

## THE FEMINIST PRESS AT CUNY & TAYO LITERARY MAGAZINE LAUNCH LOUISE MERIWETHER FIRST BOOK PRIZE

NEW YORK, NY—The Feminist Press and *TAYO* Literary Magazine have partnered to launch a new publishing prize for debut women/nonbinary writers of color. In the spirit of both organizations' missions to amplify silenced voices, they introduce the Louise Meriwether First Book Prize. The prize honors trailblazing writer Louise Meriwether, author of *Daddy Was a Number Runner*, and seeks to find the next dynamic voice in literary fiction or memoir.

The contest is open from June 2nd, 2016 to July 31, 2016 and welcomes submissions from women and nonbinary writers of color. All submissions will be reviewed by a panel of judges that include Feminist Press and *TAYO* staff and allies. The top five submissions will be read by literary luminaries Tayari Jones and Ana Castillo, in addition to Jennifer Baumgardner, executive director and publisher of the Feminist Press, and Melissa Sipin, editor-in-chief of *TAYO*.

Upon hearing conversations within the literary community about its lack of diversity, Jennifer Baumgardner felt the press should respond accordingly. "We are an activist publisher. Thus, if we agree that the world needs more diverse books, we have to do something about that," she explains. Recognizing that the two biggest obstacles to publishing a debut book are finances and author visibility, the Feminist Press will offer both funding and publishing support to better lift up a debut writer whose work may not otherwise have the means to reach a wide audience.

"The First Book Prize, one of the first dedicated to only women/nonbinary writers of color is a step forward, and a huge one at that. I believe the answer to the equity problem in publishing is education, is critical consciousness, is—quite simply—decolonizing our literature. This is a First Book Prize that honors just that: publishing and celebrating one of the very best works by a woman/nonbinary writer of color whose book and spirit embodies a kind of freedom we must always fight for," adds Melissa Sipin.

One winner will be announced in February 2017 and will win \$5,000 and a publishing contract with the Feminist Press.

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