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UNM GRADS LAUNCH BUSINESS TO SUPPORT CREATIVE WRITERS

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, AUGUST 1, 2018—New Mexico writers Melanie Unruh Rodriguez and Jennifer Simpson have teamed up to create a subscription box for writers delivering inspiration, creativity-boosting products, and New Mexico magic. Both Rodriguez and Simpson earned their MFAs in creative writing at the University of New Mexico.

Rodriguez says the idea for the box came about because she saw a real need to create a community for women writers, to help inspire them and build their self-esteem. “As women, we often juggle many titles and responsibilities, and unfortunately, many of us end up relegating our creative writing aspirations to the back burner. Couple this with the gendered disparities in publishing, and women lack opportunities to tend to their creativity and to get their work out into the world,” Rodriguez says.

Each month Plume subscribers receive a letter from a successful woman writer along with a sampling of her literary work. But Plume is more. A basic subscription includes writing prompts, and some treats like tea and chocolate. The Plume Plus subscription will include more specialty items, Self-Care for the Creative Soul™. “We want to remind women writers to honor their work as a writer,” says Simpson. “Though publishing is important, for many of us, writing is a lifestyle, a way to feed your soul, and a Plume subscription supports that.”

Rodriguez and Simpson polished their business plan as participants in the UNM Business Plan Competition earlier this year. Though they didn’t win money from the competition, the

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experience was valuable. “The process of working together to craft a business plan and a presentation, attending the educational bootcamps, and working with a mentor helped us to get this business off the ground,” says Simpson. “We also learned about, and are now taking advantage of, resources available in Albuquerque to assist small business startups.”

Each Plume delivery is infused with New Mexico magic. Both Rodriguez and Simpson honed their writing chops in New Mexico, first in graduate school at UNM, and now as residents writing in the state and benefiting from its inspirational beauty. Though the state has long been known for its artists and writers, historically the economy has struggled. Rodriguez and Simpson are committed to utilizing local vendors as much as possible, from the self-care products and treats to printing and packaging materials.

Melanie Unruh Rodriguez is a writer of short stories, YA novels, and creative nonfiction. Her work has appeared in *The Boiler*, *Cutthroat*, *Sixfold*, *Post Road*, *New Ohio Review*, and *Philadelphia Stories*, among others. She was nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize and received notable mention in Best American Essays 2013. She earned her MFA in creative writing in 2011.

Jennifer Simpson is a marketing consultant, community builder, and teacher. She is the Director of DimeStories International, where authors share their 3-minute stories at open mic events in four cities, and online. Her work has been published in various journals including *Garfield Lake Review*, *Bartleby Snopes*, and *Practical Welding Today*. She earned her MFA in creative writing in 2012.

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