

Acknowledgements

Not long after I had finished writing *Aqueduct*, my last book of poems and texts, I met Joaquín Perez Salvador, from Granada. He had moved to Toronto and was working at the marvellous Tapas Restaurante of Luis and Jenny Soares. We soon became friends. He was to have a marriage ceremony that summer to Bonnie Smith of Scarborough, back in his hometown of Cullar de Baza, northeast of Granada. "I'd like you to come," he offered when he learned I was again to be in Europe that summer. It was the kind of immediate and uncomplicated generosity I would come to know so well on my regular trips to Spain.

My acceptance of that hospitality would change my life and determine my writing life for more than a decade. During my quick stop back to Granada from Cullar, I made my first, and all too brief, visit to the Alhambra.

I thought that my writing from Córdoba and Sevilla in *Aqueduct* had exhausted my fascination with Andalucía's gardens and monuments. But during two hours in Granada, I realized my relationship with southern Spain and its ancient history was far from over.

Over the ensuing years, I would wander three gardens, observing, contemplating, writing, reading, and researching there and in libraries, and even, for a dilettantish two days in Sevilla — I would dig, rake, weed, and hoe along with kind gardeners who befriended me.

In Granada, I made two of my most precious friends in the world — Esther Rull Perez and her husband Andrés Santafosta López and their families — Esther whom I first met at Joaquín and Bonnie's wedding. I was hosted and fed delicious food by poet and philologist Loly, Joaquín's sister, along with her children Paola and Antonio, and spent a month in the home of her friend José. Conchi Molina Burgos, now in Almería, became a friend, as did so many of Joaquín's community in Cullar de Baza, another lieu where I wrote, and whose people welcomed me on a few occasions. I thank them all sincerely.

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