

P A M B E R N A R D

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## Blood for Seed

*But now, for us, wild Winter, and the need  
Of sowings for new Spring, and blood for seed.*

—Wilfred Owen, “1914”

The Romans fought in light of summer’s jade,  
with festivals to cleanse their soldiers’ guilt.  
And after Hastings, bishops bade a year of fasting  
for those who killed a man, forty days  
for wounding one. Yet earth now stinks  
with the cruel trade in boys, no wiser  
than their horses hock-deep in the mud of Flanders,  
or shell craters of Verdun—boys caught  
in the grim slash across the face of Europe  
called the front. Along that bleak proximity,  
a persistent illusion stands, between  
righteousness and bone-headed decency.

What to do with all we know? And if  
blood’s the seed, into what will we grow?

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**PAM BERNARD**, a poet, painter, editor, and adjunct professor, received her MFA in Creative Writing from the Graduate Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College, and BA from Harvard University. Her awards include a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry, two Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellowships, the Grolier Prize in Poetry, and a MacDowell Fellowship. She has published three full-length collections of poetry, and most recently a verse novel entitled *Esther*, published by CavanKerry Press. Ms. Bernard lives in Walpole, New Hampshire, and teaches writing at Franklin Pierce University, as well as conducts private workshops.