts use a collective "she" to speak for many women and woman-identified individuals in a larger, historical context, and to give voice and agency to women as survivors of sexual trauma.

#

She takes the shears and shaves off her curly red hair. She sells it in the mail. She can almost become a man, or better, nothing at all.

#

People are smiling in the restaurant. She sees another woman at the back who almost looks like her. The woman laughs. She touches her own face, her smooth black skin, unsure of who she is anymore.

#

She no longer looks in mirrors. She never thought it would happen this way. Blood makes strange patterns on the skin. Sometimes it looks like lace.

Award funds travel to the British Museum Library in London, the Pepys Library in Cambridge, and other archives to research 17th-century texts.

Emily Withnall _____ NONFICTION
(Missoula, MT)

Fracture

Fracture is set in the high mountain desert of northern New Mexico. In demonstrating the similarities between the way courts handle domestic violence cases and environmental legislation, this memoir reveals the United States justice system's complicity in upholding the rights of those who already retain the most power. Through parallel narratives about violence against women and violence against the earth, *Fracture* asks whether a woman or community can ever truly heal.

Surrounded by prickly pear cactus, I do not often have reason to think of the sea. But the sea is where part of this story started millions of years ago. What was once kelp, algae, sea snails, and shells drifted down to the ocean floor and settled in among the other detritus. As the seascape changed over thousands of years, the layers of organic marine matter were buried deeper and deeper, compressed by layers of sand and rock and mud. Preserved like dried flowers between dictionary pages, pressed between "resurrection" and "ruin." If only alphabetical order could be reversed, if only we could sustain our delusion and denial.

Award funds travel, research and living expenses to complete the manuscript.

Annie Woodford _____ POETRY
(Deep Gap, NC)

Where You Come from Is Gone

Southside, Virginia, has experienced an economic upheaval that exposes the vulnerability and pathos of the place and its people. In a landscape of abandoned factories, these poems reveal the violence of natural resource extraction—only in this case the natural resource is human labor, taken in no small part from women who spent their lives tending looms and sewing machines, raising children in trailer parks, or fending off economic insecurity in the shadow of foreclosed and decaying homes.

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from All Over the South Today
Fables of Faubus

**This is how mass graves begin.
It is only an illusion
that the dirt lifts itself.
In reality, each shovelful of earth
is an act of will or coercion.
Soil weighs about 2,200 pounds
per cubic yard, depending
upon moisture content and the rate
at which bodies are assimilated.
All over the South today, ghosts
of white men wipe milk
from their mouths.
They squeeze the hands of girl-children
until all the little bones break.**

Award funds living expenses during the completion of the book.



I think the only choice that will enable us to hold to our vision. . . is one that abandons the concept of naming enemies and adopts a concept familiar to the nonviolent tradition: naming behavior that is oppressive.

Barbara Deming

Munera Yusuf _____ **POETRY**
(Toronto, Ontario)

My Notoriety as a Minority

This book colorfully glimpses of what life is like for a Muslim, lesbian woman in hopes of guiding a marginalized community into empowerment. This young black woman uses the word “notoriety” to reclaim herself and her visibility. The pain of growing up in shelters, in hospitals, and in homelessness has brought this book to light, and makes *My Notoriety as a Minority* a megaphone of everyday life, everyday hurt, and everyday love.

from Qabiilkeyga (My Tribe)

**We are
Strong bodied
Broad shouldered
Nappy headed soldiers
From fighters to caretakers
Protecting babies with sheets wrapped around our
backs
Our waist and hips bare more than any westernized
knapsack**

**For we are women
Baring tens of thousands of rounds per minute
Shooting truth into the chests of anyone that dares to
step
Across the fine lines of respect and disregard**

**Standing tall in the name of nurturement
Protect those who come from blood so thick
No one can wreak havoc**

Award underwrites living expenses to allow time for the completion of the book.

Please visit our website www.demingfund.org for more information, and like us on Facebook for updates on current and previous grantees, application deadlines, and information about Barbra Deming and her legacy.