

WINNER ANNOUNCED THIRD ANNUAL LOUISE MERIWETHER FIRST BOOK PRIZE

“Lyrical and smart, with appropriate undercurrents of rage.” —Emily Raboteau

“*The Names of All the Flowers* poignantly builds up to its heartbreaking loss with loving details. . . .
This book has me all stirred up.” —YZ Chin

NEW YORK, NY—The Feminist Press, *TAYO Literary Magazine*, and distinguished judges YZ Chin, Glory Edim, Tyler Ford, Natalia Oberti Noguera, Brontez Purnell, Emily Raboteau, Melissa R. Sipin, and Jamia Wilson are honored to award the 2019 Louise Meriwether First Book Prize to Melissa Valentine for her memoir, *The Names of All the Flowers*. Transporting readers to 1990s Oakland, Valentine shares the grief, despair, and rage she experienced when her nineteen-year-old brother, Junior, was murdered. Writes Valentine, “The story connects one tragic Black-on-Black death to a collective grief for all Black boys who die early deaths.” The book will be published by the Feminist Press in the summer of 2020.

The Feminist Press and *TAYO Literary Magazine* established the prize in 2016 to honor landmark African American feminist author Louise Meriwether and her 1970 classic, *Daddy Was a Number Runner*. One of the first American novels to feature a young Black girl as the protagonist, the book inspired the careers of writers like Jacqueline Woodson and Bridgett M. Davis, among countless others. The Louise Meriwether First Book Prize annually seeks the best debut work by women and nonbinary writers of color, and awards them a publishing contract at the Feminist Press and a \$5,000 advance prize.

“A stunning, evocative, and timely debut by a writer who carries the heritage and history of this country in her veins. . . . She will leave you breathless,” says Melissa R. Sipin, *TAYO Literary Magazine* editor in chief. “Valentine’s words on grief and trauma will stick with me for life,” explains writer and activist Tyler Ford. “This is a book I know I’ll return to time and time again.”

The Names of All the Flowers will be published during FP’s fiftieth anniversary year, a time for celebrating the legacy of feminist literature and looking toward the future. “Louise Meriwether’s enduring story of resilience and hope in the midst of adversity continues to inspire the next generation of writers to own their narrative power and transform culture,” says Jamia Wilson, executive director of the Feminist Press. “Melissa Valentine continues in Meriwether’s iconic tradition.”

The inaugural prize was awarded in 2017 to writer YZ Chin for her short story collection *Though I Get Home*, followed in 2018 by Claudia D. Hernández, who won for her memoir *Knitting the Fog*.



Melissa Valentine was born and raised in Oakland, CA. Her nonfiction has appeared in *Guernica*, *Jezebel*, *Apogee*, and *BLACKBERRY*, among others. Valentine is a graduate of the MFA program at Mills College. She currently lives in Brooklyn, NY.

The submissions period for the 2020 prize will be open March 28, 2019, through June 28, 2019. For submissions guidelines, visit FeministPress.org or email louisemeriwetherprize@gmail.com.