Celebrating Acequia Culture Through Poetry

Provided by the New Mexico Acequia Association - 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/benedicion-del-agua
  or here: 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. 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, Silviaraes, 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

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