



# Celebrating Acequia Culture Through Poetry

Provided by the New Mexico Acequia Association - [www.lasacequias.org](http://www.lasacequias.org)

## **Activity 1: Bendición del agua (Blessing of the Water)**

### **Instructions:**

- Go online and search for the video for '**Bendición del agua by Olivia Romo**' - you can find it here:  
[www.westernfolklife.org/benediccion-del-agua](http://www.westernfolklife.org/benediccion-del-agua)  
or here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZtzolZNSAs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZtzolZNSAs)
- Answer these reflection questions on a separate piece of paper.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What are some of the challenges facing acequias and acequia communities that are described in this poem?
2. How does Olivia express her 'querencia' through this poem?  
*\*Querencia = A feeling of love, dedication, and belonging to a place, community, tradition*
3. What similarities or differences do you see between what Olivia describes in her community and family, and what you see happening in your own community and family?
4. What emotions or memories do you feel when you hear Olivia's words?
5. What is the call to action for young people in New Mexico that Olivia makes at the end of the poem? What can you do to answer this call to action?

*Olivia Romo is from the village of Taos, in northern New Mexico. She served for many years as Communications and Outreach Director at the New Mexico Acequia Association. Olivia is a spoken-word artist and was named the New Mexico State Champion of Slam Poetry in 2011.*

## **Activity 2: De donde yo soy (Where I am from)**

### **Instructions:**

1. Read the poem 'De donde yo soy' by Levi Romero.
2. Use a dictionary or Google Translate to look up any words you don't know. Write the definitions on the paper so you can look back at them later.
3. Use Mr. Romero's poem as an inspiration to write your own poem about where you are from and what makes you who you are. Your poem can be as long or short as you want - it can follow the style of the example poem, or be totally unique!
4. *\*Bonus challenge\** - Email a copy of your poem to - [emily@lasacequias.org](mailto:emily@lasacequias.org). Include your name, age, town, school, and mailing address - and you will be entered in a raffle drawing to win a prize!

### **De donde yo soy (Where I am from) by Levi Romero**

*Inspired by "Where I'm From..." by George Ella Lyon. Levi Romero is a poet, writer, and architect from Dixon, New Mexico who now lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico and teaches poetry and creative writing at the University of New Mexico.*

I am from leche de jarro  
from Morrell manteca and Gold  
Medal flour  
I am from acequias, viviendas,  
dispensas, y  
el Rosario recited on Radio ¿Qué  
Dice?  
I am from the Irises drooping like  
teardrops  
in grammita's abandoned flower  
bed  
y las Barras de San José  
whose long gone limbs I remember  
as if they were my own.  
I'm from ojos verdes and  
travesuras y avergonzadas  
from mis primos Peter and Jondas  
de La Villita  
I'm from no friegues conmigo and  
que Dios te bendiga  
from dime con quien andas y te  
diré quien eres  
I'm from ipórtate bien, repártete  
con tu hermano  
y no seas malcriado!

I'm from Santos, velas, and lo que  
será, será  
I'm from aquel vallecito de  
lagrimas  
soy de Romero, Atencio, Valdez, y  
Duran  
vengo de hablan cuando no deben  
de hablar  
y son callados cuando deben de  
decir algo  
soy de atole, frijolitos, papas con  
carne, y chile colorado  
From tu abuelo, Juan Andrés,  
murió en la borrega en Monte Vista  
y tu otro abuelo, Silviares, viajaba  
vendiendo fruta  
desde el Embudo hasta Ratón  
los retratos de mis antepasados  
los traigo en mi corazón  
yo soy un manito del Norte  
me río por no llorar  
soy de aquel mestizaje floreciendo  
como el rocío en el amanecer

*Levi Romero ©2007 Target Corporation.  
All rights reserved*