Wednesday, April 15, 2015 program introduction:

Good evening, I'm Gerard Hogan and I welcome you to this program featuring poets Xavier Cavazos and Katharine Whitcomb. I'd like to thank some library colleagues: Courtney Paddick, Molly Allen, John Streepy, Courtney Cox, and Lizzie Brown, for their help with arranging, promoting, and encouraging this series. And of course, thank you to the eight participating poets. There are poetry displays on the library's first floor for which we have Pat Swiney and Lisa Euster to thank. And in the Wildcat Shop, in the SURC, there's a display featuring the works of some of our featured poets, and that's thanks to Joanna Hunt in the bookstore; I encourage you all to get over there and buy their works so these poets can continue to live the luxurious lifestyles to which they’ve become accustomed.

This year's National Poetry Month poster, illustrated by cartoonist Roz Chast, features the first stanza of the poem "Eating poetry" by Mark Strand:

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.  
There is no happiness like mine.  
I have been eating poetry.  
The poem goes on for a few more stanzas and actually mentions the librarian who is appalled to find that all the poetry has been eaten!

There are certain privileges that come with being host of this series, one of which is that I get to share one of my favorite poetry-related quotes. In the preface to Leaves of Grass, Walt Whitman writes:

“This is what you shall do; Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons …. re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem … and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body.”

Our little community is fortunate to have more than our fair share of creativity, and that's certainly true for the literary arts.

Xavier Cavazos is the author of *Barbarian at the Gate*, selected and introduced by Thomas Sayers Ellis as part of the Poetry Society of America’s New American Poets Chapbook Series, and *Diamond Grove Slave Tree*, which was awarded the inaugural Prairie Seed Poetry Prize from Ice Cube Press. Xavier teaches in the Central Washington Writing Project, Africana and Black Studies, and the Professional and Creative Writing Programs here at CWU.

Conclusion:
I hope you’ll all mark your calendars and come out on Monday, April 20th for poets Jampa Dorje and Gary Cummisk. Thank you.