

# MONEY FOR WOMEN/BARBARA DEMING MEMORIAL FUND, INC.

PO BOX 717, BEARSVILLE, NY 12409

## GRANTS AWARDED AUGUST 2021 NONFICTION & POETRY

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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 through small grants to feminists in the arts (writers and visual artists).

Submission periods for applications occur once a year: January 1-31, with poetry and nonfiction awarded in odd years, and visual art and fiction/mixed genre in even years. Judges in 2021 for nonfiction were Daisy Hernandez, Kendra Allen, Jenny Bouilly, Dawn Davies, Jamilah King, Andrea Pino, and Cheryl Savageau. For poetry: Gabrielle Calvocoressi, Nicole Terez Dutton, Dana Levin, Carol Moldaw, Cynthia Oka, and Alice Templeton. Grants totaling \$19,950 were awarded to 19 women.

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**Stephanie Anderson** \_\_\_\_\_ **NONFICTION**  
(Boca Raton, FL)

***The Green Wave: Women, Climate Change, and the Regenerative Food System We Need***

*This book will combine literary journalism, memoir, and research to trace how women across the nation are building resiliency into our food system, implementing regenerative agriculture on the land, training and investing in the next generation of producers, and creating an inclusive and sustainable world for all of us.*

My desire for firsthand stories is why I am heading to Against the Grain, a diversified, regenerative farm in western North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains owned and operated by Holly Whitesides. Meeting Holly is like encountering a version of myself in another life. Years before buying this farm, Holly worked on a spread in South Dakota, the same state I grew up in; she knows the smell of the prairie after rain, the ripple of wheat in the wind, the otherworldly cold of a hailstone. This is what I might look and sound like, I think to myself, had I become a farmer like generations of my family before me.

**Award will fund travel to regenerative farms and ranches operated by women.**

**S. Erin Batiste** \_\_\_\_\_ **POETRY**  
*Hoard* (Brooklyn, NY)

*Hoard interrogates the effects of 1980s and 1990s capitalism on the Black American middle-class family. Using confessional poetry, storytelling, and mixed-memoir alongside erasure poetry, archives, and other ephemera, this collection traces the poet's matrilineage, childhood, and various griefs to examine Black femininity and feminism, inheritance, nostalgia, and mythology.*

from "Reincarnation"

How we would long for salty  
potato salad and polite weather  
talk and window shopping  
and wandering at festivals seeking  
solstice oils and geode pendants—  
declared *non-essential* now.  
How before, we'd spend every  
five-day cycle yearning to be  
returned to our small worlds  
and cramped apartments, until  
we became reduced to them.

**Award will fund living expenses and travel to Louisiana for ancestral and genealogical research.**

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**Erinn Batykefer** \_\_\_\_\_ **POETRY**  
*Noiseless, Patient* (Pittsburgh, PA)

*This hybrid project explores American womanhood through the lens of horror and the supernatural. It also represents a formal departure in the poet's work, trading the lyric for the rhythms and narrative tools of prose poetry and flash fiction.*

from "La Necropoli dei Bambini, Umbria"

The vampire of Lignano is a child buried with an egg in her mouth. The egg is limestone, a rock jammed between her teeth. There are marks as though she gnawed it like Easter candy. Assume she's a girl, because this is how girls are treated. She was ten, and this was 1500 years ago, but some version of this always: the footbinding and collaring, the mutilation; some version of this now: raven claws and toad bones. Cauldrons of ash. Sacrificial puppies with their necks snapped, and a stone

where a tongue should be. Stones weighting her hands

**Grant will subsidize childcare and wages during an artist residency.**

**Chris Belcher** \_\_\_\_\_ **NONFICTION**  
*Pretty Baby* (Los Angeles, CA)

*Pretty Baby is a queer coming-of-age memoir that follows a girl as she navigates sex, gender, and coming out in working-class West Virginia, through her adulthood in Los Angeles, where she renegotiates gender and sexuality, this time as a professional dominatrix.*

I suspended, effortlessly, and closed my eyes, knowing that a woman should never close her eyes alone at night in a strange man's pool. I was afraid of him, not because of anything he had done or said, but because I knew I was supposed to be. Which made closing my eyes, letting my ears sink beneath the surface to muffle the radio, feel like a dangerous game. It was gratifying, knowing I could take such a gamble and win. Like people who use heroin—only once. We all have to find out what we're made of.

**Grant will pay for a short writer's retreat to work on revisions.**

**Lory Bedikian** \_\_\_\_\_ **POETRY**  
*Apology to the Body* (Tujunga, CA)

*In this manuscript-in-progress, moments of illness, death, dying, motherhood, and working-class issues are seen through the lens of a daughter of immigrants from Lebanon and Syria, all of Armenian descent.*

from "Apology to the Body"

I'm looking to cleanse regret. I want to give you a balm for lesions, give you evening primrose, milk thistle, turmeric, borage,

feet moving toward a language of trees, hands deciphering sediment, steady rhythm back in the pulse, the breathing you knew

before you were born. Believe me that we began together and I will mend each sheath of myelin, reverse the dark that grows behind my eyes.

**Grant will be used for submission fees.**

**Helen Betya Rubinstein** \_\_\_\_\_ **NONFICTION**  
*Monochrome with Misbehavior* (Brooklyn, NY)

*This project is a collection of essays on gender and the irregular.*

And maybe what the marshmallow test measures is a tolerance for uncertainty, as children balance the certitude of one against the potential for two. Which may be a generous way of describing how waiting to hear back can become preferable to hearing back itself: because the waiting is when you can grind your wheels, your carnival-ride wheels, your bleary, neon, wild-eyed wheels—

See, maybe hope is always fear-fueled. A kind of violent running from the present. Refusing to sober up or come down, you stay high on potential, on the future, on "will."

**Grant will support research for the project, including books and travel.**

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**Marci Calabretta Cancio-Bello** \_\_\_\_\_ **POETRY**  
(Coral Gables, FL)

***What Will You Do With This Gift of Blood***

*These poems explore the dynamics between the transracial adoptee, the first mother, and the adoptive mother. They interrogate absence, violence, division, archetypes, saviorism, and reparations to restore agency and justice to first mothers who have been demonized and separated from their children.*

from "Origin / Adoption"

My first mother placed inside my mouth  
a thick tongue / a curled tongue  
prone to quick rolling music  
and bramble-berried consonants  
I would never speak to her.  
These days, on this other hemisphere  
I twist my second mother's words  
from my tongue as I do  
the fruit from my neighbor's tree:  
geu-rhim / cham-eh / / fig and yellow

**Award will cover expenses for research and time to write.**

**Lily Chang** \_\_\_\_\_ **NONFICTION**  
(College Park, MD)

***I Write My Name on My Body: A Memoir***

*This memoir collection describes a woman's experience of her body as foreign, enigmatic, and disconnected since girlhood as a result of the trauma of violence. The project uses creative forms, styles, tones, and voices to interpret the effects of systemic violence on a woman's experience of her body.*

If you could, you would step out of yourself, the cold alien film crumbling like a cloak. You think you would be used to it by now. The comments used to be bigger, pulsing with laughter, given dimension by pointed fingers. Always the boys in the playground, always there to correct you. They catch you every time, keep you silent and still, bound by what they think a girl should look like. You are made a spectacle. You're one of the spectators yourself, shaking your head, mouth pinched in disgust.

**Grant will offset living expenses.**

**Tammy Delatorre** \_\_\_\_\_ **NONFICTION**  
***Big Island Girl*** \_\_\_\_\_ (Hermosa Beach, CA)

*The author writes about her childhood on the Big Island of Hawai'i. When her mother is sent to prison, the narrator must adapt to life with a father who hunts, fishes, and runs a marijuana farm. Eventually, she must break free to escape her heritage of poverty, addiction, and violence.*

*I am coming for you. My mother might have said those words that night she went after him—the bearded man, the one she took to her room all those nights. He would come over after I'd gone to bed. She carried me from her room—the only place I could fall asleep—to the room across the hall. In the sticky Hawaiian heat, I'd wake to their loud moans and groans in the middle of the night and sit straight up in bed.*

**Grant will support travel to Oahu and research.**

**Danusha Lameris** \_\_\_\_\_ **POETRY**  
***Untitled Third Book*** \_\_\_\_\_ (Santa Cruz, CA)

*Whereas the poet's last book explored desire against the landscape of grief, this book of poems turns toward the natural world, its mysteries, and its solace—monarchs feasting on milkweed, the slippery bodies of tadpoles, the chewed off leg of a deer left in a backyard by a lion. The world itself as a first language.*

"Nothing Wants to Suffer"

-after Linda Hogan

Nothing wants to suffer. Not the wind  
as it scrapes itself against the cliff. Not the cliff  
being eaten, slowly, by the sea. The earth does not want  
to suffer the rough tread of those who do not notice it.  
The trees do not want to suffer the axe, nor see  
their sisters felled by root rot, mildew, rust.  
The coyote in its den. The puma stalking its prey.  
These, too, want ease and a tender animal in the mouth  
to take their hunger. An offering, one hopes,  
made quickly, and without much suffering.

**Grant will provide time and space to complete the book.**



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**L. Renée \_\_\_\_\_ POETRY**

***And the Dust Still Sings* (Columbus, OH)**

*And the Dust Still Sings documents the experiences of the speaker's maternal ancestors, from Virginia tobacco fields to West Virginia coal mines. Composed of poems, lyrical prose, and artifacts, the collection probes inheritance—namely what is held by and missing from traditional archives on Black Appalachian life, asking how to make meaning from these revelations.*

from "Genealogical Trip to Pulaski, Virginia"

In Virginia, it's common to see the dead  
mayflies skip across pavement like flat rocks tossed  
sidearmed at a stream's surface, then lodged

in sidewalk cracks, among orphaned pebbles,  
sticks and sprigs of grass. I'd rather look  
at uncountable rows of tobacco leaves  
which leave me breathless, dizzy even. All those  
green ears flap like an elephant's hello, hang woody

scents heavy through my car vents like next-of-kin  
hugs hugged only at family reunions.

**Grant will allow travel to libraries, archives, and cultural centers across Virginia and West Virginia, for genealogical research and oral history collection.**

**Thao Thai \_\_\_\_\_ NONFICTION**

***The Knife's Edge* (Lewis Center, OH)**

*This nonfiction book explores the relationship between myth and motherhood, madness and idolatry. It weaves archetypes of motherhood into the writer's own story to create a work that feels shameless and inevitable, a celebration of all the unsaid things in a mother's heart.*

Once, in the roasting heat of a summer night, I  
stayed in our Florida room, reading by the light of a  
single lamp. My mother slept in her room, blankets  
pulled over her head. I heard a light tap on the door. I  
went to it. My hand on the knob.

"What are you doing?" my mother hissed from  
behind.

Her hair hung over her red eyes, desperation  
clinging to her.

"Nothing."

A shadow vanished into the trees. We stared at  
the retreating form, hoping we'd imagined the danger.  
That silent violence.

"I heard you calling for me," she whispered.

**Award will allow time to write by funding childcare.**

**Jane Wong \_\_\_\_\_ NONFICTION**

***Meet Me Tonight in Atlantic City* (Bellingham, WA)**

*Meet Me Tonight in Atlantic City highlights the stories of working-class and low-income Chinese immigrants, particularly women. How can you "make do" when you don't have much? This book contains interwoven essays on immigration, diaspora, gendered expectations, inherited trauma, class and labor, and subversive pride.*

The scene continues for Jin Ai, but not for us: at 6 a.m.,  
my mother wakes up from a dream in a language she  
doesn't understand yet. *Hey gorgeous, hey pretty lady,  
my baby.* She walks past our sleeping forms—consumed  
in white down feathers—and pulls on her heels. With  
purpose, she takes the elevator down to the first floor.  
She walks into that red velvet world and follows what  
her heart does not desire. My father is whiskey-eyed and  
half-asleep—a drowsy raccoon hunched over the  
blackjack table. His shirt is unbuttoned one too many  
and his wallet is an open window. My mother clenches  
her fists and imagines raising them to the false sky  
above. Her eyes swirl like a crystal ball. No one will  
ever know if she's crying. My father doesn't say her  
name or look up. "One more game." Dozens of floors  
above, we are still dreaming. *K.O. K.O. K.O.*

**Grant will support the completion of the last two essays in the book.**

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**Mariya Zilberman** \_\_\_\_\_ **POETRY**  
*Field Guide to Impossible Light* (Detroit, MI)

*At a time of immense personal, political, and global unknown, the poems in Field Guide to Impossible Light take questions and the very act of questioning as their central subject: When does a question liberate us? When does it condemn us? And when must we answer with silence?*

from "Against Temporality"

A woman asleep on the bus  
holds a succulent. The slow rise of her chest  
makes me responsible. I polish my dusty tongue,  
chisel initials into the woodblock.  
Shrill song of the windows. Trees shedding layers  
as I shroud in them. Outside, a bloody  
buck drags itself into the brush. Bag of fertilizer  
spilt on the dining table.  
Innocent murmur of the anxious heart: I wake  
in a cold room, dress with the lights off.

**Grant will pay for expenses during revision of the manuscript.**

**Preeti Vangani** \_\_\_\_\_ **POETRY**  
*Home Science* (San Francisco, CA)

*Home Science is a collection of poems exploring familial strife to unwrap how a conservative upbringing impacts daughterhood, wifehood, sexual relationships, and the notion of freedom. The book dives into the freest versions of women we want to be, the desires we censor or are signaled to conceal by patriarchy.*

from "Self-Examination"

In the brain there is noise and there is someone feminist. In the bed there is silence. There is so much about silence I don't know yet. Does silence like to be spooned? Omitting, revising, humoring are on the guest list to gobble up pain in bite sized portions. In the brain I remember to forget the number of strokes, his hand a hammer, his hand pressing down the back of my head, cerebellum. A structure that coordinates balance. In the brain, a tightrope I make her cross. In the brain I am in control. Do you ever have thoughts of harming yourself, she asks.

**Funds will be used towards revising, completing, and workshopping the manuscript.**