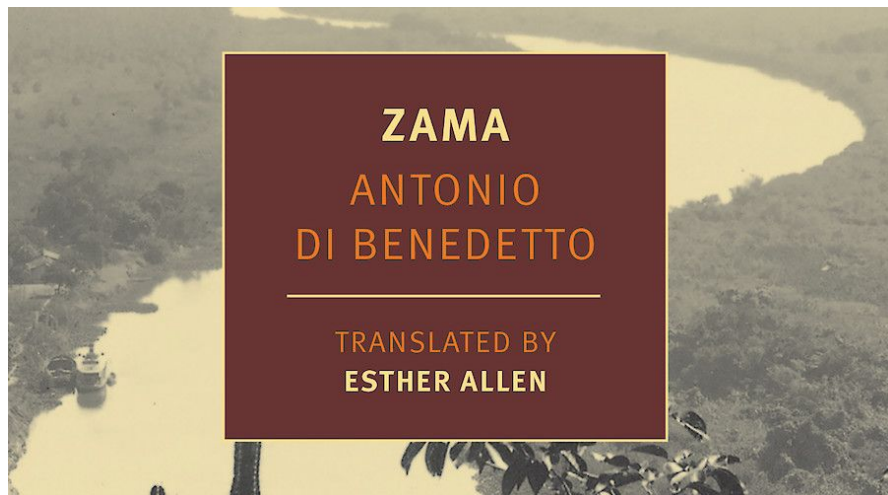




Zama by Antonio Di Benedetto



Presentation of the English version of “Zama,” now universally recognized as one of the masterpieces of modern Argentinean and Spanish-language literature.

Antonio Di Benedetto narrates the solitary and suspended existence of Don Diego de Zama, an official of the Spanish crown in Asuncion of Paraguay, who, after a long wait, is expected to be transferred to Buenos Aires at the end of the 18th century. Zama is going through an existential, distressing and reflective waiting, in a territory characterized by remoteness and alienation. *Zama* is the novel of an exile, with a timeless and archaic language, by moments close to that of the Golden Age.

The English version of the book will be presented in conversation with:

- Esther Allen, translator of *Zama* into English.
- Benjamin Kunkel, novelist and critic.
- Juan José Herrera, Consul for Cultural Affairs.

An ardent fan of Dostoyevsky, Di Benedetto is given to portraying states of extremity—of obsession, delusion, wild aggression—but without any nineteenth-century rhetorical overheating... *Zama* has been described as a work of existentialist fiction, and its protagonist, alone with a troubled mind, is as much an ambassador from the twentieth century as a Baroque-era bureaucrat. As with novels by Kafka, Camus, Sartre, and Beckett, the story’s preoccupation is the tension between human freedom and constraining circumstance... The belated arrival of *Zama* in the United States raises an admittedly hyperbolic question: Can it be that the Great American Novel was written by an Argentinean? It’s hard, anyway, to think of a superior novel about the bloody life of

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the frontier.

—Benjamin Kunkel, *The New Yorker*

A book signing will follow the presentation.