

2018-3



Newsletter

Under  
a  
cloud  
of  
cherry  
blossoms,  
poets  
gather

Dino de Leyba

Saffron

## A WORD FROM YOUR

# President



“Bring out the good china”, I said to myself, after struggling with a clogged nib and boring paper. After all, why else did I buy posh gouache and good paper if I’m not going to use it? I deserve it! And so do you!

If you tend to use blah ink and cheap paper because you’re “just practicing,” might you be more inspired by a gorgeous color on fine art paper? By all means use your basic calligraphy supplies when you’re learning individual

letters, but do letter on the good china every now and then!

Once you create a piece you’re proud of, please enter it in the New Mexico State Fair; the guidelines are posted on our website. To enter, bring your framed art to the August meeting, drop it off at Elizabeth McKee’s house before August 24, or take it to NM Expo Creative Arts building during take-in (August 24–25).

As we start another year, I’m very excited about the programs and workshops that Patty and Elizabeth have planned. This year our theme is Capitals. Most programs will appeal to members at every skill level, but the series will build gradually to include more advanced techniques next year. In April, Annie Cicale will teach a 3-day workshop (April 5–7) on Capitals, which will really polish our skills.

Our next workshop will be Belgian calligrapher Joke Boudens teaching David Jones-style capitals (November 3–4). In lieu of our November program, Joke will give a presentation on Monday, November 5, where we’ll also have a potluck plus a benefit for the Pen Fund (which is used to buy pens for our public school classes).

**Here’s to another great year of calligraphy!**

– Trish Meyer, President

## Escribiente

P.O. BOX 30166  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87190

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-2018

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WORKSHOPS - **Elizabeth McKee** - alphabeth55 at gmail.com  
REFRESHMENTS - **Sharon Shannon** - sshannon2 at swcp.com

Materials will now be presented at each meeting by anyone who has an interesting tool or technique to show.

Refreshments for the meetings will be provided by anyone who is willing to share. Please bring your own drink if you wish. None will be provided.

## Cover Art

Our Weathergram on the cover is a beautiful one created by Jane Robertson, using a poem written by Dino de Leyba.

Photo by Trish Meyer

Escribiente is a non-profit organization of persons dedicated to the advancement and promotion of calligraphy. Meetings are held at 6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month, except for January and July. December’s holiday meeting will be announced. We meet at Manzano Mesa Multi-Generational Center (southwest corner of Elizabeth and Southern Streets).

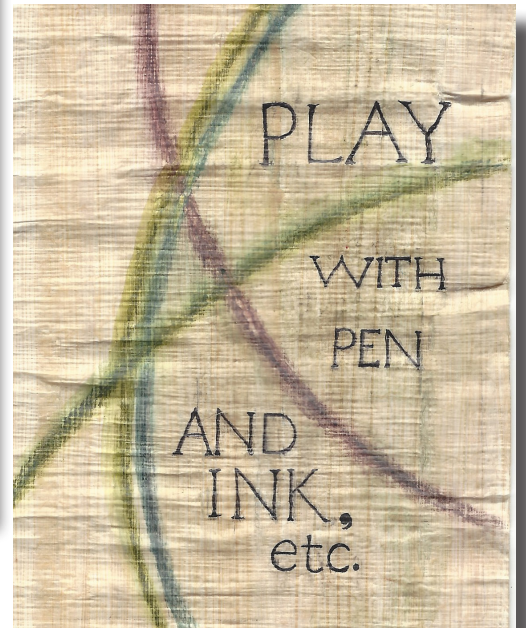
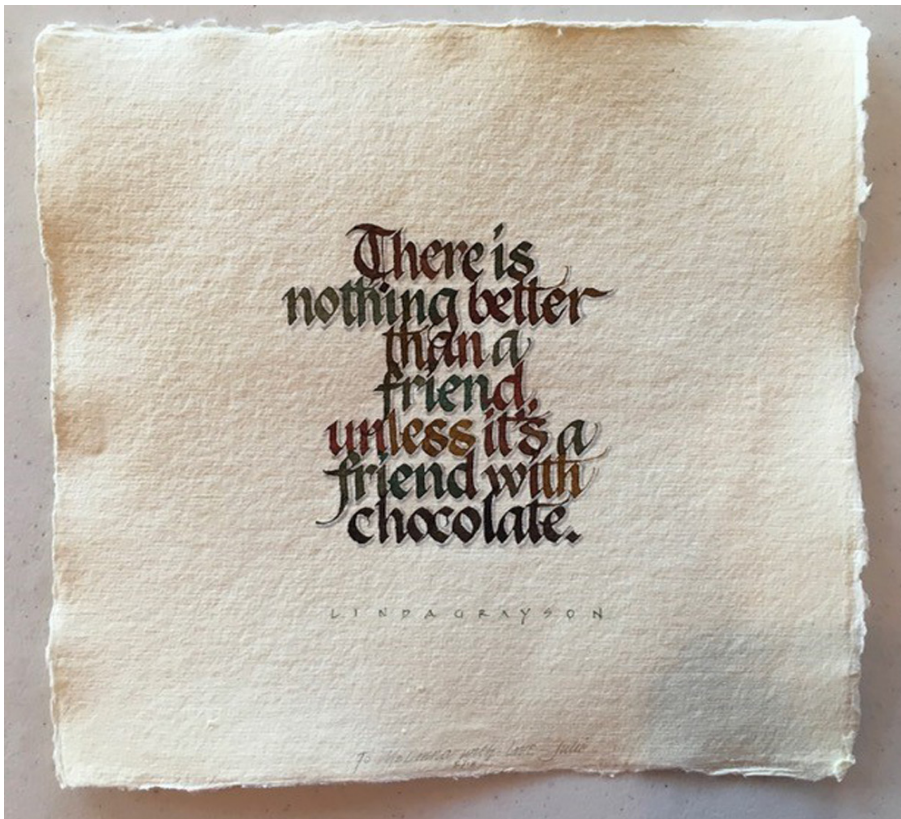
Yearly dues are \$30. with online Newsletter, and \$40. with printed and mailed Newsletter.

Dues are not pro-rated and are payable May-June. Benefits of membership include: receiving the Newsletter, book tape or DVD check-out from our lending library, discounts to attend workshops and a discount at Artisan’s Art Supply.

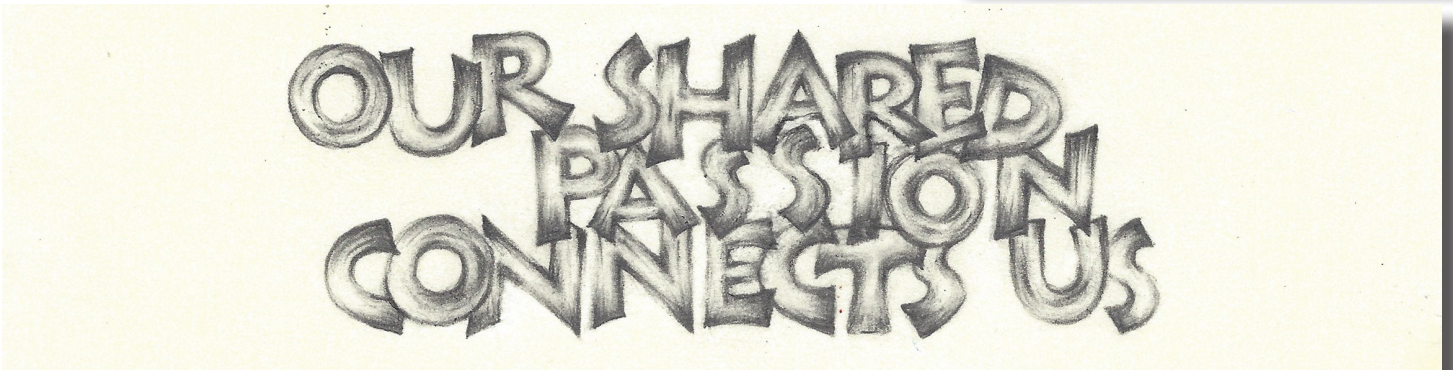
Dues should be mailed to:  
Escribiente, PO Box 30166, Albuquerque, NM 87190

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# THIS & THAT



Artwork created by members. Above, Julie Gray, right, Lynda Lawrence, below is Lynda's too, and on the bottom is Bill Kemp's sample of his pointed pen Foundational he taught us at the June meeting.



If one dream should fall  
and break into a thousand  
pieces, never be afraid  
to pick one of those  
pieces up and begin again.

FLAVIA



# Unpredicted Motion

by Elizabeth McKee

This October, at Matrix gallery, Elizabeth McKee's large-format accordion-fold book, **Assault of Angels**, will be on display along with studies she painted in preparation for undertaking this large project. The central piece is an enormous book, constructed from eighteen 22"x37" panels, and bound with Ugandan bark cloth, interpreting the poem *Assault of Angels* by Michael Roberts--a verse touching on the fear and joy of facing the unknown. This enormous book signals the fantastic size and power of the unknown. Against the backdrop of the cosmos, large angel wings can almost be heard beating, but the effect is not fear. Rather, it is awe.

**Unpredicted Motion** is both a line from **Assault of Angels** and a theme for the artist's life. Elizabeth was born in Finschhafen, New Guinea, to Lutheran missionaries from Iowa. She spent her early life in New Guinea, Iowa and Australia, completing her college education at the University of Iowa before moving to Japan to teach English. It was in Japan that she first discovered Calligraphy. A lover of both poetry and visual arts, McKee studied Japanese calligraphy and Chinese brush painting, before embarking on her journey with Western Calligraphy as a young mother in Ottawa, Canada. When a friend gave her a copy of Fred Eager's *The Italic Way to Beautiful Handwriting*, she felt that she had found her vocation.

The poet, Michael Roberts (1902-1948) was born William Edward Roberts and made his living as a teacher, editor, and broadcaster for the BBC. **Assault of Angels** is his most well-known verse and was included in the *Faber Book of Modern Verse*, which he also edited. He died from leukemia, at age 46 leaving behind his verse, and the *Faber Book of Modern Verse*, as well as a legacy as a pioneering ecologist years before it was fashionable.

McKee first encountered **Assault of Angels** in the late 1980's. It came to mind in 1990, as she and her husband Neill McKee, contemplated a move to Dhaka, Bangladesh, where he had been offered a job with UNICEF. Reading the line, "A time comes when the house is comfortable and narrow," she looked around her comfortable, narrow home in Ottawa and decided to accept the call of opportunity that the move to Asia represented. In Bangladesh, McKee embarked in a deep investigation of color theory, and also started a small business marbling cloth and paper items. A few years later, the McKees moved again to Nairobi, Kenya, where she ran a marbling business for four years. When she turned 50, she stopped marbling and began work on the book which will be on display.

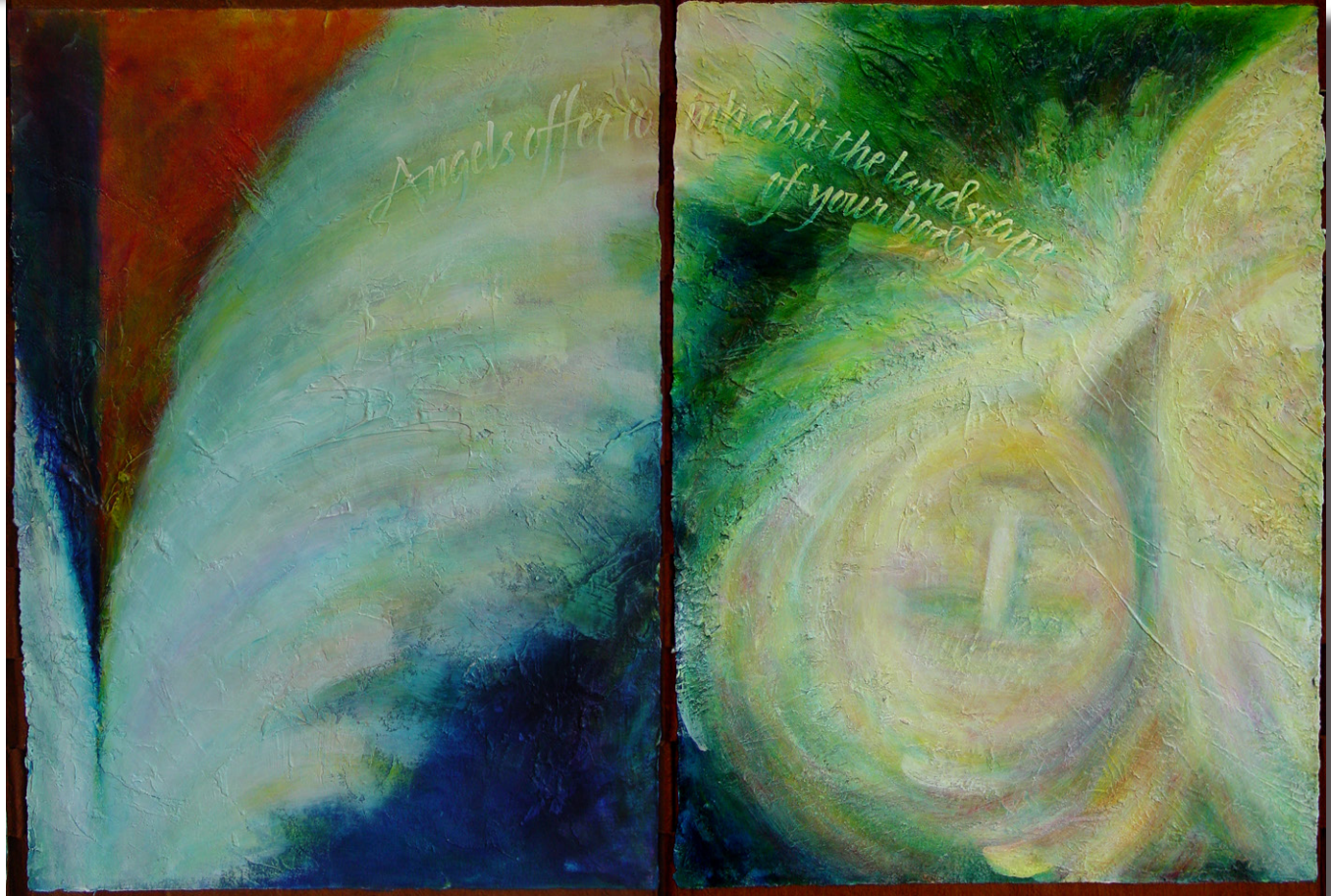
McKee began by painting the panels with her non-dominant hand to unlock her unconsciousness. She then ordered the pages and lettered the poem. Framing eighteen pieces as a *decem et octtych* was never going to work. This would be a book. McKee had studied binding techniques since the mid-1980's, but figuring out how best to bind the **Assault of Angels** was



a challenge. It wasn't until the McKee's next move, to Kampala, Uganda, that she was able to buy the bark cloth needed to make the binding possible. She did not establish the final structure of the book until 2002.

In 2001, McKee's husband's career led her to Pasadena, Maryland, and it is in her Maryland studio that she finally completed the project. By this time, she had also discovered her deep love of book arts, and began working almost exclusively in this medium. After turning 60, she gave herself the challenge to create sixty books by the time she turned 62. This exercise allowed her to more deeply examine the possibilities for what a "book" could be. Many of McKee's subsequent creations have been intricate sculptural works, which test the edges of the definition of the word "book".

Elizabeth and her husband moved to Albuquerque in 2015, another move that she never would have predicted. But they chose this city in large part for its vibrant artistic scene and in particular, its calligraphy and book arts communities.

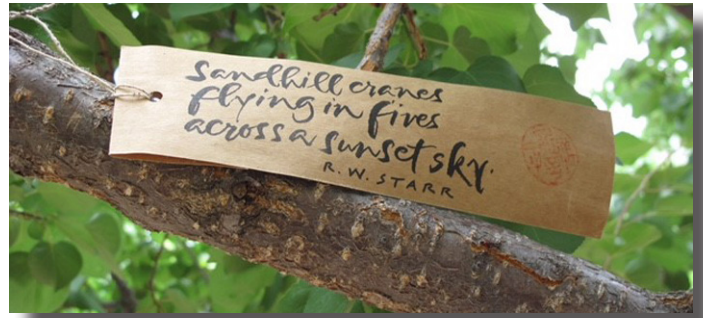


# 2018 POETS' PICNIC

MAY 26, 2018  
 OPEN SPACE VISITOR CENTER,  
 6500 COORS BLVD. NW, ALBUQUERQUE NM

*by Trish Meyer*

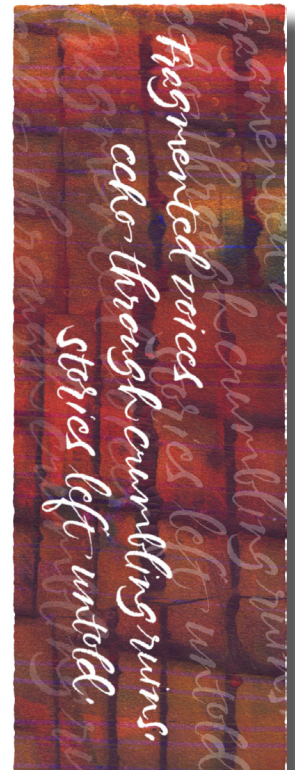
As part of the 2018 Poets' Picnic, Escribiente members calligraphed over 150 Weathergrams submitted by local NM poets, and these were hung on trees around the Open Space Visitor Center grounds. The event featured music, poetry readings and calligraphy demonstrations and was enjoyed by an appreciative audience on a beautiful sunny day. During the event, Elizabeth McKee, Ginger Larkin, Jan Florence, Penny Bencomo, and Trish Meyer created custom Weathergrams for attendees. These were offered for a \$5 donation, and we raised \$175 for the Open Space Alliance, a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote public awareness and conservation of Open Space lands. Our talented members also contributed artwork to the 2018 Poets' Picnic chapbook, which sold out before the event was over! Artwork was donated by Julie Gray, Janice Gabel, Esther Feske, Beth House, Caryl McHarney, and Elizabeth McKee. The chapbook was designed and printed by Trish, after which Esther rounded up members of LIBROS (New Mexico's Book Arts group) to hand bind the books. Proceeds of the chapbook sales (\$562) also benefited Open Space Alliance. Creating weathergrams is a perfect way to practice your calligraphy: The poems are short and fun, but there's just a little pressure to help you focus! And they are a wonderful introduction to calligraphy for members of the public, who get to enjoy these little offerings all summer long. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a smashing success!



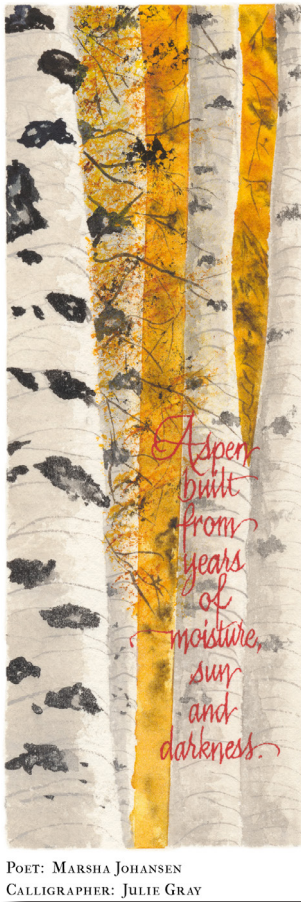
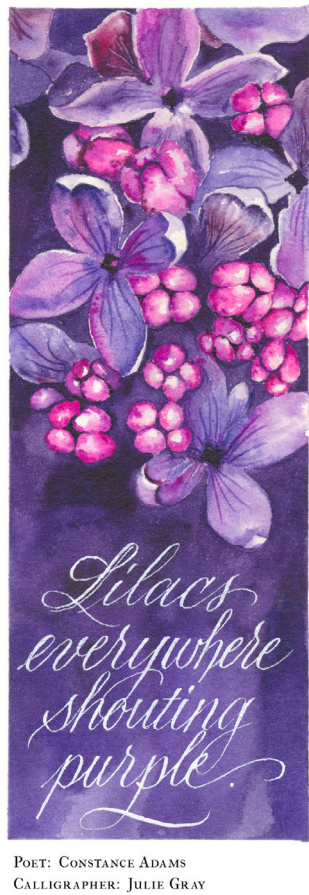
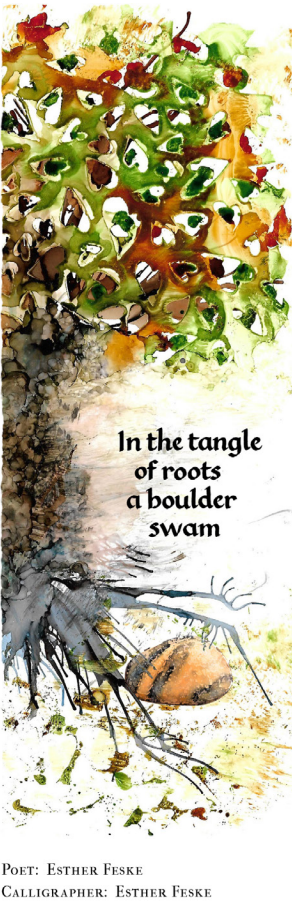
Lettering Weathergrams are from left: Trish Meyer, Jan Florence, Ginger Larkin and Elizabeth McKee.  
 (Photos on pages 6-9 by Evelyn Costello and Trish Meyer)

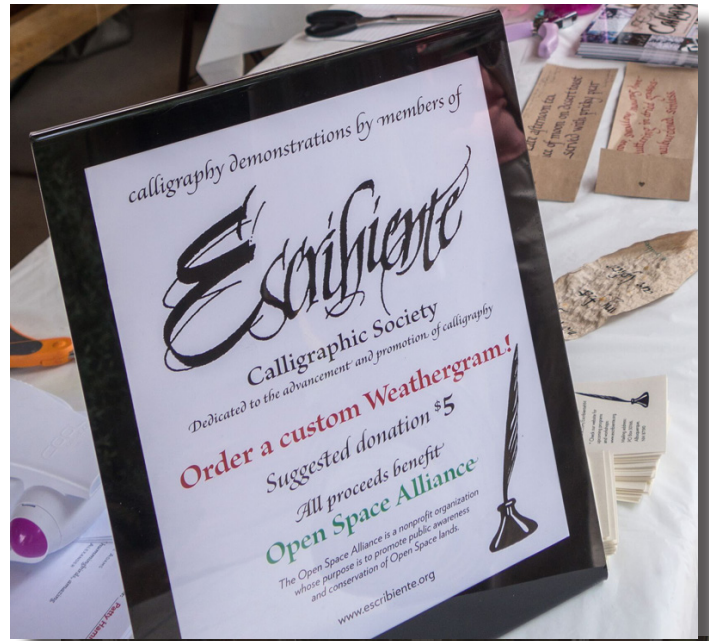


POET: CINDY RIGGS  
 CALLIGRAPHER: CARYL MCHARNEY



POET: STEPHANIE J. TUTTLE  
 CALLIGRAPHER: ELIZABETH MCKEE



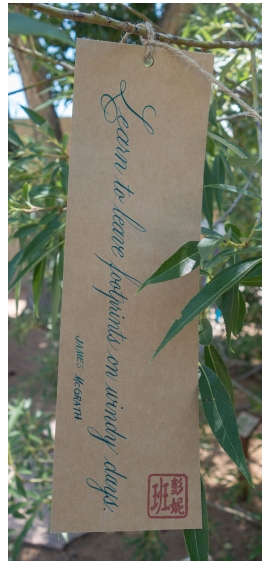


So many weathergrams hanging and blowing in the wind, done by talented calligraphers, representing talented poets!

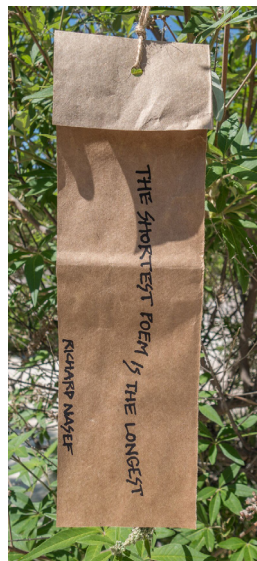




Jane Robertson



Penny Bencomo



Esther Feske



Patty Hammarstedt



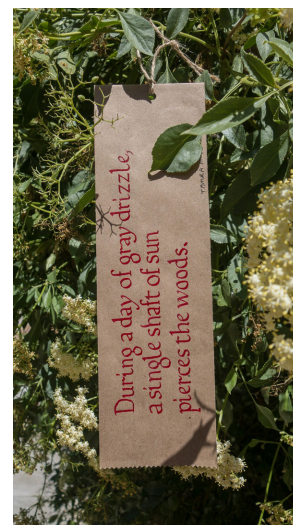
Ginger Larkin



Janice Gabel



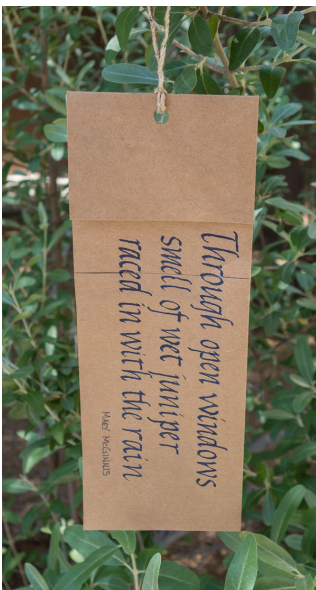
Pam Beason



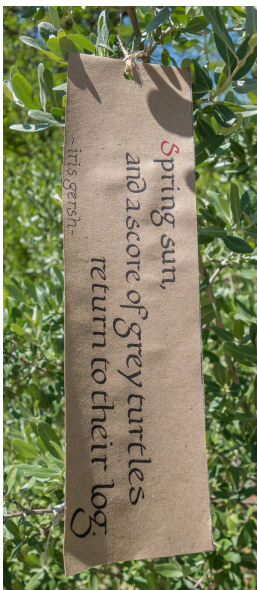
Sharon Shannon



Catherine Hogan



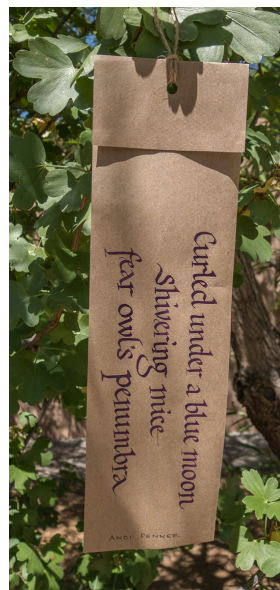
Lora Morton



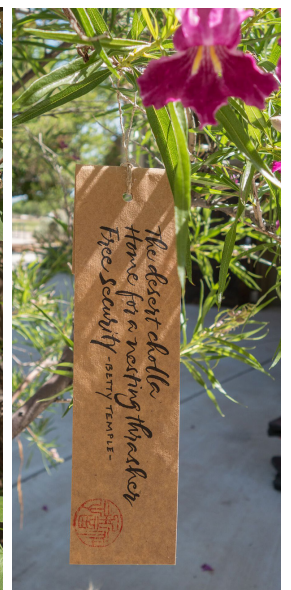
Polly Owens



Beth House



Trish Meyer



Elizabeth McKee

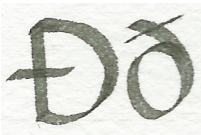
# We used to have six more letters in the English alphabet.

...and spelling seems hard enough already...

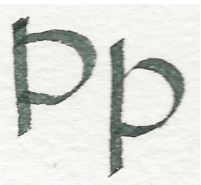
Written by Hannah Poindexter. Submitted by Esther Teske

Along quaint New England streets, you'll probably spot a sign or two declaring itself "Ye Olde Tavern" or "Ye Olde Soda Shoppe". But before you adopt a British accent and order a pint of ale inside, there's a bit of history you should know. Phrases like *ye olde* are actually just some of the late 19th century's first marketing ploys, meant to evoke a sentimental connection to older times. And *ye* has its own complicated story--based in the history of the alphabet.

English has always been a living language, changing and evolving with use. But before our modern alphabet was established, the language used many more characters we've since removed from our 26-letter lineup. The six that most recently got axed are:



**Eth** The *y* in *ye* actually comes from the letter eth, which slowly merged with *y* over time. In its purest form, eth was pronounced like the *th* sound in words like *this*, *that*, or *the*. Linguistically, *ye* is meant to sound the same as *the* but the incorrect spelling and rampant mispronunciation live on.



**Thorn** Thorn is in many ways the counterpart to eth. Thorn is also pronounced with a *th* sound, but it has a voiceless pronunciation--your vocal cords don't vibrate when pronouncing the sound--like in *thing* or *thought*.

Today, the same *th* letter combo is used for both eth and thorn sounds. There is a pronunciation difference--thorn is a voiceless pronunciation and eth is voiced--but that's just something you pick up as you learn to speak. Of course, you'll never hear about this in school, because that's English for you.



**Wynn** Wynn was incorporated into our alphabet to represent today's *w* sound. Previously, scribes used two *u* characters next to each other, but preferred one character instead and chose wynn from the runic alphabet. The double *u* representation became quite popular and eventually edged wynn out. Ouch!



**Yogh** Yogh was historically used to denote throaty sounds like those in *Bach* or the Scottish *loch*. As English evolved, yogh was quickly abandoned in favor of the *gh* combo. Today, the sound is fairly rare. Most often, the *gh* substitute is completely silent, as in *though* or *daughter*.



**Ash** Ash is still a functional letter in languages like Icelandic and Danish. In its original Latin, it denoted a certain type of long vowel sound, like the *i* in *fine*. In Old English, it represented a short vowel sound--somewhere between *a* and *e*, like in *cat*. In modern English, ash is occasionally used stylistically, like in *archaeology* or *medæval*, but denotes the same sound as the letter *e*.



**Ethel** Ethel also once represented a specific pronunciation somewhere between the two vowels *o* and *e*, though it was originally pronounced like the *oi* in *coil*. Like many clarifying distinction, this letter also disappeared in favor of a simpler vowel lineup (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*) with many different pronunciations.



**A Calligraphy Club has started on the west side.**

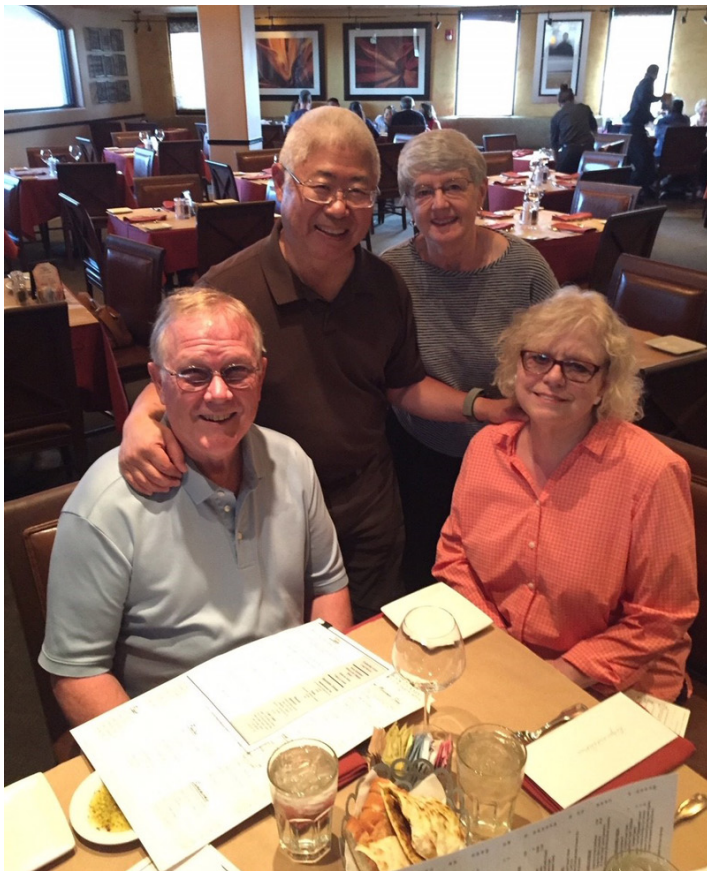
We meet most second Tuesdays at the Esther Bone Library, 950 Pinetree Road SE, Rio Rancho. NM. 87124 from 10:00am- Noon!

**Beth House** is teaching an Uncial class at the Meadowlark Senior Center in Rio Rancho. It's a four session class beginning Sept. 20, continuing Oct. 4 & 18, and Nov. 1. Registration begins 9am- on the first Thurs. of the month which is Sept. 6. Cost is \$2:00/class. Membership is free. 4030 Meadowlark Senior Center, 4330 Meadowlark Lane SE, Rio Rancho, NM, 87123. **505-891-5018**

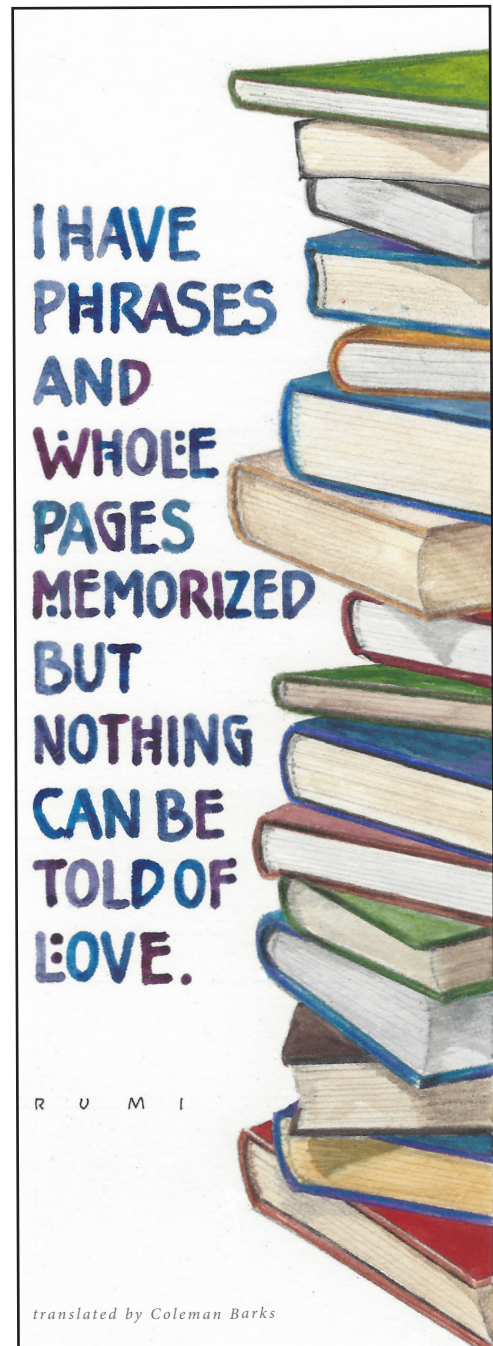
This class is limited to 12 students.

**Questions: Beth House**

**House.richard807@gmail.com**



A farewell dinner with very dear friends, Rodger and Dianne Mayeda, and Bill and Linda Kemp. It was not truly a farewell dinner, but until we meet again. Rodger brought so much light and love to Escribiente, with his beautiful pen holders and his enthusiastic raffles! He and Dianne leave for Colorado to start a new chapter of their lives. We wish them all the best, and hope they come back often to visit!



*A bookmark for you!*



Rick House talking about his book and box from Teresa's class



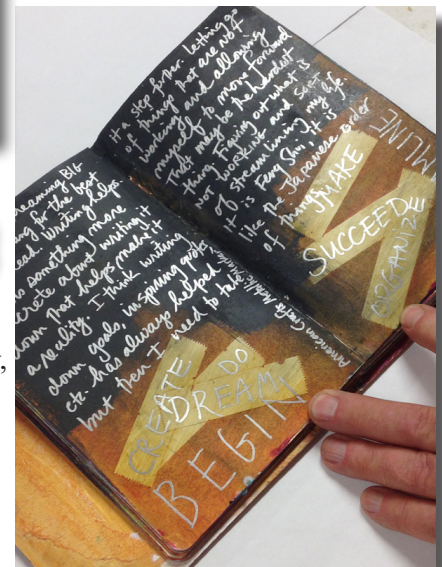
One of Carrie Imai's cards



Piñon classrooms



Carrie with Mary Curry from Las Cruces



From the Journaling class

# Literally Letters, Ghost Ranch 2018

by Beth House

Five days of classes at Ghost Ranch really gets you away from the chaos of daily life! Our classrooms were in the Piñon Buildings-very convenient to the Dining Hall, Library and lower level bedrooms. My class with Carrie Imai began with a basic Italic review. Even though I teach Italic, I always learn more! Of the five students in our class, Christine was totally new to calligraphy. With Carrie's teaching methods, she developed very nice letterforms by the end of the week. The Italic style Carrie taught began with a 30 degree pen angle on top of an "a", then changed to a 45 degree pen angle for the rest of the letter. All horizontal strokes were at 30 de-

grees. Also, Carrie's branching began low, making the Letters narrower. Carrie reviewed Neuland and introduced a style she has developed: "Carrieokie"! Carrieokie is fun !

It is lowercase and can be very condensed.

Rick's Books and Boxes class taught by Teresa Wilber was noisy and enjoyable! Covering and gluing a book-board box with his decorated paper and sewing a book using a Coptic stitch was new to him. Teresa is a great teacher! Janice Gabel took Painting and Journaling by Caitlin Dundon.

It was wonderful to be in the Ghost Ranch environment and sharing the experience with others! Amy and I have contacted many possible teachers for next year and hope to know soon Ghost Ranch's decision on 2019's Staff for Literally Letters!



### Ghost Ranch 2018 Students...

Front Row: Betsy Barker, Thelma Hahn, Beth House, Carrie Imai, Amy Jones, Christine Connor, Janice Gabel, Jean Long.  
Back row: Debbie Ozment, Kate Barker-Froyland, Mary Curry, Suzi Brown, Wendy Fox, Caitlin Dundon, Teresa Wilber, LeeAnn Meadows.  
Missing: Jenny Dyer, Rick House



Caitlin talking to Thelma and Christine (from Omaha - her first calligraphy class with Carrie)



Teresa Wilber, Instructor, showing her books to LeeAnn Meadows and Betsy Barker



Teresa showing her Turkish Fold book



Janice Gabel with instructor Caitlin Dundon



Journaling class



Thelma Hahn with Teresa Wilber



Amy Jones showing gift from Carrie

# Journaling at Ghost Ranch

by Janice Sabel

I had a delightful week at Ghost Ranch for Literally Letters in early June, taking Painted Art Journals with Seattle artist Caitlin Dundon. We explored many techniques using acrylic paint, gesso and matte medium: layering, sgraffito, resists, scraping, wet and dry stenciling, stamping, embossing and collage. Most of the techniques were not new to me. What I found invaluable in this class was the process of developing my journal pages. First and foremost, I was not creating a finished piece of art. There was no pressure to “produce”. These pages could be created for the fun of it, for trying new things. I worked in multiple journals simultaneously, which allowed time for drying and made me “Let It Go...what was done was done, now go do something else!”

As layers were added and new techniques tried, I learned “Not To Worry”. It didn’t matter if something didn’t work...mistakes could be repainted, sanded or covered up with collage. (And if all else failed, add quinacridone nickel azo gold!) Eventually, however, some of my pages were beyond the help of quin gold! I was challenged to find anything I liked about them! This is when Caitlin introduced WABI-SABI – the aesthetic described as one of “beauty that is imperfect, impermanent and incomplete”. I was learning to embrace imperfection and appreciate the concept that scars are signs of experience.

Instead of giving up on those ugly pages, I needed to push through...to ask each painting “What do you need?”, then try something else. After all, what’s the worst that can happen? This step is important, especially when it is thoughtfully done. And I can say that, while I still don’t care for some of my pages (yet), all of them were improved. One spread even became my favorite! Of course the week was over before I could even begin to add lettering, as in journaling, to my pages. But these books have barely been started. And I have come away from this



class encouraged to approach all of my work with these principles and methods.

# Poisoned Books!

*from AtlasObscura.com*



The librarians at the University of Southern Denmark weren't looking for poison. They just wanted to read the scraps of manuscript used to make the covers of three rare books from the 16th and 17th centuries.

When they put the books under X-ray analysis, though, they found they had a real danger in their hands, they write at *The Conversation*. The books' covers were suffused with arsenic.

For years, in the 19th century, arsenic was considered dangerous to eat but safe enough to use in other ways, including as dye in postage stamps that were meant to be licked or in green dresses worn to fancy balls. It was regularly used as an ingredient in green paint, to help the color last longer. Now, though, we know that when arsenic is used in paint, it's still very dangerous. It can form microscopic particles that can make their way into people's lungs. In some circumstances, arsenic paint can even give off a poisonous gas.

One of the most dangerous books ever created was meant to warn against exactly this danger. In the 1870s, an American doctor tried to raise awareness of the hazards of arsenic-laced wallpaper by creating a book of potentially poisonous samples and sending it around to libraries. The intent was to help people identify dangerous wallpaper in their homes, not to poison librarians. Today, only four copies of that book still exist, and they're treated very carefully.

The books at the University of Southern Denmark weren't painted green for aesthetic reasons; the librarians think that someone was using the poison paint to protect the books from insects and vermin. But when their tests revealed the arsenic content of the paint, they couldn't ignore it. The books are now kept in a ventilated cabinet and boxes marked with warnings. The librarians are also planning on digitizing the books to minimize the need to handle them. (That can be a complicated procedure all on its own, though.)

It just goes to show—books can be more dangerous than anyone realizes.



An Honorable Mention was awarded to Julie Gray this year for her entry in the Graceful Envelope Contest.

To see other winning entries, go to [www.calligraphersguild.org/envwinners2018.html](http://www.calligraphersguild.org/envwinners2018.html)

# Oh My Gouache!

**Gouache** is opaque watercolor. It has a type of chalk or Blanc Fixe added to give it opacity. Gouache has good covering power, and will dry to a flat, matte surface.

**As** the nib size gets smaller, thin the gouache with water to increase the flow through the pen.

**Pebeo** T7 Designer Gouache #16 Rich Gold is a good metallic gold to use with a dip pen. It can be diluted with water to any consistency and is very metallic.

## MEDIUMS THAT MAKE GOUACHE MORE PERMANENT

**Acrylic Matte Medium** - can be added to the gouache. It will allow you to write over previous layers.

**Egg Yolk** - Some colors will smudge less if you add egg yolk. Egg yolk makes letters richer, crisper and more translucent.

Separate the egg. Save the white for glair. Gently place the yolk in the palm of your hand. Roll the yolk, carefully wiping the excess white with your free hand onto paper towel. Hold the yolk by pinching one end and pierce the yolk over a container. Beat the yolk and add water - about twice as much water as yolk. Add drops of this mix to your gouache.

You might not want to use this mixture in a book, as it may crack. Use glair instead.

**Glair** - Separate an egg. Place the egg white in a bowl. Whip the egg white until it is stiff. Place in the refrigerator, covered, overnight.

In the morning the white will have separated, leaving behind a liquid beneath the stiffened egg white.

Pour this liquid into a small container. Add drops of this to your gouache to make it more permanent.

Refrigerate any mixture containing egg, and throw out any water that has egg in it to avoid the smell of rotten eggs. The dried paint will be odor free.

## GOUACHE AS A RESIST

**If** you find masking fluid difficult to use, white gouache is a good choice. Use a good quality paper at least 200 GSM weight.

Write with white gouache mixed to a thick consistency and use a light touch to avoid cutting the paper surface. A broad edge works well.

When completely dry, brush on a wash of waterproof ink and allow that to dry completely.

The white gouache can then be washed off the paper. Leave to soak in large container. This could take several hours, but don't try to quicken the process by picking at it. Let dry completely.

Other letters can be made on top of waterproof ink and new washes made in the same or different colors.

**Gouache** and Watercolor can be mixed together. A drop of white can be added to enhance the opacity.

**You** can mix transparent watercolors with Dr. Martin's Bleedproof White or Pro-White for pastel colors on dark papers. This will also give a raised look to the lettering.

**Stir** gouache frequently, as some pigments settle faster than others. Gouache has more dense particles than watercolors to make it opaque. When mixing gouache, a good consistency should be similar to Half and Half or a light cream.

BE SURE TO SEE YOUR NEWSLETTER AND OTHER INTERESTING ITEMS RELATING TO CALLIGRAPHY ON ESCRIBIENTE'S WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.ESCRIBIENTE.ORG](http://www.escribiente.org)

If you would like to receive up-to-the-minute information and news relating to Escribiente and its members, send your e-mail address to Bill Kemp at: **brotherbill55@hotmail.com** and he will add you on.

The deadline for submissions for upcoming issues of Escribiente Newsletter...

2018-4 ISSUE: deadline is OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2018

2019-1 ISSUE: deadline is JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2019

2019-2 ISSUE: deadline is APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2019

2019-3 ISSUE: deadline is JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2019

2019-4 ISSUE: deadline is OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2019

Any information and/or artwork you have is welcome! Classes you've attended, artwork you have done, tidbits of news, awards you've won, book reviews, a favorite material you can't wait to tell everyone about, upcoming shows, classes you are teaching, etc. etc. This is YOUR connection with the calligraphic world in New Mexico and beyond...we always welcome your input!

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