



Bilbao-New York-Bilbao by Kirmen Uribe in Washington, DC



Spanish novelist Kirmen Uribe presents the American edition of his award-winning novel “Bilbao–New York–Bilbao,” in conversation with Miguel Albero.

Bilbao–New York–Bilbao is the second book commissioned for the *Spatial Species* series, edited by Youmna Chlala and Ken Chen. The series investigates the ways we activate space through language. In the tradition of Georges Perec’s *An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris*, *Spatial Species* titles are pocket-sized editions, each keenly focused on place. Instead of tourist spots and public squares, we encounter unmarked, noncanonical spaces: edges, alleyways, diasporic traces. Such intimate journeying requires experiments in language and genre, moving travelogue, fiction, or memoir into something closer to eating, drinking, and dreaming.

Uribe’s novel *Bilbao–New York–Bilbao* is set on a hypothetical flight that its narrator, one Kirmen Uribe, takes from Bilbao’s Loiu Airport to New York’s J.F.K. On the flight the writer contemplates his supposed novel-in-progress, which is about three generations of a family, his own, whose life is bound up with the sea. *Bilbao–New York–Bilbao* is a novel with no conventional plot to speak of. Its structure is that of a net, and the knots of the net are the stories of the three generations as they intersect with crosswise stories and reflections on the twentieth century as it was experienced in the Basque Country.

Uribe has succeeded in realizing what is surely an ambition for many writers: a book that combines family, romances, and literature, anchored deeply in a spoken culture but also in bookishness—and all without a single note of self-congratulation.

LITERATURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Venue

Politics and Prose, 5015 Connecticut Ave
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—*Times Literary Supplement*

Kirmen Uribe in conversation with Miguel Albero



ABOUT THE WRITER

Kirmen Uribe writes in Basque. He is one of the most relevant and widely translated writers of his generation in Spain. He won the National Prize for Literature of Spain for his first novel, *Bilbao–New York–Bilbao*. Uribe's works have appeared in periodicals such as *The New Yorker* and *The Paris Review*. He was selected for the Iowa International Writers Program in 2017 and awarded a New York Public Library Cullman Center Fellowship for 2018-2019. He is now based in New York City, where he teaches Creative Writing at New York University.