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For all inquiries, please contact Jisu Kim: [jisu@feministpress.org](mailto:jisu@feministpress.org)



“A rare page-turner of a collection—startlingly sensitive, oozing with compassion, and full of both gentle and explosive revelations about human nature, forgiveness, and the grace we sometimes fail to offer ourselves.”

—NANCY JOOYOUN KIM, author of *The Last Story of Mina Lee*

“The type of storytelling that captivated me in my youth and made me long for more of its kind.”

—LUPITA AQUINO, book influencer

## ANNELL LÓPEZ WINS FIFTH ANNUAL LOUISE MERIWETHER FIRST BOOK PRIZE

**New York, NY**—The Feminist Press and distinguished judges Margot Atwell, Lupita Aquino, Bridgett M. Davis, Nancy Jooyoun Kim, and Cassandra Lane are honored to award the 2023 Louise Meriwether First Book Prize to Annell López for her short story collection *I’ll Give You a Reason*. López’s winning manuscript explores the lives of immigrants and first-generation Americans in the Ironbound neighborhood of Newark, New Jersey. In her debut work, López explores race, political unrest, sexuality, religion, body image, Blackness, colorism, gentrification, and more, delivered in vivid prose. The book will be published by the Feminist Press in spring 2024.

The Feminist Press established the award in collaboration with *TAYO Literary Magazine* 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 seeks the best debut work by women and nonbinary writers of color, and awards them a publishing contract with the Feminist Press and a \$5,000 advance prize.

“López possesses an uncanny ability to get inside the heads and hearts of all the players—opponents and allies alike—in stories about immigration, sexuality, gentrification, and that ever-elusive American dream,” said judge and 2020 Prize winner Cassandra Lane. Adds writer Bridgett M. Davis, “*I’ll Give You a Reason* thrums with richly drawn portrayals of Dominican immigrants rarely visible in our society. Annell López makes us see these complex, tough women and girls in their full humanity. Even as they chase an elusive American dream, these characters fight back in the ways they know how. And we can’t help but love them for it.”

All five Prize winners—YZ Chin (*Though I Get Home*), Claudia D. Hernández (*Knitting the Fog*), Melissa Valentine (*The Names of All the Flowers*), Cassandra Lane (*We Are Bridges*), and López—will appear on a panel to celebrate the Prize at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) conference in Seattle, WA on Friday, March 10.

**ANNELL LÓPEZ** is a Dominican immigrant. She is the author of the short story collection *I’ll Give You a Reason*, forthcoming in 2024 from the Feminist Press. A 2022 Peter Taylor fellow, her work has received support from Tin House and the Kenyon Review Workshops and has appeared in *American Short Fiction*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Brooklyn Rail*, and elsewhere. López is an Assistant Fiction Editor for *New Orleans Review* and an MFA candidate at the University of New Orleans. She is working on a novel.

The Feminist Press at CUNY ▪ 365 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5406 ▪ New York, New York 10016 ▪ 212-817-7915

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