



Contemplation

in the High Desert

Quatrains inspired by the Poetry of Rumi

by

Teresa E. Gallion

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inner child press, ltd.

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Dedicated

to

Hertzog and Teresa Gallion

Two Loving Parents

Many thanks to

Debbi Brody

for keeping me grounded during the review
and editing of this body of work.

Light and love to you my friend.

Teresa

Foreword

I like it when the musician, author or poet behind the words or music match in tone what I am reading or hearing in their work. I met Teresa before I heard her poetry, so learned that part first. She has a strong presence you can feel when she enters a room, and a gentle, velvety voice. Teresa is confident, grounded and earthy. She is a joy just to be with and laughs easily. I love it when she shares stories about her treks in the New Mexico mountains and desert and weaves the deep revelations that come as she hikes.

So as I read the quatrains in this book, and read lines like “I hear God laughing,” or “Awakened to the Master’s touch,” or “Watching angels Spar in the velvet night,” I know they have more meaning and realness than they would from anyone else. Teresa has actually *heard* God laughing. You can hear it in her own laughter as she stacks chairs with me after a worship service or a gig. She has indeed *awakened to her Master’s touch*. It shows in her eyes and in the way she treats those around her.

When Teresa writes, “The truth stands / next to the blade of grass / it strokes your leg /every time you walk across my land,” it is not simply a pretty poetic metaphor - she has *felt* both the blade of grass *and* the Truth standing next to her. She absolutely lives that way. And readers will know or sense this as they delve into these quatrains.

I have seen and felt the deep spirituality she lives and practices every day; she has read the works and teachings of Rumi for many years and exudes the same kind of genuine spiritual knowing. How honoring that her feet and mine walk the same dry, desert ground, and match in the spiritual and earthly energies. Yes, Teresa is my favorite kind of artist: one whose words are an extension of the Soul through which they emanate.

I invite you to take a spiritual journey in the pages that follow, inspired by the poetry of one whose words and being are one.

Michael John Hall
September, 2011

Preface

I am blessed to live in a high desert sanctuary where the sun shines more than 325 days a year, where the blue vaulted sky sports the most spectacular clouds and the night sky twinkles with ecstatic brilliance. Add to that the indescribably beautiful New Mexico landscape that draws artist and writers from all over the world. Within that context, I often find my head in the clouds whether walking the city streets, a desert arroyo or a Ponderosa Pine trail. For me, the New Mexico landscape is sacred ground. To share this space with the soul of Rumi is a blessing.

I became intimately acquainted with Rumi (13th century Sufi mystic and poet) over the past 12 years, sharing moments of quiet reading and reflection when one retreats from the tasks of daily living. Rumi resonates with my heart and soul as I sit in my rocking chair at home, as I sit by my morning campfire, as I sit in a natural hot spring in the mountains, as I sit by a river gently flowing past, as I sit under a Juniper Tree in the middle of the winter desert. No matter where I read Rumi, I am always inspired to write quatrains in response to the lyrics of wisdom that sing to me. He makes me laugh and cry, stand in righteous indignation, tremor with ecstatic joy and sometimes I dance, especially at home. All of these emotions flow into four line verses that respond to whatever touches me in that moment.

I did not start writing quatrains with the intent of publishing a book. My dear friend and colleague, Debbi Brody, would see a few of them every year when we attended the annual writers festival at Ghost Ranch Conference and Retreat Center in Northern New Mexico.

Preface . . . continued

She always said, “You need to put these together in a book.” So I finally listened to that gentle nudge of Spirit coming through Debbi. When I put the quatrains together as a collection, I realized the significance of what I had been doing for so many years. I was unfolding spiritually at a pace I could handle. *Contemplation in the High Desert* has become a love offering to all who spend time in quiet reflection, contemplation or meditation. Each quatrain stands alone and may be used to start or end your day. If you are a writer, I hope it provides prompts to jump start your writing. If you are an artist, I hope it stimulates your creative juices. Regardless, I hope these quatrains stimulate your inner journey of self. Most of all, I hope they provide a partner to sit with and simply reflect on life.

I invite you to sit in a quiet space that gives you solace and taste the flavors of these quatrains. You may find some that will tickle your taste buds. The menu is diverse. Indulge yourself and may you find something that nourishes your Spirit.

Teresa E. Gallion
May the Blessings Be
September, 2011

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Joy is earned in charitable deeds
If you are not joyful
You have much work to do
Go across the street and help your neighbor pull
weeds



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I break my bread in half
Hand a piece to Spirit
Spirit gives it back to me
Share with your brothers and sisters



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Listen to the harp play in the garden
The melody reaches for your heart
A rainbow of strings
Are tuned to your consciousness



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Undress your emotions
Bathe them in this stream
Feel the power of the sacred water
Dress you in love



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A river of joyfulness
Floats in the light and sound
Sit in solitude with the master
Get acquainted with joy



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Sitting by the stream
I hear God laughing
Ecstatic wind massages my face
Soul dances in the sunlight



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Burning in the fire of love
We surrender to the moment
Spirit offers a ride
We fly on the wings of butterflies



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Soul floats down river
Bathing in light and sound
The experience of freedom
Is imprinted on the heart



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I sleep 24 hours per day
And life bounces all around me
But today I drink at the well of purification
Awakened to the Master's touch



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Teresa E. Gallion



When you get knocked down hard
Lick your boots clean
Get up
Start walking again



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Teresa E. Gallion



Every time you ask for help from Spirit
An answer comes
Not necessarily the way you want it
Always as a healing massage



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Teresa E. Gallion



Every tree that lies down in the forest
Is a sacrifice to earth
A return to its origin
The beginning of rebirth



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Teresa E. Gallion



Gratitude is misplaced
In outward proclamation
From the heart's landscape
It flows freely



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Teresa E. Gallion



When snow and ice melt
Waters of life form
A pure lake for your heart
To float unattached



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Teresa E. Gallion



Water is the history
Of my soul flowing past
Through the current
Many passages



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Teresa E. Gallion



The truth stands
Next to the blade of grass
It strokes your leg
Every time you walk across my land



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Teresa E. Gallion



He listened very attentively
Then asked, *do you see the solitary branch*
Focus on the tip
Discipline will show you the way



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Sit beside the stream
To gather your thoughts
Bend your knees toward the ripples
Feel the presence of God



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I am the rosebud that tempts your nose
I am the harp string of your heart
I am the musical growl in your belly
I am the mystical massage on your cheeks



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The scent of light
Touches intimately
A slow melt in the sand
Releases body from soul



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Teresa E. Gallion



Water rolls over the falls
The rush of spirit
Grabs attention
Expands smiles



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I saw you dance under the light bulb
It shimmered above your head
What power you have
Stepping to the Beloved's rhythm



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I am full
Yet the light penetrates
There is always
Room for God's holy light



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Teresa E. Gallion



Soul watches me all night
At daybreak kisses my forehead
Steps back into my body
With a cup of gratitude to share



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Teresa E. Gallion



Your arms are the tree trunks
My hands cling to
If I let go
I have to face life



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Teresa E. Gallion



I am hungry
Watching angels
Spar in the velvet night
I want a piece of that action



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Teresa E. Gallion



The Beloved sits at the river bank
Relieving hearts of pain and sorrow
I think I will sit at the river
Wait for my turn to surrender



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Teresa E. Gallion



Passion strolls in on a slow breeze
Flirts with everything in its path
If I miss its crimson kiss
I will not be bound to earth school



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Teresa E. Gallion



To feel lonely is a failure to see
All the gifts that surround you
Open your eyes
The world waits for your embrace



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She said, *your head is in the clouds*
I said, *pure joy, wonderful pillow*
She said, *don't play with me*
I said, *let's dance with the Beloved*



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The song of the waterfall
Entertains day walkers
Arms bent backwards
In meditative pose



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I lay a prayer on your chest
To soothe your burning sleep
It is selfish to hold back
When love flows in my river



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Teresa E. Gallion



Some days it is enough
To simply look up
Take a deep breath
Savor the deep blue sky



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She followed the Beloved to the garden
He touched a rose
With a loving thought
Her smile expanded like a waterfall



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Look beyond the words
Catch a glimpse of the tsunami
Crowding the shoreline
Planting seeds of love in mayhem



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Teresa E. Gallion



Karmic creditors come to collect
I bend over my altar to dry my tears
I am gently picked up
Anointed with the blue light of love



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Teresa E. Gallion



The master of knowledge spoke to me without a
word
He unveiled the stage show on the planet
Raised his hand and said
Behold! Be silent!



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Teresa E. Gallion



I lock onto its gaze
My body floats to its ship
Running up and down the deck
I stumble into the presence of Spirit



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Teresa E. Gallion



Lightning streaks across the sky
God speaks with authority
I bow in respect
I lived through the experience



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I move from wanting to longing
To hear your voice say my name
Thoughts of you cast a shadow
On the path I walk



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I sit on planet earth
Spell bound in illusion
Forgetfulness threatens me
Slows my journey home



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Spirit rubs ashes of life across his face
Karma drips from his cheeks
The River swells in red
Steam climbs skyward pulls Soul along



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This is your best moment
Yesterday is memory
Tomorrow is not yours
Breathe gratitude in the present moment



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Rub my knees to the bone
Spirit releases its protective grip
I want to run up the side of the mountain
And proclaim my freedom



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Life's lessons line your pockets
They overflow with spiritual treasures
Jiggle your pockets
Be grateful for the coins of wisdom



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You already know the answers
When you are ready
Just look inside
Soul holds them with open arms



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Truth manifests in the light
Are you ready to ride the light stream
Back home to God
Release old body and let Soul fly



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He drank from the chalice
Gold ran down his cheeks
The elixir of Spirit massaged his body
Teasing Soul to pursue the chase



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I skip on the stars
Hug the moon close to my heart
I am blessed
I surrender to bliss



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Teresa E. Gallion



I admit
Your rejection struck a painful nerve
Thank you for waking me up
I fell asleep on the path



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I hugged the darkness
Cuddled my pain
Wept all my gratitude
At the feet of Spirit



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Teresa E. Gallion



Death stopped at my gate
Saw your light in my window
Death ran from life
Tucking its tail in the wind



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Teresa E. Gallion



My tears ran away
Looking for a place to hide
You walked into my life
Holding my bucket of tears



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Your words pierce my heart
The pain so intense
I hug it in your honor
Peace floods my veins



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I was whipped by your rejection
Refused the grief strutting in
Bent over my river of tears
Thanked the Beloved for the experience



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Tsunami broke my silence
Made me look up
into the window of truth
I wanted to run and hide



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The desert is enchanted
Calls forth my longing
Rising from the sand
As I engage the moment



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I trotted into friendship
Like a royal white stallion
Friendship rejected me
Did not break my spirit



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I tasted human love
In the kiss on your lips
The honey melting your embrace
Reminded me of home



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Teresa E. Gallion



Sitting on this desert mesa
Watching Pedernal suck clouds for dinner
I am enthralled by the natural power
Of nature's simplicity



Footnote : Pedernal is a mountain in northern New Mexico

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Teresa E. Gallion



Cotton candy and hot dogs on a stick
Riding decades of change
Hold their position
On the rotating axis of earth



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She is sweet wine hugging my tongue
Vermillion butterflies land on my lip
To taste the sweetness
Of an unknown goddess



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Teresa E. Gallion



Touch me in intimate places
And hug me in eternal bliss
For you bring me joy
That is sweet and pure.



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Teresa E. Gallion



I have a hangover from loving you
That sleep will not cure
Don't get caught like me
Run like hell for the mountains



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Teresa E. Gallion



If you look at the mountain
And laughter fills your belly
Share your insight
With a lost and lonely friend



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Teresa E. Gallion



When someone reminds you
How emotional you are
Remember the healing wisdom of Spirit
Comes in subtle ways



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Teresa E. Gallion



Sugar rolls down your lips
I lick the clouds with authority
That is as close as I may come to you
We were separated at birth



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Teresa E. Gallion



I sat submerged in mud
Soaked the misery from my bones
You extended your hand
I stood up, embraced an ecstatic wind



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Teresa E. Gallion



I thought of you
A butterfly landed on the window
My heart fluttered
As I scanned your wings



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Teresa E. Gallion



The blue light soared above me
All sorrows melted like butter
My spirit took flight
In the hands of the Beloved



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Teresa E. Gallion



The loss of love trotted behind me
As I tried to out run the wind
There's something tight in grief and pain
That gives us strength to run



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Red wine spills from his lips
Infuses life in the plants tickling his feet
They rise
Filled with laughter and love



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We exchanged hands today
I gave you my left hand
You gave me your right hand
Everything changed for the better



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I lay beside the fireplace
Burning with joy and peace
I want to run away from responsibility
And dance in the flames of love



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A thought of you so powerful
It breaks my wine glass
I cannot afford such thoughts
Crystal is too expensive



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Lapis streaks between the clouds
Birds flap wings above earth, below sky
A mirage of light
Floods the atmosphere



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I stared down a wolf
Claiming the edge of the forest
This is not the first time
Courage has dominated my life



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Teresa E. Gallion



Black rubber stains the concrete
The street buckles under the pain
The next tire challenges the road
Tread melts into liquid distress



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Teresa E. Gallion



I take a handful of sky
Toss it to a friend
Watch it swell like an ocean wave
Around her heart



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Teresa E. Gallion



I awake to morning lying in dead skin
Shed on the dark night of soul
Skin breathing love and gratitude
My new dress code



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Drink from my river
It is pure and sweet
I know this to be true
I saw the Beloved playing in the water



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A choir of angels sings
At the foot of my bed
My guardian says, *come with me*
It is time to face the music



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The first light of morning
Hugs me gently
Opens the pathway
On the trail to the Beloved's cabin



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A seeker came to the river
Saw the Beloved fishing
He asked, *why are you fishing*
So that you may eat



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God touched her with a thought
She could not stop laughing
A boat appeared in the water
God said, *come ride with me*



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The gentle breeze
Knows the secrets of the forest
Listen with your heart
Embrace the storyteller



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She panics at the crossroad
Unable to move
A stranger appears on the road
He says, *all roads lead to God*



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The seeker runs around the forest like a madman
The teacher walks casually in the forest
The seeker yells, *where can I find God*
The teacher says, *you're standing on sacred
ground*



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Wake up, wake up
The Beloved stands at your window
Waiting for you
To come out to play



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The spiritual fire burns within
It is love
Open the gates of illumination
Let the flames hijack a ride in the trees



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I have no expectations
I want to give you a gift
A love offering from soul
My smile



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I cannot tell you how to live your life
I can only tell you how I live mine
Is there something from my dinner plate you need
Take a spoonful please



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I play with her in the yard
Whose teeth are strongest in this sock tugging war
My dog does not care
She is in dog heaven playing with her master



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He raped her with words
Walked away licking his lips
Don't worry about his arrogance
Karma is coming to kick his butt



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Step lightly on this sacred ground
Like a baby's first steps
Tip toe into awakening
From the Beloved's touch



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Give me a cool drink of water
From the palm of your hand
Your soft touch
Fills me with gratitude



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A dove lands on the ground
Lays an olive branch at her feet
He walks in armored
With a dozen red roses



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Plant seeds of delight
In the garden of ecstasy
Watch the birds come to steal
To plant seeds of love in mayhem



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The eyes of the wolf
Lock my gaze
Pierces my inner child
With stains of love



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When you are weary and restless
Get off the negative road
Step knee deep into a mud ditch
Pretend you are stomping grapes



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Give me a bowl of strawberries
A love offering from your heart
I will hold the sweetness
Close to my soul



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I want to touch your petals
Feel your velvet charms
Massage my fingers
Into a precious ruby



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Teresa E. Gallion



A picture weaves an intricate web
Stained with time memorials
Do we dare say
Open wide and let your children enter



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Teresa E. Gallion



The door is open
Come into my house
Drink from my fountain of peace
Enfold your Spirit in love



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I see you gazing into sadness
Your tears flood the road
I extend my hand
To help you climb out of loneliness



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Teresa E. Gallion



Here in the desert silence
I find sanctuary
Here in the desert silence
I hear the hum of sacred voices



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Teresa E. Gallion



Rise up, come fly with me
I float in beauty
Surrounded by light and sound
I am love



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Teresa E. Gallion



Looking into the void
Heavenly light draws me to you
Touch my hand Oh Beloved
I want to float in eternal bliss



Contemplation in the High Desert
Teresa E. Gallion



I climb the side of your back
Touch the jewels running up your spine
Feel the presence of Spirit
Guiding all hikers up the trail



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The sky is falling into my hands
Earth trembles on my behalf
My angel helps me hold the sky
In the palm of my hand



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Teresa E. Gallion



I ate apples of peace
You sliced apples of joy
An apple slice touched your lips
Became an apple of love



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Teresa E. Gallion



His inner child does hard drugs
Makes him run wild in the streets
Chasing the roaming dust
From the Beloved's feet



Contemplation in the High Desert
Teresa E. Gallion



Opened my heart
To nature's gallery
Swell of joy inexpressible
Ran wild across the landscape



Contemplation in the High Desert
Teresa E. Gallion



Looking inward
The light greets me
When I reach for it
Radiance blooms in my hands



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I taste a wisdom cherry
The garden in my heart blooms
I run across the universe
Sharing love bouquets



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There is a message
In the jaws of the flames
Buckle up homo sapiens
I am pissed off



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A full moon rises
Teasing the heart valves
A cascade of radiant light
Calls me home



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Life giving water flows over the waterfall
Evaporates in a flowing mist
I must acquire a thirst
To catch that eternal wave



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I walk the desert
Lifetime after lifetime
And today I found
The Beloved's footprints in the sand



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We ride the white stallions of joy
Gallop in ecstatic bliss
God kissed us
In the shadow of the trees



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Come to me
Let me melt your sorrows
In the purification pools
Only awakened souls may enter



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Greed walks boldly
Down city streets
Eats all weakness
That crosses its path



Contemplation in the High Desert
Teresa E. Gallion



New Mexico sunsets
Make my lips smack
Like delicious food
Give me an extra helping please



Endorsements



Debbi Brody

I have been reading Teresa Gallion's poetry for over a decade. It is persistently fresh, lyrical, insightful and without an ounce of pretension. Her understanding of spirit and its role in our every day lives, as well as in the natural world, lends an uplifting sense of light to all Ms. Gallion gathers into words.

Debbi Brody

Poet, Poetry Educator

Author of *Portraits in Poetry* and *FreeForm*

Jane Vincent Taylor

The High Desert is a thin place where consciousness touches other times and older voices. Teresa's quatrains honor the inner and outer landscape where transformation is both common and wondrous. Rumi swirls through her poems and we, too, are invited to walk in the desert with the Beloved.

Jane Vincent Taylor

Poet

Lou Liberty

We are greatly fortunate that Teresa Gallion has been in conversation with Rumi for several years. We are even more fortunate that she has decided to share those deeply personal quatrain conversations with us through her book, *Contemplation in the High Desert*.

Teresa's work is profoundly spiritual, as we would expect since she is inspired by the mystical poet, Rumi. She is not a copyist, however. Teresa's poems record her own seeking and therefore they carry the fresh intimacy of conversation with a best friend. More importantly, her work goes beyond self to Self in its exploration.

Teresa's quatrains are that wonderful paradox of tangibility and the transcendent. Her first quatrain reminds us that if we are seeking joy, we must be charitable. Accomplishing that task may be as simple as her instruction to us, "Go across the street and help your neighbor pull weeds".

The remaining quatrains carry us through diverse moments, moods, and experiences, each one bearing a gift of insight, a rare sip of that "wine" that so enchanted Rumi and likewise all who seek Spirit.

From philosophic to erotic, from to courageous to playful to profound, *Contemplation in the High Desert* takes us on a mystical journey in a free flowing, thoughtful, engaging way. We arrive at the end of the trip laden with treasure.

Lou Liberty
Author, Poet, Fellow Traveler
www.louliberty.net

Jeanine Hathaway

Teresa Gallion writes out of the authority of her own experience: of joy, of surrender, sacrifice and growl. The contrasts, say, between the High Desert and waterfalls, the edge of a forest and sorrow that melts like butter, are both unexpected and apt. Each brief quatrain offers treasures for our culture which seems too focused on scarcity. Each quatrain is a gift, "a coin of wisdom," from a writer whose generosity is lavish.

Jeanine Hathaway

Author

The Ex-Nun Poems

The Self as Constellation

Motherhouse

Gary Stewart Chorre'

Teresa Gallion has been a stalwart contributor to the Albuquerque poetry scene for many years. It is both as a friend and admirer that I joyously took the time to peruse her Quatrains for this book. While short in length, each literary gem provoked introspective rumination, igniting an epiphany of awareness that illuminates a particular interaction or personality trait leading to that "Aha" moment of understanding. Hers, is the clear light of wisdom sparkling bright and true in the glint of a poetic insight only the few possess.

Gary Stewart Chorre'

Poet, Actor

Gregory L. Candela

Teresa Gallion is a well-known, highly-respected and beloved New Mexican poet. She is an avid hiker, and her poetry is inspired by the state's deserts, mountains and rivers. Her poetic landscapes are vast, compressed then powerfully released in the 4-line poems of *Contemplation in the High Desert*.

Gallion's meditations speak directly to her readers. She is their personal and passionate guide. Her poems are both imperative and welcoming :

The truth stands
Next to the blade of grass
It strokes your leg
Every time you walk across my land

With few exceptions, her quatrains have no regular rhythm or rhyme; however, the poet addresses her readers through dominate stressed (trochaic) and double-stressed (spondaic) syllables :

Sit beside the stream
To gather your thoughts
Bend your knees toward the ripples
Feel the presence of God

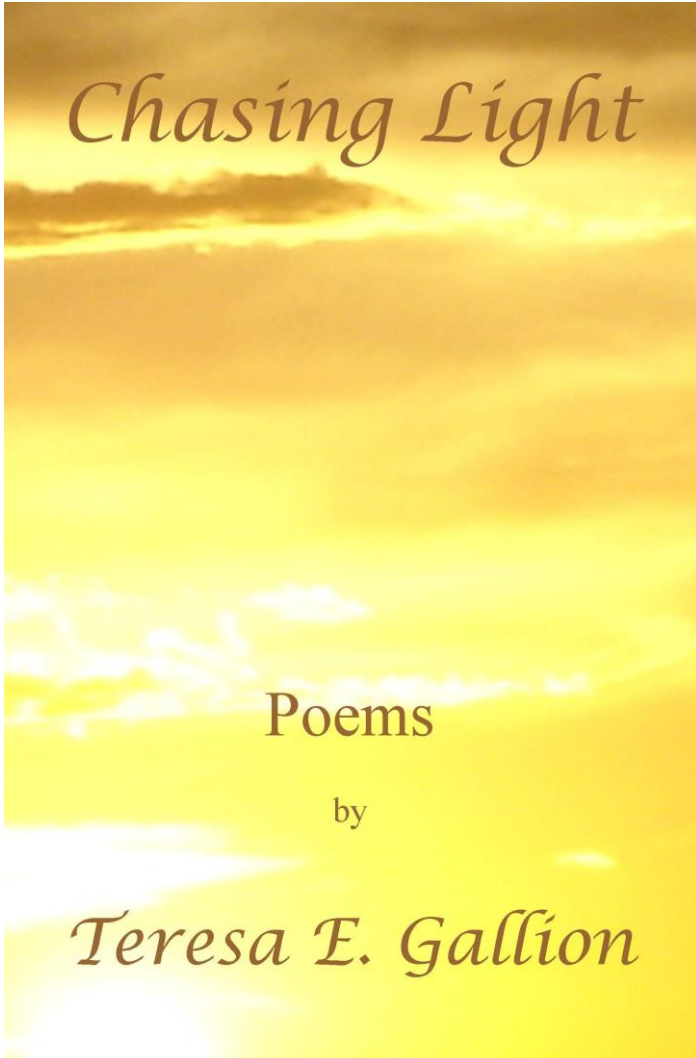
Half these poems command and invite; half confess—all reveal a wide-open spirit seeking spirit; all are spoken as Teresa Gallion speaks: forcefully, truly and beautifully.

Gregory L. Candela

Poet

Professor Emeritus, University of New Mexico

also by Teresa



<http://www.innerchildpress.com/teresa-e-gallion>

~ *fini* ~



Teresa E. Gallion has studied the works of Rumi for over 12 years. The soul of Rumi has walked with her on her personal spiritual journey, hiking the mountains and deserts of New Mexico. He was her inspiration for this book of quatrains. This book takes us on a journey of spiritual awakening and reaches for your heart to stimulate insight into all things that touch us in the natural world.

Teresa received her Master's Degree from Bowling Green State University. Her work is published in numerous journals and anthologies. She has a CD, *On the Wings of the Wind*. Teresa has made the high desert of New Mexico home for the past 25 years.

Visit Teresa's Web Site at :
<http://teresagallion.yolasite.com>

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