

UNAMUNO & Desperate  
Author Series 2019 Literature  
Festival



Dear Unamuno Authors,

*September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019*

What a joy the historic festival was this past May 27 through June 1, 2019. Many said they'd never seen anything like it. Sometimes I'm not sure *what* exactly happened. The festival infused the art of poetry with love. We organically expressed inclusiveness. The Holy Spirit flew around Madrid. It felt like something went *through us* rather than something that was *about us*. Does that make sense?

Beginning in 2020, I will step down as the active leader and poet-priest instigator of the Unamuno Author Series. I began the series in 2012: I headed-up 50 events and hosted more than 100 authors. The festival achieved all I had hoped, and then some.

Since I founded the series I hoped to empower younger writers: in that spirit, I now pass on the series and future festivals to the wonderful team you have met: Elizabeth Moe, Terry Craven, Layla Benitez-James, Clarissa Watson, and Annie Schumacher. They are spinning with ideas regarding more translations, a continued varied list of participants, more workshops and more chapbook energy. In addition, three new team members will join: Joan Fleming from New Zealand; Joseph Fasano based in New York City; and Jorge Garcia based in Switzerland.

We spread goodwill. We established a global literary community. New friends were made. I will finish hosting with three events this fall: Cyrus Cassells and Richie Hoffman on September 6<sup>th</sup>; Mark Jarman, Janet Sylvester and Todd Boss on October the 25<sup>th</sup>; and Michael Collier, Nick Drake and Martha Sprackland on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Finishing with Michael feels appropriate, since he first welcomed me into poetry 16 years ago on the mountain top of Breadloaf in 2003.

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2020 is sure to have an amazing line-up of writers that this new team will invite and organize. After this epistle you can contact them through our website regarding readings or wanting to read or how you can spread the Unamuno word.

Letras Latinas at University of Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies has asked me to help them promote the Lorca Prize for a Latinx writer to be celebrated. Has there ever been a more important time to hold up Latinx writers? Carmen Gimenez-Smith has agreed to be our next judge. We are in conversations about determining *which year* to start up the prize and how best to roll it out: a chapbook, a conference, readings, publication are all options on the table. The prize brings a new Latinx poet to global prominence, in the US and Spain. Stephen Sanchez was the first recipient. We are in conversation with Canto Mundo about their future involvement. This dovetails with my work in Honduras, where I promote the Our Little Roses poetry fellowship, bringing poets annually to Honduras, fully-funded (see website or write me if you know a poet wanting to go, we are booked through 2021).

On the evening of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, we will have an event for the future Latinx prize with Francisco Aragon and Laura Garcia-Lorca in New York City at the Zen Center. Some well-known poets will also be on hand to read Lorca's work in both languages. You're invited!

Thank you everyone for *believing* in our grassroots lemonade stand effort that turned into something beyond our wildest dreams. I *fully believe*, with all my heart, that the next manifestation of the series and festival-energy will astonish. Time to bless and let go. Help me support this team of amazing talents! We made history. We widely embraced the poetry community. We supported a dynamic independent bookstore. We celebrated the vibrant and historic Residencia, the Instituto Internacional and the spirit of Lorca.

Let the spirit move on.

*Abrazos desde España!*  
Spencer Reece