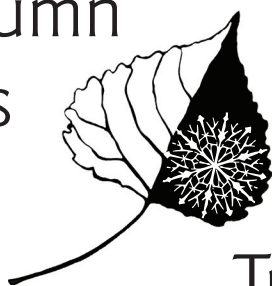


Autumn
Gifts



Winter
Treasures

Autumn
Gifts



Winter
Treasures

Candlelight Readings at
an Earth Vespers Service
to celebrate Winter Solstice

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2016

PLACITAS ❄️ NEW MEXICO

SPONSORED BY THE
Partnership for Earth Spirituality
Joan Brown, *osf, President*
& Earth Care Fellowship
of Las Placitas Presbyterian Church
Leland Bowen, *Chair*

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Las Placitas Presbyterian Church
7 Paseo de San Antonio
P.O. Box 768
Placitas, New Mexico 87043

FIRST READING

“I REALIZED MY TREASURE”

Jeff Dickson

Young, tender leaves begin to bud and spread, hopeful for the sun and what the future holds.

Crisp air, spring turns to summer and we are fully developed, we thought, ever-reaching for the warmth, joyfully swaying in the wind, connected to every moment, feeling vulnerable and connected in ways we hadn't before. Feeling everything, anything is possible, all at once.

The Summer transitioning to Fall is hard. Everything ages and continues within the cycle, Fall shows a change, which unexpected, is natural. When did this happen? Why does Summer have to end? Colors deepen, their meaning, their identity, changed.

Energy begins to flow inward, for self-preservation. A new understanding emerges, grieving the transition of younger days, coming to terms with the present, content with the life flow we find ourselves within. All things age, and we feel it in winter. The cold disturbs and the wind strikes deep. Struggling to remember the sun chasing the rain. Struggling to know our place, our usefulness, the need for our existence.

Those around me seem asleep, encased within protective shells in an attempt to ward against perceived hurt, unknown risk, emerging from the bleakness, the cold crisp darkness winter brings.

I was once a small tender shoot, reaching for new possibilities. Unaware of my limits and the boundaries around me. I became a strong, vibrant reflection of the energy accessible

to us all and even though I mourned the change, I became a different kind of beauty. A new version of myself.

Winter has reminded me of my past. You can read my lines and know part of me, but we must grow together, sharing this magnificent voyage, to truly understand. Does the cold kill off all growth without the hope for a future, or protect new growth waiting to emerge in the new cycle?

SECOND READING
FOR FREE

Jim Fish

At some point
You reach the point
You get beyond
The expectation
The anticipation
And move
Into acceptance
 Appreciation
 Celebration

The reckless exuberance
Of springtime youth
Slips into the distant past

The confining ambition
For accomplishment
And approval
Over long summer days
Slides into fall

You find yourself
Sitting
In front of a campfire
Sipping
A glass of wine
Watching a waxing crescent moon
As it dances with the scattered clouds
Leading the edge
Of an approaching cold front

Against the odds
You made it here
You earned today

You have purchased your season pass
The rest comes
For free

You accept
The fact
That you cannot do
Some things
You used to do

You appreciate
The fact
That you find yourself
Now
In a position
Such that
You can choose to do
What you do
That you can choose to focus on doing
What you can still do well

You celebrate
The opportunity
To put some time in
Helping some good cause

Helping
In some small way
Doing something
You do well
Something
You enjoy doing anyway

You celebrate
 The opportunity
 To seize
 Some small
 Hedonist pleasure

You find yourself
On a late fall evening
Sitting
In front of a campfire
Sipping
A glass of wine

With light snow
Starting to fall

The first flakes
Of the coming ski season

You toast the campfire

You call each today:
 A gift

The possibility of each tomorrow:
 A treasure

THIRD READING

ELLOS SABEN: THEY KNOW

Gregory L Candela

Green gnomes in rows—dangling
in brisk autumn breezes:
Anaheims, Big Jims, Sandias

Yearling cottonwoods, their leaves
brilliant-light yellow and green—shivering

And the rust-spotted gold crowns of 80-year-olds
peer over the mud banks of the
Rio Puerco and Chaco Canyon Wash—rattling.

And these tiny green gods, slaughtered
roasted, frozen and flayed become

redemption in December posole, rellenos
burritos and stew.

The cottonwoods—still clinging
to the last of their copper, bronze-black cover

Reveal themselves as slow-standing
line dancers in snow.

They all know that spring returns
al valle del Río Grande en Nuevo Méjico.

FOURTH READING

FALLING

Tani Arness

Autumn is a leap into wind,
not a color but a dream of color.
Everywhere I turn, I feel my father's death.
Autumn is not a yellow resignation
but a capoeira dance of shadows.
We organize our movements into seasons,
and still it is queer, my father's dying,
his need tossing about in the same autumn breeze as mine.

The seasons turn and fall and pull us forward,
each yellow leaf piling into history
before the snow comes whispering
about we need cleansing and we need beauty.
It is insatiable this need to live,
battling this need to die.
I kiss the dirt I walk on
because there is no answer to the questions
jumping and twisting in our winter fires.

FIFTH READING

THE DILIGENCE OF A LEAF

Richard Wolfson

Autumn, a light socket that carries too long,
slowly fades into a shadow of whiteness,
madness elicits a response, hushed tone of crane,
the endless reverberation of dry hands.

Mellow face of sympathy shines brightly,
the tallow edge of midnight whistles a poem
upon the unkempt love that benefits only owls,
the uncoiling slice of history talks to children.

All of our hidden secrets revitalized by angles
of the seasons that morph as seamlessly
as gravity carries a wayward cottonwood leaf,
noiseless in the grand osmosis of time.

SIXTH READING
CRANE CALLS

Judith Roderick

Crane Calls.
My heart
Answers.
My eyes
Scan the skies.
Spotting short
Undulating flight lines,
Long necks,
Preceding long trailing legs.

They come
Again,
Gliding over me.
I am engaged,
Enthralled,
Transported
What century is this?
What lifetime is this?
Timelessness!
I am so grateful
We are
Both
Still
Here.

SIXTH READING, CONTINUED

LISTEN

Judith Roderick

To our calls.
Our sound
Is as ancient as the Earth.
Our long bills,
Our elegant sinuous necks,
Our ancient vocal chords
Produce a deep resonant chord
In tune with the Earth
In time with the Earth
In rhythm with the Earth.
Our sounds
Are an integral part
Of the music of life on Earth,
An important part
Of her Orchestration.
We have played this song with her
For millennia.

LISTEN

Come out of your boxes.
Turn off your electronic chatter.
Clear your head,
Attune your ears,
Open your heart,
So you can hear us;
So you can hear our part
In the Earth's song.

SEVENTH READING
LONGEVITY TOME

Merimée Moffitt

Thick cream and something sweet
the coffee ground and percolated

the chair by the wood stove turned
to the window he'd set in decades ago

his fields green and rolling with alfalfa
her garden fenced with crops drooping

tomatoes and corn, onions, scallions,
long-stemmed marigolds and rosemary,

potatoes, eggplants the neighbors brought
the seeds for, squashes and greens.

The doctor said no coffee, no
cigars so he waited then gave in to

his reward for the toil and days of
wind when she wasn't happy but achey,

their collected bones aching together
but she suffered more, not having the cigar.

Her joy was the neighbor's visit when baskets
would come out and trading begin, then cards,

a cake she'd tucked away, or fruit pie, raspberry
from her patch. On lonely days the howling

would make the house clack and she would sew,
or spin, tat, knit, weave—all those woman things.

No that didn't happen. The children needed
school so they left the farm. He worked with iron
she sold eggs, painted skulls, and made fancy
dresses for women whose men smoked in special rooms.

The heart attacks would come,
and all would be lost. No, not true.

They lived long and happy until the coffee
and the cigars were forbidden. Then she
married the rancher from Texas and didn't like
the dusty life until he died, too, and she
held off the pipeline workers with her
shotgun dangling. The courts took
the corner land with the creek and brushy
woods so she put the house up for sale with
plans to move to Paris. At least for a while
she'd be served good coffee and ride the trains.

EIGHTH READING

REMEMBER

Kat Heatherington

remember not that you argued
with your sister, but that you sang
in the kitchen alone,
and the house remembered
a sound it had not heard in years.
remember fireflies blinking
slowly in the roadside dark
and a night sky as open
as the Arizona night sky —
remember, on the last night, every star
in the heavens shone on that place.
a comet streaked to the east
bright as a firecracker, potent, silent.
remember the vine that entered the door
and the softness of your father's voice
and the way his eyes lit up
every time he looked up and saw you there.
remember his pleasure, and his pride.
the way the creek sank when the rain stopped,
the six-part insect harmony every night,
and his hand on your shoulder,
blessing you. remember
his hands when he talks,
his big, precise gestures,
his carefully kept and yellowing fingernails.
the black trees in silhouette
against a star-strewn horizon.

his voice, retelling
the story of your birth—*when the nurse
handed you to me, i felt a love
i had never known before.
and it has never stopped.*
the scent of honeysuckle,
a redolent night,
that infinite sky.
it has never stopped.

NINTH READING
54 AND MORE

Louise Mancuso

When I was fifty-four, I wrote a very short poem with that title:

I can feel
my bones
going porous
see
the Swiss cheese
turning stale.

Twenty years later, I am in the Winter of my Year, the Winter of my Life, on this Earth.

In contrast, the two large trees—one in front of the house, the other in back—are rowdy Rock Stars, their hair-leaves disheveled and flowing, sending up six unwieldy shoots for each one I snip off.

And practically every day now, more objects appear on my body that keep reminding me of impending demise. I look in the mirror, and I can't help but think I'm turning into an old tree. The moles keep coming, pushing out from tired, stale skin, impatient to tell me:

You are finite.
You are earth.
The soul seeks heaven
the body, dirt.

And no—in case you were thinking to ask—I don't believe in

ZOMBIES.

TENTH READING
UNSPOKEN GIFTS

Bernadette Perez

I am in the autumn of my life
Changing of colors siphon from roots
Embedded within my structure
I listen
Thy tongue now mute

Attached to a fundamental whole
I am a descendant surviving
My fear
Foliage will not color well if thy soil is too rich
In the wind leaves begin to drift

Beauty unrestrained
Descending rays of expression
Many events from my past reflected by ripening
Gifted from the essential substance of nature

Beneath my feet
A vision of red, yellow, browns and greens
An extension from crying trees
Spreading fibers through the gentle wind

Listen to thy crackling
Step by step
Detaching from its origin
Fertilizing underneath
Nurturing at thy base

Attachment that weathers
Stem from necessity
Expelled air from pursed lips
Lyrics that softly whisper

Winter's silent treasure
The reason for ones longstanding
A gift unspoken
Autumn's longing

ELEVENTH READING
WINTER TREASURES

Martha Ritchie

Winter spirits dance like treasures on the diamond studded
snow,

Sparkling above the dead in their dingy, brown undercoats.

Golden anniversaries are sky blue and splintered silver in
our memories, which now with us go.

Seconds, stand hauntingly still, tumbling us through the
always, like Bach's and Shubert's music notes,

Now frozen in time and looking back on the then.

In the winter's stark quiet and darkness that becomes sud-
denly like bells,

Sweet memories peel out to push back the blackness of
frosty, wintery, night's, treasures where we've been.

Wondering at the moon and a million stars as they are
married into watery swells.

And into the comfort of the cold glistening sky where they
rapidly fly.

The magic of our cold winter's nights brilliantly shared,
and shining forever.

Without really caring to search any further for Winter
Treasures, or even wondering why?

For these ties to our Winter Treasures now must we sever.

TWELFTH READING
SING OF SNOW

larry goodell

Sing of snow
ice forms in the mind
the mountain is covered and is heavier
it is so cold, the star-fluffs seem forever
 in their delicate haste
my body is frigid from thinking about it.
I have become the dark skies
 the wind and then the silence
the miracle of turning to solid
of the transformational universe of water.
Water, wherefore art thou?
from one state to another
 the Wind Woman wonders
turning inside outside herself as
 snow flurries become her
and water which is the gain of life
 the exciter of generation of seeds
arrives in bold layers after having fallen
in ice snow clouds thundering like Zeus speaks
like the mother of care wakes up the father
to act and produce as if the world
 of plants and hibernating animals
and humans shielded and warm are
 all praying silently mindfully
 “Send the layers and layers and blusts
the savior-specks, the mass of light building crystals
 of falling snow
our gardens are starved for your gain,
sing of snow, the trees, dormant in their depths,

are dying without you
 you in the gathering wind come from
 all gods within
the nature of spring calling back to you, winter,
 the acequias dry, falling into disuse,
 are open to your coming, the wind and the cold
 the wind-beating ritual, the cold triggering change
 clouds forming denser, dense, heavy with
 the falling, the releasing
 song, sing
 of snow.”

THIRTEENTH READING

AUTUMN IN THE *BOSQUE*,
WINTER IN AMERICA (2016)

Gary Brower

*And now it's winter in America and all
the healers have been killed or been betrayed.
The Constitution struggled but died in vain
& now Democracy is ragtime on the corner,
hoping for some rain.... The people know it's
winter, winter in America.*

—Gil-Scott Heron.

I

When cold seals the fate
of chlorophyll,
bosque cottonwoods fade to blonde
then curl brittle brown:

Yellow meanders north to south
from one cottonwood leaf
to another
through the valley,
as far as the eye can see
with jaundiced sight.

Leaves glide away
into the World of Wind,
or fall into an amber quilt
upon the river.

This change of leaf-life
arrives on a blanket of cold
that descends from Taos toward
Truth or Consequences of winter onset,
a saffron, arboreal river-trail.

II

The Rio Grande,
thirsts from water depletion,
sandbars in its throat.

In the autumn of our discord,
a Big Freeze has brought
Winter to the Empire.

The first snow
of our Decline
is on the horizon,
roads filled
with dead snowplows.

III

Winter darkness extends
into all hours of the Future.

At home by the fireplace,
I listen to Debussy's Clair de lune,
look out the window toward the river
as flakes like crystal leaves
from the Tree of Storms
surge across a giant moon.

If each snowflake is a note,
blizzards are scattered symphonies.

Empires have been lost in this music.

POETS

JEFF DICKSON, his wife Elizabeth, and their two boys have lived in New Mexico for 9 years and they really enjoy the New Mexico history, culture, and great food!

JIM FISH published *Firemiles* in 1975 while at Princeton University working on a Ph. D. in chemical engineering. *Jim and I* came out five years later. *A Sense of Play* was published January 2009. *Songs of the Landscape* was published in the spring of 2013. In addition to writing poetry, Fish sculpts wood and is the winemaker at Anasazi Fields Winery.

GREGORY LOUIS CANDELA has resided in New Mexico since 1972. He holds a doctorate in American and African American literature and is professor emeritus at University of New Mexico. Candela has published a volume of poetry (*Surfing New Mexico—2001*), six produced plays and edited 6 volumes of poetry and prose. Recent publications include poems in the *Malpais Review*, *Adobe Walls*, *Sin Fronteras*, *Van Gogh's Ear*, *Cyclamens and Swords*, *Monterey Poetry Review*, *Elbow Room New Mexico* and *Italian Americana*. Currently, Candela is seeking a publisher for a book-length poetry manuscript, *Graveyards of New Mexico*.

TANI ARNESS lives, writes and teaches in Albuquerque, New Mexico where she remains dedicated to finding the beauty, spirit, and surprise in the intersection of words and living. A collection of her poems can be found in *Tzintzum: 5 contemporary poets lend us their hearts* by Mercury Heartlink Press, 2013. Her poetry can also be found in numerous literary magazines including *North American Review*, *Rhino*, *Adobe Walls*, *Rhino, bosque (the magazine)*, *Malpais Review*, *Santa Clara Review*, *Red Rock Review*, and *Crab Orchard Review*. Her website is: www.tani-arness.com

RICHARD WOLFSON began writing after the death of his wife JoAnn, a poet, in 2004. Many of these poems come from dreams and shamanic journeys. He currently lives in Albuquerque with his second wife Vicki Bolen, who is an artist and collaborates with him on books, cards, and prints. Currently, he mixes comedy and poetry.

JUDITH RODERICK is a local artist and a craniac who has painted cranes on her silk scarves and Art Quilts for years. Tonight she reads their poems.

MERIMÉE MOFFITT arrived in NM in 1970 in a big shiny Chrysler with some Viet vets, their girlfriends, two dogs, and what she could hold or stuff under the front seat. Since then: years in Taos, a son, a husband, more kids, grand-kids (four) and degrees from UNM. She has publications in many reviews and anthologies, and her poetry book *Making Little Edens* is available on-line; her second book, *Free Love, Free Fall: Scenes from the West Coast Sixties* published by ABQPress is now available.

KAT HEATHERINGTON is a poet, artist & ecofeminist pagan, who lives in Sunflower River River intentional community outside of Albuquerque. Her work deals with the knife-edge of intimacy between nature & human relationships, and the organic realities of farm life. More of her work can be found at <https://sometimesaparticle.org>

BERNADETTE PEREZ—A Poet possessing expression and creativity. In 1990 Bernadette received the Silver Poet Award from World of Poetry. Her work has appeared in *The Wishing Well; Musings* in 2010, *Small Canyons Anthology* in 2013, *Poems 4 Peace* in 2014. *Fix and Free Anthology* in 2015. She is the Vice President of the New Mexico State Poetry Society and member of Rio Grande Valencia Poets since 2005.

LOUISE MANCUSO, born and raised in Buffalo, NY, spent 6 ½ years as a cloistered Poor Clare nun in the Bronx. She called Wisconsin her home for over 30 years, where she honed her writing skills as a member of the Mind's Eye Radio Group in Madison. She, and her partner Sue Hoff, re-located to New Mexico four years ago, and have a special affection for the people of Placitas. Louise also likes to paint and draw, and experiment with other art forms. She is a member of the Visionary Arts & Crafts Guild in Rio Rancho.

MARTHA RITCHIE is a Placitas resident. She and her husband, Burke, retired here from the San Francisco Bay area. A writer since high school, Martha taught learning disabled students in elementary and high school how to write for fifty consecutive years. She writes now, late at night, if she can't sleep.

LARRY GOODELL was born in Roswell, spent most of his life in Placitas. He started ceremonial performance poetry in late 60's and early 70's, New Mexico style. He has collaborated with artists, taught and started workshops. He emphasizes performance but promotes the poet as publisher as his Duende Press proves. His writing often generates from

gardening, from word-play, from the socio-political and from his love and long relationship with Lenore Goodell. See <http://www.larrygoodell.com/> and check out some of his collection here <http://www.granarybooks.com/collections/goodell/>

G.L. Brower of Placitas is a poet (5 books, 4 CDs, 1 book coming this spring), the Founder/Editor/Publisher of the *Malpais Review* for five years—the only poetry quarterly in New Mexico. He was a director of the Duende Poetry Series of Placitas for 12 years.

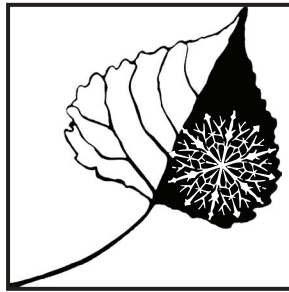
About the event

For nineteen years the Winter Solstice readings
have been a regular offering of
the Earth Care Fellowship
at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church
and The Partnership for Earth Spirituality,
as part of the Earth Vespers series.

This year, 2016, we celebrate *Autumn Gifts*, *Winter Treasures*,
and welcome back the slowly stretching days
at the Winter Solstice Candlelight Poetry Reading.

Thirteen poets from the Southwest read poems
by the light of a single burning candle.

Between readings, a short interlude of silence
provides a moment of contemplation
at the close of another year.



2016



2016