

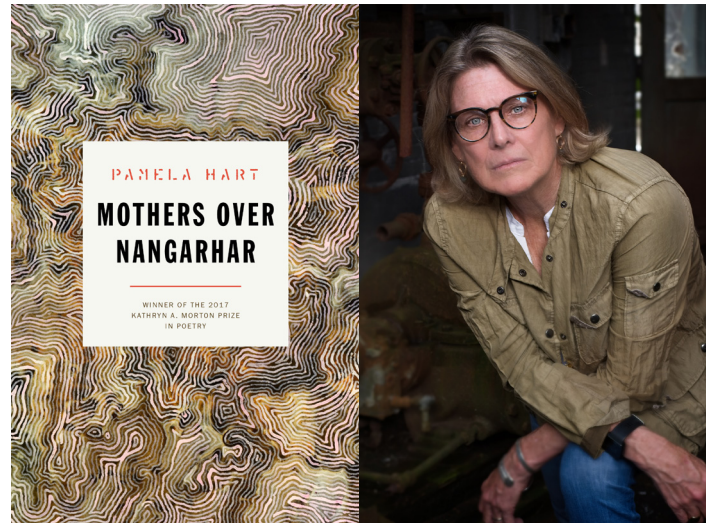


MOTHERS OVER NANGARHAR

PAMELA HART
READER'S GUIDE

TWELVE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why do you think most people don't know much about the military?
2. What do you think about the military-civilian divide after reading this book?
3. How important was the presence of research versus imagination as you read this book?
4. What is the journey this book travels?
5. Why has the home front experience been overlooked in most literature and popular culture, particularly in the work being written about the recent war?
6. As you read this book, what poems if any resonated with your own personal experiences—whether you are connected to the military or not?
7. What are your thoughts on the idea that people we love sometimes choose paths that seem dangerous or outlandish? Has this happened to you or someone you know/love?
8. After reading the book, what new understandings do you have of how a family member—spouse, child, parent—has lived during the past nearly two decades of war?
9. What poem or poems raise new questions in your mind about the idea of war?
10. What do you think of the choices some of the



family members make as coping strategies?

11. What would you do if your family member decided to serve?
12. Why did you decide to reflect on and include the experiences of people other than yourself in this collection?

WRITING EXERCISES

Writing after Maggie Nelson's *Bluets*

1. Identify your project or topic.
2. Detail a direct encounter with that thing. Be as descriptive as possible.
3. Name the first person you can think of who is missing from your life.

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The Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, supports Sarabande Books with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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4. Write down something you never told them. (A confession, an idea, a story, etcetera.)
5. Remind that person of something you did together. Tell the narrative.
6. Is there a connection between the thing and the person? Explain.
7. Write down the first thing and then write the next five words that come to your mind in an associative chain from one word to the next.
8. Now pick one of those things on the list and write about an encounter you had with that thing.
9. Repeat previous steps.

News Poem

1. Pick a real news headline as the title of your poem.
2. Now begin to write a narrative poem about the situation that provoked the headline.
3. Go back and read what you've written. What else does it remind you of? (The first thing that comes into your head.) Start writing about that.
4. Go back and read what you wrote about the second thing. What does that make you think of? Write about it.
5. Is there a way to get back to the first story? Is there something else you missed in the first story? What images connect across each of these stories? How are the motives of the characters different? How are they alike?
6. Try to work your way back there.
7. End the poem with an image from the first story.