

Barbara Forever

Every Ocean Hughes  
and Barbara Hammer

We can live only in the event's reverberation.  
—Edmond Jabés

I met Barbara Hammer and Every Ocean Hughes (who then went by Emily) on the same night in 2011. From my journal, dated May 8th of that year:

... last night went to the Kitchen for Emily Roysdon's *A Gay Bar Called Everywhere*. A collective theater experiment with a large cast of friends and acquaintances. Was very piqued and moved—various representations of clichés and pathos and themes of 'our community'. Barbara Hammer homage to Claude Cahun. Vanessa Anspaugh and Aretha Aoki's duet re: passive-aggressive friend-love, many more vignettes. Met Emily at Julius after and shared a cab home—new friend? I admire her work, and felt comfortable talking about the show with her, turns out she crashed at E's right after I did.

Reading this eight years later, I am touched by the scare quotes I placed around 'our community'. I was relatively new to the scene in 2011 and likely felt insecure claiming membership to what was, and still is, a fluid, multi-generational patchwork of queer, feminist artists and writers living in or passing through New York City. 'Lesbian mafia' (a term equal parts endearment and critique) was often bandied about. In my memory, *A Gay Bar Called Everywhere* was a fun hyper-performance of the selfsame social milieu that would carry on—only slightly less self-consciously—at the gay bar called Julius immediately after the show. In an attempt to succinctly define 'our community', overlapping structures of interpersonal support spring to mind. We are each other's collaborators, professors, lovers, landlords, coffee dates, critics, employees, icons, and audiences with a common cause—unwieldy as it may be—to steward our marginalized lineage and marshal an ethos of our own design. Hence, Every's casting of Barbara Hammer and Barbara's loving pantomime of Claude Cahun.

Every and I both began interview-based collaborations<sup>1</sup> with Barbara during the last months of her life, once she had publicly announced that she was in palliative care. The providentially crossed roots and branches of our projects have formed, as Every wrote in an email to me on the 7th of January, 'a wonderful triangle'. During my conversations with Barbara we would find ourselves seamlessly workshopping her answers for Every:

Jan 6, 2019 (43:36:00)

BH: One of the questions that Every's asked me about is, "What work from the queer community have you learned about dying from?" And [clears throat] this isn't, I don't know, I don't think it's the queer community. But the books that I've read about dying. Well. Um. [sighs] So you see my brain is faster than my mouth! Uh. The great

poet and writer of all time, *A Room of One's Own*.

CF: Virginia Woolf.

BH: So Virginia Woolf and her book on health and illness.

CF: I love that book so much, *On Being III*.

BH: *On Being III!* [coughs] It's been republished, with her mother's writing. Oh what's the name of the press, it's a friend of Janlori's and it's here, and I had hoped to look for these books yesterday, um, to get into being able to answer Every, and I wasn't well enough. But, there's a queer [laughs] person who precedes me. But there was no talk of sexuality in her illness.

'So you see my brain is faster than my mouth.' Throughout their correspondence there are instances in Barbara's writing that appear to be typographical errors or grammatical mistakes. Language loosened for Barbara toward the end of her life, and she had moments of trouble recalling words and names. It was a minor aphasia, but it frustrated Barbara immensely. As with so many aspects from her lifetime of work, she refused to conceal the facts of the matter. Barbara felt an imperative to document and share what dying looked and felt like for her. 'A queer death is a community death', Barbara writes in response to Every's question, 'What would a queer death mean to you?' '... As one leaves, one leaves with more clarity of the unknown, a sharing of the process, a little bit more revealed.'

Barbara died on March 16, 2019. On the 27th of March, Every came to northern California to attend a death doula workshop, located less than two hours from where I live in rural West Marin. We planned an afternoon pilgrimage to a small house that Barbara built and inhabited in the 1960's in an area, halfway between my home and the death doula workshop, called Joy Woods. It rained heavily as Every and I drove through the village of Bodega, listening to a recording I had made on my phone of Barbara recalling how to get to a place she hadn't set eyes on for fifty years. Her voice—puckish and gravelly, weary and warm—guided us left off the highway, across a small creek, past a corral, into the redwoods. We slowed but did not stop before what was undeniably the house that Barbara built. The lights were on and someone was home. We continued, climbing steeply up a ridge until we came to an intersection wide enough to turn around in. Joy Way crossed Fitzpatrick Lane. Coincidence has played a subtle yet pronounced role in the creation of this work, which is less a "work" than it is a resonance, ongoing. The correspondence between Every and Barbara that is presented here provides more than an artifact from the end of a life, more than a peek into their friendship. It is a prolongation of Barbara's frank generosity—an openness that engendered amities and communities during her lifetime as well as now, in her wake.

1. I am completing a book that Barbara and I began work on in the fall of 2018. It is about her experience of dying, and will include selections from her recent journals, transcripts from a series of conversations she and I had in New York City in January 2019, some reproductions of her artwork, and a brief afterward by me.

Sun, Oct 28, 2018 at 2:36 PM  
From: Every

Dear Barbara,

I've just watched your recent [Whitney lecture](#) on YouTube. I'd heard about it and I was really wishing I could have been one of the many faces looking lovingly at you from the audience, but I'm happy at least it was recorded.

Hi. It's been a long time. I've been a bit quieter the recent two years, traveling less, doing a lot of therapy and generally taking care of myself. Recent months I've felt a new energy and am excited for it. I'll be working on some big new projects and I feel ready.

Two years ago my grandmother died. She was like my sister and my mother too. And I helped her die. I cared for her over several weeks of her letting go, delivered morphine under her tongue in the final hours, and played her favorite CD as she slipped away with me lying on the floor beside her bed. The experience was profound. I'd lost several very good friends when I was young and I was never able to deal with the grief. So when Enid passed, and I was able to be present with her and for her death, the grief came to me strong. It still does. My recent name change to Every Ocean Hughes arises from the courage and energy in taking Enid's name, Hughes, as my own.

It also started me on what has now been two years of research which I've been calling *Queer Death* and it will be the basis of the new performance and exhibitions I'm planning for the next three years. I've been addressing it from many angles, even attended a death doula workshop last April and am taking another this March.

So of course your lecture jumped out at me and I so wish I could have been there. Like always, your power and charm just overwhelms. It's glorious, truly. It teaches. Your ability to ask for and weave this life event into the pleasure of your life is beautiful. And your bond with Florrie is a horizon I hope I'm able to meet with my own love Lawen. Thank you for modeling so many joyful powerful horizons.

I wonder, Barbara, if you would let me interview you. I think we could have a great conversation and I'm sure I could find a great place to share it. Probably many.

I send you a lot of love.  
Every

Mon, Oct 29, 2018 at 8:47 pm  
From: Barbara

Dear dear Every,

How I love your new name! I would indeed be honored to have a conversation with you via the interview format.

Our work seems to be dovetailing in some ways at this time.

Your sweet grandmother and I know how dear she was and still is to you was so lucky as you were to share this special time together. I receive all the love you send and look so forward to our Every/Barbara dialogue.

Barbara, sending the love right back! And to Lawen too!

Wed, Oct 31, 2018 at 11:53 am  
From: Every

Excellent!

My first concern is how we can proceed, as I won't be in NYC anytime in the near future.

How would you feel about me writing out some questions as a start? You can reply and we can take it from there. If you prefer audio, we can switch to speaking after the first round, or mix it in . . .

xx Every

Wed, Oct 31, 2018 at 10:41 pm  
From: Barbara

Yes, that sounds good. I'm not too well so not too many at a time. Also, [I will be in L.A. until Nov. 12](#) so after that would be best.

xB

Thu, Nov 1, 2018 at 1:20 pm  
From: Every

Hi B, here are some questions to begin, answer at your leisure.

Safe travels to LA.

xxx Every

1. What in your artistic life prepared you to have a conscious death?
2. What in your queer life prepared you to have a conscious death?
3. Do you have an aesthetic vision for your final days? What you'd like to be hearing, smelling, seeing?
4. How have your senses changed as you are approaching and accepting death?
5. During your recent lecture at the Whitney Museum you spoke about the primacy of pleasure as motivation in art making and relationships—have you found any pleasure in preparing for death, living with dying?
6. What could the idea "queer death" mean to you?

Thu, Nov 1, 2018 at 1:21 pm  
From: Barbara

GREAT!!! QUESTIONS!

Wed, Nov 21, 2018 at 9:45 pm  
From: Barbara

Dear Every,  
You are not far from my mind and I just want you to know I've been overwhelmed with new and wonderful things but the writing is waiting for me in a special interior hangout and I can't wait to begin.  
I'm grateful you are in my life,  
Barbara

Mon, Dec 3, 2018 at 8:12 pm  
From: Every

Hi Barbara, Hello from Los Angeles.  
I send love and look forward to your answers/replies when they come.  
xx Every

Mon, Dec 3, 2018 at 9:10 pm  
From: Barbara

Thanks, received!  
I'm feeling lousy. One other outstanding thing I still have to finish. It's hard when you're not able to work but 3 hours a day and that's pushing it. But your questions hang waiting for me with delight as it gives me a new way to think about my health/death. I actually have been writing since 2015 on my demise but not yet through a queer eye though mine is always so queer it's funny I could say that, but I think you know what I mean. Yes, I saw you were in LA and already told my friend [Amy Shoulder](#) who is in NY town right now before she returns.

thank you  
b

Thu, Dec 6, 2018 at 6:45 pm  
From: Barbara

Dear Every,  
I am so excited to have worked with these invigorating questions this morning. Please, in exchange, tell me about your grandmother's death. Love always and what's next? And is it OK if I put some of this—my answers—into the booklet I am writing?  
See attached  
B

EOH: What in your artistic life prepared you to have a conscious death?

BH: My artistic life has prepared me to want a conscious death due to my longstanding practice of wanting to know everything, face the unknown, discover the hidden and reveal disguise. From the beginning I never accepted that my lifestyle should be an anomaly or something to hide. It was a breakthrough for me to come out as a lesbian in 1970 and I thank the feminist movement at that time for making lesbian visibility a "thing." I feel similarly about giving back. If I can reveal or if not that, walk a reader, a viewer through the processes of dying then I am laying the possibility for a door to be open by those who read and might consider a conscious death to be incorporated into their lives.

EOH: What in your queer life prepared you to have a conscious death?

BH: As my life and artwork have so closely followed one another, so too does my response. It isn't an everyday common articulation of death and our thoughts around this final happening that color our discourse. Until recently death is a subject to "not talk about," to ignore, or worse, to deny. As queer folk have made headways into uncovering numerous previously hidden topics, we have prepared ourselves to also run hand in hand with death talking truth to power and speaking hidden voices. I think those of the AIDS generation began this discourse and one so quickly goes to the powerful writing and installations of David Wojnarowicz for leading the way.

EOH: Do you have an aesthetic vision for your final days? What you'd like to be hearing, smelling, seeing?

BH: I might have a vision but it is total fantasy I believe for the true discourse happens in the pain and suffering that I have not yet discussed fully. I have the feeling that creating a vision will have nothing to do with what I expect to be the hard reality of lying in bed being so drug addled that I'm scarcely aware of the music playing the color of the sky through the distant window, nor the visiting friends. Having said that I will dip into complete fantasy with warm summer air on my skin as I repose in nature looking across the yard to the whinnying horse in her corral as my dog lay by my side. I am embraced by my lover of forty years who has encircled my shoulders with her strong arm all the while giving me a tender kiss from time to time. The sound of nature entertains me as the crickets in the garden, the new peepers in the pond, and the scurry of little creatures underfoot divert and suffice. I take in one last full and deep breath if I'm able and expire surrounded.

EOH: How have your senses changed as you are approaching and accepting death?

BH: There are dramatic changes in my senses as I continue into the thirteenth year of living with cancer. The dimensioned appetite jumps out as in the past I loved about everything and would eat so much and

with gusto that I could be considered chubby. It is a challenge now to find a food that interests me and furthermore that interest can change in a second and it no longer appeals.

My hearing seems more acute as loud sounds such as the television being too high for me irritate and become a focus that I can't ignore. Walking down the street a slam of a car door can make me jump a little. I hear or used to hear a month ago the sweet sparrows from the expansive planted deck across the street.

I think my sense of smell is intimately connected with my desire or lack of desire for food. I have just begun to work with medical marijuana and I remember yesterday when I heated some rugelach in the oven to remind them that they were still fresh and I so enjoyed the smell of warm wheat that filled my studio.

EOH: During your recent lecture at the Whitney Museum you spoke about the primacy of pleasure as motivation in art making and relationships—have you found any pleasure in preparing for death, living with dying?

BH: I have found pleasure during various moments of living recently in palliative care with cancer. Just yesterday morning after taking the drugs (time release Tylenol and low dose morphine) and waiting an hour or so I felt genuinely happy. I was sitting on the couch near the window where I hang out every morning and I just felt good. I remarked on this to Florrie as it isn't often the case. I think this feeling of well being lasted a few hours. Even now, spending over an hour at the computer thinking about my responses to your questions I feel "good enough" but I wouldn't call that "pleasure." I ask for small favors now and when I can answer a question with lucidity I call that pleasure.

EOH: What could the idea "queer death" mean to you?

BH: What makes a death "queer"?

Queer death is defined by the people around me both physically and virtually. It is defined by the people who have made my life "worthwhile" through their expression of the meaning my work has made in their lives.

A queer death is a community death. As one leaves, one leaves with more clarity of the unknown, a sharing of the process, a little bit more revealed. The following queer deaths of others yet to come are made more rich from this sharing as they enlarge the beginning efforts are making towards definition and exchange.

Fri, Dec 7, 2018 at 9:32 pm

From: Barbara

Dear Every,

I want you to know my responses to what I wrote you yesterday. Upon reflection in the evening I thought these answers that I was so proud of momentarily sound like a standard interview format and do not reveal our friendship nor an ongoing project. With that in mind I had these other thoughts: ask me the same questions every week (and me to you). I can imagine the changes that

would occur given more reflection or plain old frustration eventually. . . Other ways of carrying on—skype now that you are closer in time value, non verbal visual communication (drawing, random words presented as visuals?).

I'm sad it took me so long to get into the project but now I'm there! I'm curious to know—are others involved? Who? What other ideas have you come up with beyond the interview format? Have you envisioned this as a presentation? A book? An online event(s)? I am very curious and excited to be working together!

Barbara

Sat, Dec 8, 2018 at 12:29 am

From: Every

Hi Barbara.

Very nice to get some replies and questions for moving forward. I am currently an artist-at-large with Camden Arts Centre (London) and have spoken with them about publishing the conversation online, which they are happy to do. I have had ideas beyond that, but I thought we could wait to see what happens first, what format(s) make most sense. Mostly, I'm just very interested in us writing back and forth and getting you to talk about your experience. I prefer the writing interview format because I want to be bold and clear, looking at death and palliative care with you, and I feel that can happen in writing more than in conversation where we soften ourselves for relationality. But I can be flex. We could skype if that sounds better/easier to you. You tell me! It is your experience! Here are some new questions. Let me know how these questions are for you and if you want to pursue other formats.

xxxEvery

7. What have you read or seen that has impacted your experience of dying consciously?
8. I know you've worked on organizing and placing your archive for many years, can you talk about that decision and process?
9. Do you estimate your remaining alive time or do you have a strategy for not looking ahead?
10. What has changed in the month since I first asked about your sensorial experience?

Sat, Dec 8, 2018 at 1:02 am

From: Every

Hi B.

I just sent this reply to you but I'm having further thoughts. Let me think again and get back to you again. Pause

E

Tue, Dec 11, 2018 at 8:59 pm  
From: Barbara

Hi Emily,

Further clarification. In June of 2015 I started seriously and regularly keeping a journal of my illness and experiences around it. It has grown to something like 25000 pages now—in case I'm wrong on that, it would come to about 70 or 80 pages so far. An editor has approached me and we are engaged. She has sent a few pages of it a short time ago to a publisher who upon inquiry seemed interested. I haven't heard back. I have been thinking of a chapbook or small personal work.

When your suggestion came along I was thrilled as I so admire your approach to living and making. When I got the "gay inquiry" I was even happier as I hadn't addressed queer death/dying/living in my writing per se.

Now you write about online publishing or something else?

I would love to include our back and forth in my writing if you agreed and editor thought it worked. If you don't agree, I would want to address some of your questions without rewriting what I've already written to you, but reframe and rewrite. My problem is I'm not doing so well and time to write is a premium.

Please get back to me with above answered.

xxB

Sat, Dec 15, 2018 at 2:47 am  
From: Every

Hi Barbara,

I also took pause to reflect on your response prior, that this wasn't giving space to the "ongoing project" (yours and mine) or our friendship. I was questioning my tone—which I saw as wanting to platform you and your experience and to use plain language in a direct address to death and dying. But alas, there is much more going on, so I've been thinking about tone and form.

I think yes include our exchange, of course. I can imagine it working as it moves from a diary form to an interview/relational form. And I'm happy to appear in your journal, as a character in your days who reached out to you to discuss this. :)

If you answer another round I'll work on form.

xxxEvery

Fri, Jan 4, 2019 at 10:30 pm  
From: Every

Happy New Year Barbara,  
I hope this finds you well.

Where do we find ourselves? We are doing another round of answers and then re-grouping I think . . .

Thinking of you,  
xxx Every

Fri, Jan 4, 2019 at 11:11 pm  
From: Barbara

Talking about you today! I have the 2 answers to send you. Started today with reading your questions to Corrine Fitzpatrick who is editing the book on dying.

You were going to share your grandmother's death with me in whatever way you like.

I'll send you the answer on archiving tomorrow. I need to find my references for the other.

Don't have too much time left.

Xx

Fri, Jan 4, 2019 at 11:17 pm  
From: Every

Hi Barbara,

Yes, you are right on all counts. I'll attach [this text I wrote](#) last month about my name change. It also addresses a bit my grandmother Enid's death. And it is the first piece of me getting closer and into this project.

Barbara, you wrote "don't have too much time left." It took my breath away. I hear you.

Can you also write to me about that?

LOVE  
Every

Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 10:28 pm  
From: Barbara

Love your writing!

Questions about what Queers inspired me. Virginia Woolf on Illness. Did you see the recently published book on her essay plus one by her mother. Will find [title](#).

feel better—and was approved by R (name retrieval becoming hard) before they moved to Brooklyn, but Florrie didn't like that plan.

I read about an artist that gave birth in Microscope Gallery a few years ago by now—was researching to see if anyone died in such space.

Now I've reconnected with [Carolyn Lazare](#) (she's my friend—how could I forget for an instance?) who will publish on health issues in forthcoming magazine edited by Corine Fitzgerald who tells me she wrote for your [Vienna Secession show](#). Corrine and I are working together on a new piece on death and other issues. I'm very excited about this. I was drawn to C's writing from [an essay on a health conference in Aspen](#) where she wove in queer issues of AIDS impressive to me.

About two years ago I read books about people dying that were on nytimes best seller list. Atul Gawande On Being Mortal and another about a man losing his breath. He was a doctor recently graduated and young. [If I find I'll reference.](#)

Suppose there's much on AIDS but didn't research personal stories (DW of course) but not deeply.

I have been in Palliative care since last May but now after the Whitney lecture has the decline begin (I knew that's why I rushed for the date). I don't know how to tell people rather than directly and I don't want to go online and be overwhelmed.

The archive question is important. I've written or told so much before. Will find energy shortly. Please add the above to your list of Qs and As.

Very keen on specifics of how you helped your grandmother die. F has promised that to me. I'm so lucky!

I'm very glad we are in touch.  
XxB

Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 9:11 pm  
From: Every

Hi Barbara, hello and love  
It's raining in Los Angeles. I'm sitting in a light filled corner. I leave in 3 days with a lot of wishes, plans and ideas in my pockets.

I think of you often.

How did I help my grandmother die? I washed her, turned her, comforted her, played her favorite music, held her hand, and dripped morphine under her tongue. As she had aged she had often said to my mother and I "you know when the time comes I'm going to need your help" and "I'm counting on you." We had access to the morphine because in the final days I was picking her

up to move her into a hospital bed that we had gotten for her apartment and when I lifted her the final time her rib cracked.

I can't say too much about this, it's something to discuss rather than report on, also because it is a gray area. My mother and her best friend are both nurses who have long worked in nursing homes and volunteered for hospice, so they know how to wash and care for people. Do you want to skype? Should I talk with F? Do you need assistance, or do you have everything in place?

Apparently it's in my astrology to be present at transitions—births and deaths. I have one week of death doula training, but a lifetime experience of being close with death.

How are you? How is your body feeling? Your mind?

I am sending love to you.

I am deeply honored to be in conversation with you.  
Every

Sat, Jan 19, 2019 at 12:21 am  
From: Barbara

Dear Every,

By now you are back in Sweden. It sounds like a truly full time in California!

I appreciated your personal notes on seeing your grandmother through even when so very difficult.

I want to answer the outstanding question on archives if I can as I am a "tidy up person." Everything is coming to an end as regards my work but I am still enjoying small food, reading (as much as I can) and seeing friends for short visits. It has been recommended that I stay at Florrie's where we are all set up with palliative care and have a nurse come every week at this point.

I am not in much pain and once I take the meds and they kick in it is pretty much OK. I am sleeping more and more. I am quite skinny.

All to be expected. As you see my spelling has declined as has my reading. This is the most shocking thing—to look at a word I've known all my life and not make sense of it. You should see me puzzle out a few things including the Times.

You wrote: Do you want to skype? Should I talk with F? Do you need assistance, or do you have everything in place?

Skyping is tiring so unless we arrive at a really important reason I'd rather not. (I did one last night with Bloomington, Indiana and my word retreat was embarrassing though I tried to hide it). We don't know what is causing this—possibly a general break down of the body.

You wrote: Apparently in its my astrology to be present at transitions—births and deaths. I have one week of

death doula training, but a lifetime experience of being close with death.

*How are you? How is your body feeling? your mind?*  
think I answered this

A number of years ago I began to research archives. I learned that archivists would not visit unless the material was organized. I began by putting the approximately 50 banker boxes into years. I laid these out on the floor and had both Duke and NYU come by. Funny to me that neither of them really dove into the writing, the collection, but simply looked briefly and offered a price. Both were the same price and I thought my collection (going way back to the 60s birth of the queer and other movements in the Bay Area) so I researched further. I was told to make a data base so for a year I hired an assistant one day a week and we organized and counted the number of leaves (pages) in each folder within the individual boxes.

I had heard from a friend who sold his archive to Yale that I should contact them but I needed an agent. I did, Yale came, they loved the collection, prices were negotiated, and settled on a much much larger price than the original archives. Because of [this sale](#) I was able to set up a Legacy account. This is used to give awards (so far one through [Queer Arts for Lesbian Experimental Filmmakers](#) and the other [for a queer student at San Francisco State](#) (my alma mater). I think there will be another after my demise. Remaining moneys here pays for my executor to keep managing my films and pay for expenses in that area and her own work. That is Florrie who will have my estate. These small awards have surprisingly meant a whole lot to a ton of people. I had no idea. We had about 95 lesbian artists in the last round up from the first year at 70. I cover the expenses of [Queer Arts](#) to organize and the judges for their work. It's been very gratifying and I hope more queer artists think about passing on monetary awards when they die.

Dear Emily—you can always stay in touch with Florrie. I suppose I have a few months left but you just never know.

Endlessly fascinating. [I speak about right to die](#) in two weeks here in nYC for the State Legislature of NYC that have a bill before them.

Should we do more? leave it as is? Corrine Fitzpatrick and [Dancy Foxes](#) (fabulous press!) will be working on a publication but it will be broader than death and dying. I don't think they are including the few things I wrote to your questions. Could you put the last 2 together and send me a document when you put in this last one (and vague one about queer artists who inspired).

Should we do more, call it quits. I am not taking on anything new so this is probably it.

Love you too and honored for the conversations!

Barbara for ever

Help. I helped. Florrie helped. How do we help one, a loved one, and how do we help more? *Help the Dead*. Just last month I presented a new performance called Help the Dead. 'When I said help the dead, I meant you, I meant you and me, I meant you.' We've got to make plans. I've been studying what it can be to help, help people die and help the dead. I helped Enid. I didn't write what that actually means. But we can talk about it. Barbara and Florrie helped.

When I started this interview with Barbara I had been working on 'queer death' for over two years. I knew Barbara was sick again, but living half an earth away, I hadn't seen her in a long time. My conviction to speak with Barbara, to interfere in her waning days, came from my knowledge of her personality—I knew she would want to share, and I knew we could be frank, bold, and bare about it. I knew she would speak from an embodied place, from a queer body, and that my wanting to question the aesthetics of death wouldn't feel obtuse or unsentimental to her. This is how I started. But mid-way through this correspondence you see us both waiver '... Isn't there more resonance, more friendship? Is this how we should be talking to each other?' I still don't know. But I suppose it is one part of many, a snapshot of two people queering death in conversation. Looking for a language in this field and losing language in the process.

Barbara was working and reporting up until the end and from the edge. While we were corresponding, I had a keen awareness of her fortitude, endurance, will and grace. Her drive and fire. Barbara, having lived and pioneered the emergence of lesbian cinema and representation, having been a first and an outlier, she was acutely aware of community, history and legacy. And she was driven by that up to and through the end of her life—archiving and granting, engaging and teaching. She was speaking from the edge of alive. She was answering my questions, and questions from [Masha Gessen](#), Corrine Fitzpatrick, the [New York State Legislature](#) and so many others. Her last work was in the space of dying. How can I share it?

Barbara helped.

Barbara of big energy and big love. Pleasure and experimentation her guides.

Barbara helped.

We need advocates, guardians and guides—in the space of living and dying and dead.

Barbara helped.

*Barbara Forever*  
Every Ocean Hughes  
and Barbara Hammer

Published as part of Every Ocean Hughes's  
Artist-at-Large residency with Camden Arts Centre,  
London, 2019.

Edited by Corrine Fitzpatrick.  
Website designed by Bryce Wilner and Matthew Wolff.  
[barbaraforever.everyoceanhughes.com](http://barbaraforever.everyoceanhughes.com)