December 2019

EDITORIAL

The Christmas Mood: A Child of True Devotion

By Christopher Guilfoil

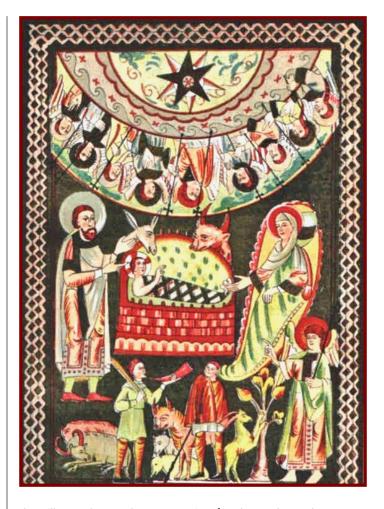
As I write these words Black Friday looms and already the retail rush with the plethora of Christmas kitsch spills over in its lack of restraint. My father used to denote it as X, for Xmas, in contrast to Christmas, which meant something different. Over 100 years ago, Rudolf Steiner asked a question regarding Christmas that has only grown more pertinent with time: "Does all of this correspond rightly to what is meant to flow through the souls and hearts of man?" It is all too easy to answer no; common sense makes the question almost rhetorical. But what have we done in the intervening years to commemorate the most significant impulse in humanity's evolution?

Steiner observes that with Christmas what our eyes perceive around us does not correspond to what we long for inwardly. My vocation as a visual artist trains me to see the world and the Other with less opacity and obscurity. Percepts drawn from the sense of sight combine with inner percepts and moral questions develop. For this draftsman, who mostly works outdoors in all seasons, each Christmas becomes more and more an alien landscape.

In a lecture given in December of 1910 (PDF link to whole lecture below) Rudolf Steiner does not allow this sort of pessimism to color his will. Naturally he looks to the past for solutions, for healthy moods, but equally he recognizes the future must involve something more. He asks: "What has the Christmas festival been for many centuries, and what should it become in the future?"

He draws us back to a time when very intimate and beautiful soul moods would well up in the simple farm folk during the dark nights of winter. He relays that the conflict and strife of the rest of year began to give way to a natural restraint and the mood: "The time of Christ draws near." Time itself was becoming too holy to allow for mischief. He then goes on to beautifully characterize for us what we now know as the Oberufer Christmas Plays.

What was essential was the whole mood that descended over



the villages due to the preparation for these plays. These were not the grotesque Passion Plays of Oberammergau, that was for Easter. He recalls himself as a boy hearing these words of the "Star Singers" who went around with paper crowns singing:

In God's Name now our tale begins.
From Orient came the Holy Kings.
They ride with speed on distant ways,
Four hundred miles in thirteen days.
They ride by Herod's palace-walls
As Herod from his window calls:
Whither go ye, relax your speed!

To Bethlehem our journey does lead.
Ye Holy Three Kings be guests of mine,
I will draw plenty of beer and wine,
I will serve venison roast and fish;
To know of the newborn king is my wish.
In truth, we cannot tell just where;
We have to follow the star we bear:
Over the house the star will shine bright.
Over the mountains the holy men ride.
There found they Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Who is the Savior of all the world.

Rudolf Steiner reflects upon his old professor Schröer, who collected these plays and shared them with his young student. Steiner, now the teacher, goes on to show how these plays remained artistically authentic and without modern day pretension. He relates the preparation for the plays was a last vestige of the consciousness that prevailed at the holy sights of the ancient mysteries. One feels the adoration and devotion Steiner had for these plays and what was handed down to him from his teacher. In this early lecture they are described in loving detail. He succeeds artistically in passing this mood on to us.

But the teacher has no illusion this mood can be achieved in the same manner as in days of yore:

"If we can see a "Christ-festival of the progress of humanity" in what Spiritual Science is intended to be for mankind, and if we compare this with what simple people could feel when the Child in the crib was displayed during the Holy Christmas Night then we must say to ourselves: Such moods and feelings can awake in us too, if we consider what can be born in our own soul when our inner-most wellspring is so well attuned to what is sacred, so purified through spiritual knowledge, that this wellspring can take in the holy mystery of the Christ Impulse...From this point of view we also try to discover true art which springs from the spirit. This art can only be a child of true devotion, a child of the most sacred feelings, when we feel in this context the eternal, imperishable "Christ festival of humanity": How the Christ-Impulse can be born in the human soul, in the human heart and mind."

Thus my Christmas pessimism is tempered with the gift of this lecture, the Scrooge in me takes these words to heart: "Let us learn to feel that if we study diligently throughout the year, our insights, our wisdom, can be condensed on Christmas eve into very warm feelings, which glow like a fire, fueled by what we have gained throughout the whole year by immersing ourselves into great teachings. And let us feel that thereby we nurture our remembrance of the greatest impulse in human evolution."

Link to PDF of full lecture: The Christmas Festival In The Changing Course Of Time, Rudolf Steiner, December 22, 1910, GA 125

From the School of Spiritual Science

Dear Members of the School of Spiritual Science,

We have become aware that some of you are not receiving the monthly email reminders for the Class Lesson when they are sent out. We apologize for this and want you to know that we are trying to figure out why this is so and remedy it. Just in case some of the reminders continue not to get through, we wanted you to receive the dates of the Class Lessons in the newsletter for the 2020 calendar year, and ask that you record them in your own calendar in case the email reminder system continues to be faulty.

In the 2020 Class dates, you will note that for three months in the spring, the lesson will be held on the third Sunday of the month rather than the usual second Sunday due to holidays and the spring time change. You will also see that the October lesson will be announced at a later date. The Annual General Meeting of the Anthroposophical Society and Western Regional Conference will be in Portland Oct. 8-11, 2020. There will be a Class Lesson as part of the conference, but we do not yet know when.

The 2020 Class Lesson Dates: Jan. 12, Feb. 9, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, May 17, June 14, July 12, Aug. none, Sept. 13, Oct (TBA), Nov. 8, Dec. 13.

Please remember that you also can continue to check the Class Lesson dates in the monthly Portland Branch Newsletter when in doubt or you can contact one of us.

Following the upcoming December 8th lesson, during the regularly scheduled conversation time, Cheri and Rebecca will share news of other groups from the meeting of class holders they attended in late October. We hope you can join us.

Thank you, Cheri Munske Rebecca Soloway

"As outer light grows dim, an inner landscape rises up, remembrance of a homeland never to be lost."

~ Herbert Witzenmann

Correction...

In the November Newsletter there was a misprint on page 1 in the article *Works of Art, Acts of Grace.* The incorrect sentence read: Within a 'sea of perception' which we make here (on the earth) in our souls, the memories of the dead are preserved. Please see the correct sentence in context of the paragraph below.

"(After death) the soul not only beholds the beings of the higher hierarches and the other human souls living with it in the spiritual world, but also beholds the world of souls to which it was related (ital. added) before going through the gate of death. A soul in the spiritual world can see our world unaided, without the kind of active effort needed to perceive other beings in the spiritual world." The earth world becomes for the discarnate soul the 'other world', in which the earthly souls one has known, with what lives in them, rise up into awareness. "At the same time, within the 'ocean of spiritual perception' created in our earthly souls by the spiritual world, memories of those who have passed through the gate of death occasionally appear. Imagine this very vividly. Let us suppose hypothetically that we lived in a time when no one could remember any dead person. The dead would still perceive those human souls - in which no memory of the dead existed. And then suppose that into "the ocean of spiritual perception" that discarnate souls can offer, memories of the dead now enter. They live there. That is something added by human free will and love to what the dead can always see from the other side. It is something added."

Pacific Eurythmy
End-of-Term Sharing

Saturday, December 14 2 to 2:45_{PM}

Portland Waldorf School Eurythmy Room 2300 SE Harrison St., Milwaukie OR

Contact Carrie Mass at PacificEurythmy@gmail.com for questions



The new course at Pacific Eurythmy is excited to share with you their work of the first term

Stay a little while, mingle with students and faculty and enjoy light refreshments afterwards

To read the corrected whole article again please go to the Portland Branch website where all past editions of the newsletter are archived. Here is a direct link:

http://www.portlandanthroposophy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/November2019PortlandBranchNewsletter.pdf

The Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society Invites You to

Save The Dates!

See the attached calendar & fliers for more information and more events

December 9

Enlivening our Three and Four Foldness for Christmas with Dr. John Takaks at Bothmer Hall

December 14

Celebration of Life for Beth Wieting
4:00pm sharp at Bothmer Hall
Please join us as we gather to remember Beth Bring
fond memories or stories to share

December 26 to January 6

Holy Nights Readings and Socializing Contact Tom Klein for more info: 503-305-8270



Calendar of the Soul

Week 35

Can I discern true being,
That it may find itself again
In the soul's creative urge?
I feel that power is granted me
Modestly to join myself
As member to the Self of Worlds.

Week 36

Within my being's depth there speaks Mysteriously the Word of Worlds Urging to be revealed: 'Imbue your labour's aims With spirit-light of mine, To offer up yourself through me.'

Week 37

To bear the Spirit-light
Into the winter night of worlds,
My questing heart strives joyfully;
That shining seeds of soul
May root in world's deep ground,
And the Word of God in senses' dark resounds
Transfiguring all that is.

Week 38

I feel as from enchantment freed
The Spirit-child in womb of soul;
The Holy Word of Worlds
It has in heart's bright radiance
The heavenly fruit of hope begotten,
Which groweth jubilant to farthest worlds,
Out of my being's ground in God.

Calendar translation by Liselotte and William Mann

The Portland Branch Newsletter is published monthly to serve Branch members and friends. To learn more about the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society, contact Diane Rumage at 971-271-7479.

To submit an article or a calendar item email it to Christopher Guilfoil: c.guilfoil@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Items selected for publication may be edited for style, content and length.

To sign up for our newsletter/email list go to:

http://www.portlandbranch.org and click on the button at the top of the right hand column on the home page.

The newsletter and calendar are posted on the Branch website, www.portlandanthroposophy.org. Paper copies are available at the Pohala and Healthbridge Clinics; and the Cedarwood, Michael & Portland Waldorf Schools, and Swallowtail School.

Our current newsletter team: Editor, design, layout, and illustrations: Christopher Guilfoil; Editing and proofreading Wes Burch; Calendar: Jeremy Davis; Printing and distribution: Jerry Soloway; Webmaster Angelica Hesse; Treasurer: Ruth Klein

The Portland Branch thanks the following Members & Friends for their Dues and Generous Donations in 2019:

Cyndia Ashkar, Christine Badura, Betty Baldwin, Virginia Berg, Sandra Burch, Wes Burch, James Conlon, Jayne Cronlund, Jeremy Davis, Michael Givens, Ali Givens, Mark Hope, Valerie Hope, Anca Hariton, Lauren Johnson, Lisa Jones, Anne Kollender, Ruth Klein, Tom Klein, Robin Lieberman, Judith Levin, Martin Levin, Brian McClure, Cheri Munske, Virginie Novak-Hoover, Robin O'Brien, Padeen Quinn, Jeff Rice, Diane Rumage, Diane Schell-Rowley, Deborah Smith, Jerry Soloway, Rebecca Soloway, William C. Surface, Linda Sussman, Elizabeth Webber

We will gratefully receive your Branch membership dues (\$50 or what you can afford).

Send to: The Portland Branch c/o Ruth Klein 12286 SE 41st Court, Milwaukie, OR 97222

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the following who generously provide spaces for our many activities: Dr. Joan and John Takacs for their long-standing donation of Bothmer Hall; the Portland Waldorf School; and the Cedarwood School.



Another Way to Donate to the Portland Branch

If you shop at Amazon and use the following link, a small donation, .5% of the price of your eligible purchases will be donated to the Portland Branch, smile amazon.com/ch/93-1269233

Urban Biodynamic Gardening

with Sandra Burch

In these shortest days of the waning year, it can be easy to think that there is nothing to be done in our small bit of paradise, our garden-yard. There is an old proverb: "The best fertilizer is the footsteps of the farmer". December can become a time of developing one of the most important gardening skills. We can begin to strengthen our organs of perception, building an ability to perceive. We can add a new kind of fertilizer, a neutral, kind perception (NKP) to our yards.

If we look more closely and take time outside in our yards, we can gaze, learn, and seek to know. Yeah, I know, "it's December in Oregon, cold and rainy outside." Remember, Tom Lehrer tells us: "Bad weather always looks worse through a window." It may take some bundling up, perhaps with warm tea upon returning to the warmth of indoors. Let's go out into the late autumn, early winter time and see what we can see.

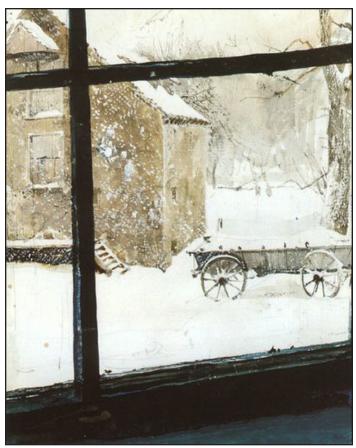
Here is an idea: dedicate the first week of December (or the first week of Advent) to paying attention to the earth elements in your yard - stones, soil, the lay of the land, trenches, hills and soggy places. In the second week give the focus to the plant life - the trees, bushes, grasses, mosses, lichens, mushrooms. In the third week look for signs of the animal kingdom - tracks, trails, yes even in your tiny city plot. Are there insects? Birds? When are they most active? And in the fourth week observe the signs of the human being in your yard - where is it most cultivated, most wild? Is there a sidewalk? Who walks by and when?

To take observational skills to another level, we can find inspiration from this quote from "Theosophy" by Rudolf Steiner:

"... every leaf, every little insect will unveil to us innumerable mysteries when not only our eyes but through the eyes the spirit is directed upon them. Every sparkle, every shade of color, every cadence will remain vividly perceptible to the senses. Nothing will be lost, but in addition, unlimited new life will be gained. Indeed, the person who does not understand how to observe even the tiniest thing with the eye, will only attain to pale, bloodless thoughts, not to spiritual sight." (p. 173 Anthroposophic Press, 1971)

December can be the perfect time to consider your yard and garden, with new zeal. Your footsteps (bootsteps) can enliven your gardening practice. If you don't have a yard, you might adopt a park for the month, or perhaps a few buckets or pots on a balcony will show you how "to see the world in a grain of sand," as William Blake suggests, in his poem "Auguries of Innocence". I will be posting observations from my yard on the blog: urbanbdbees. home.blog, in case you want to see what is happening around one little piece of ground, just south of Portland. As Yogi Berra said: "You can observe a lot just by watching."

For a cozy, by the fire activity: check out "The Alchemists" - a film by F. Fogel and C. Mann about Biodynamic Farming - vimeo.com/channels/1002128/181737300 . This film has beautiful music and scenery. I found it to be quite encouraging.



Watercolor by Andrew Wyeth

Knowing Nothing

by Tom Hennen

The hole in the landscape is real.

I can walk through it and back again.

Every time I do

My clothes look baggier.

My hair sticks out.

My boots become untied.

My coat unbuttoned.

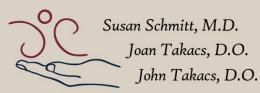
My education gone.

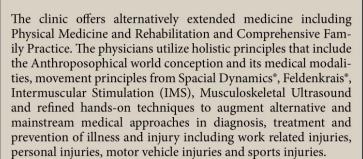
I don't care anymore how the world thinks.

I only know that the snow

Has reached my knees.

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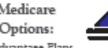
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In lecture one of the "Study of Man" Rudolf Steiner explains "The task of education conceived in the spiritual sense is to bring the Soul-Spirit into harmony with the Life-Body....The child only begins to breath in the right sense of the word when he has left the mother-body.... As we breath in, we are continually pressing cerebrospinal fluid into the brain: and, as we breath out, we press it back again into the body....We may say that breathing is the most important mediator between the outer physical world and the human being who is entering it."

In my 30 years experience of practicing Advanced CranioSacral Therapy (CST), I have found that most of us need help in resolving imbalances that originate from birth, our entry into the breathing experience. CST is one of the few modalities that I am aware of that has the potential to normalize our breathing by assisting self correction (Perhaps playing a part in a proper "education", assisting the harmonizing of the Soul-Spirit and the Life-Body). ~ Benjamin Bell

If you have a friend or family member interested in CST, bring them along to your first session for a free session. (Please be sure to reserve two consecutive appointment time slots, one for each of you.)

Portland Branch Calendar

December 2019

First Class of the School of Spiritual Science

Sunday, December 8, 9:30am • Lesson XV • (no admittance after the class starts) • Bothmer Hall, 5919 SE Division St, Portland, 97206 • Blue card required. • Lessons are normally held on the second Sunday of each month • Contact Cheri Munske at 503-484-4133, or Rebecca Soloway at 516-850-1027.

Portland Branch Council Meeting

Monday, December 9, 7pm • 2606 SE 58th Ave. • Contact Valerie Hope, 503-775-0778, valerieannhpdx@aol.com

All Branch members are welcome to attend, and/or call us with agenda items, proposals, suggestions, or to observe. Please contact Valerie to let her know you're coming. Meetings are normally held on the second Monday of the month.

Sano Taraharu presents "Little Stars of Nepal"

Saturday, December 7, 7pm • Bothmer Hall 5919 SE Division St, Portland, 97206 • Contact Lisa Bono, sanotaraharu@gmail.com, 971-276-5626

Sano Taraharu warmly invites you to an evening presentation and discussion about the "Little Stars of Nepal".

Sano Taraharu is an international organization currently beginning to work in children homes in Kathmandu, Nepal. We work to build facilities and bring trainings to adults for the care of the very young child. We are inspired by the insights of Rudolf Steiner in human development and the life of the spirit.

Enlivening our Three and Four Foldness for Christmas

Monday, December 9, 7-9pm • Bothmer Hall, 5919 SE Division St, Portland, 97206

During two of his lectures, Rudolf Steiner drew two pictures on blackboards. One illustrated the relative shapes and indicated the inter penetrating dynamics of the physical, etheric, astral and spirit "bodies." The other pictured the archetypes of the point/periphery head, crescent rhythmic system, and limbs radiating in from the cosmos, as formative gestures of the three fold human being.

We will explore the forces at work inherent in these diagrammatic gifts from Rudolf Steiner, experience, move and enliven them in, about and between ourselves.

Come in comfortable clothing and footwear.

Pacific Eurythmy End-of-Term Sharing

Saturday, December 14, 2-2:45pm • Portland Waldorf School, Eurythmy Room, 2300 SE Harrison St., Milwaukie OR 97222 • Contact Carrie Mass at PacificEurythmy@gmail.com

The new course at Pacific Eurythmy is excited to share with you their work of the first term.

Stay a little while, mingle with students and faculty, and enjoy light refreshments afterwards.

Depending on the Light with Orion Langdon and Binta Therese

Saturday, December 14, 10am-4pm • 3359 NE 72nd Ave, Portland, OR 97201 Hall • Contact handtomountain@gmail.com
Portland Waldorf School Alumni Orion Langdon and Binta Therese will be hosting a painting and pottery show and sale.

Orion Langdon makes hand-coiled cooking vessels and cups from micaceous clay harvested in the wild, generous mountains of northern New Mexico. Orion's work is one of the many iterations of an ever evolving, centuries old tradition of pottery making in New Mexico. Micaceous clay cooking pots are beautiful, durable, hold heat well and can be used in the oven or directly on the stovetop. Orion will be showing his work, answering questions about this clay body and serving food cooked in micaceous pots.

Binta creates vibrant watercolor and acrylic paintings. She draws inspiration from the world of plants and focuses on the rich hues and starkly contrasting shadows that can be seen in the trees, flowers, and water of the Willamette Valley and surrounding areas. Much of her work is defined by clean lines that bring focus to bright layers and pools of color. Her work invites viewers to relax the mind and embrace a sense of whimsy and wonder.

Celebration of Life for Beth Wieting

Saturday, December 14, 4pm • Bothmer Hall, 5919 SE Division St, Portland, 97206

See additional details in Save the Dates! Contact Sandra Burch with questions - galenalyn@gmail.com

Ongoing Local Activities and Study Groups

First Class of the School of Spiritual Science • Second Sunday of the Month

9:30 am sharp (no admittance after the class starts) • Bothmer Hall, 5919 SE Division St, Portland, 97206 • Blue card required. Contact Cheri Munske at 503 772-2632, or Rebecca Soloway (516) 850-1027

Council Meetings of the Portland Branch • Second Monday of the month

7-9 pm • 2606 SE 58th Ave., Portland • Contact Valerie Hope, (503) 775-0778, valerieannhpdx@aol.com

All Branch members are welcome to attend, and/or to call us with agenda items, proposals, suggestions, or to observe.

School of Spiritual Science Study • Second Thursday of the Month

The First Class of the Michael School and its Christological Foundations by S. Prokofieff • For Members of the School of Spiritual Science 7:30-9:00 pm • Contact Rebecca Soloway, rrsoloway1@gmail.com or 516-850-1027

Christianity as Mystical Fact Study Group • First Monday of the Month

7:45-9pm • Bothmer Hall, 5919 SE Division St., Portland 97206 • Contact Jerry Soloway 503-908-7615 or <u>irsoloway@hotmail.com</u> Please join us in lively discussions centered on Rudolf Steiner's *Christianity as Mystical Fact*.

Community Painting Tuesday Mornings

8:45-10:00AM Tuesday Morning Painting Group for adults resumes March 2020. Watercolor painting focusing on color studies and seasonal moods. All levels welcome. Portland Waldorf School. Contact cherimunske@gmail.com to RSVP.

Adult Eurythmy Class with Jolanda Frischknecht

Tuesdays 6:30-8 pm • Bothmer Hall, 5919 SE Division St., Portland 97206 • Cost: \$20/session; paid monthly, sliding scale on request • Contact Jolanda, jolandamf44@gmail.com, or 503-896-3345 Feel free to drop in, invite friends.

Eurythmy for Waldorf Alumni: Wednesdays

Study, 6:30-7:30 pm; Eurythmy; 7:30-8:30 pm • Eurythmy Room, Portland Waldorf School, 2300 Harrison St., Milwaukie • Contact Carrie Mass, Carrie.mass@portlandwaldorf.org If you've ever attended a Waldorf High School, this is for you!

Eurythmy, Portland Waldorf School Community: Thursday Mornings

8:45-9:30 am, Eurythmy Room, Portland Waldorf School, 2300 Harrison St., Milwaukie • Free - All are welcome. Contact Sarah Rem, sannerem@gmail.com 503-729-1740

Pacific Eurythmy, Open Classes for the Community in Anthroposophy and the Arts: Monday Evenings

For details please see our website, www.PacificEurythmy.com or call Jolanda, 503-896-3345 or Carrie, 415-686-3791

Festivals Study Group: First and Third Friday Mornings

10am - 12pm • 2606 SE 58th Ave, Portland • Contact Suzanne Walker, 503-208-2426 <u>zzwalker@mac.com</u> • We are working with various of Dr. Steiner's lectures in an effort to better understand the festivals and how we may come to observe them according to his indications. This study is also greatly deepening our experience of the Calendar of the Soul and the cycle of the year.

Knowledge of Higher Worlds by Rudolf Steiner • Friday Mornings beginning October 4

9:15-11am • contact Patricia Lynch at patriciahomanlynch@gmail.com

Singing Circle at the Portland Waldorf School • Friday Mornings

8:45-10:15am • Portland Waldorf School, 2300 SE Harrison St., Milwaukie, in the Orchard Room • all voices are welcomed. Contact Julianne Renzema at momartist@yahoo.com. No practice during school breaks.

Speech Formation and Mystery Drama Group • Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday

7:25-8:55 pm • 8654 NE Boehmer St, Portland, OR 97220 • Free. New participants accepted. No experience necessary, just enthusiasm and a love of the Word. Diane Rumage 971 271-7479 drumage@comcast.net

Friday Book Study in Corvallis beginning October 4

5:15-6:15 pm at the home of Renate Joy • 1020 NW 25th Street, Corvallis • Our new study is Rudolf Steiner's "Occult Science: An Outline" (If you are planning to buy this book, we suggest the classic translation by George and Mary Adams.) This is a great way to study anthroposophy in community with others, where different perspectives are shared, and understanding can deepen.

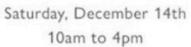
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Patricia Lynch's studio 3359 72nd Ave Portland, OR 97201





DEPENDING ON THE LIGHTA pottery and painting sale with Orion Langdon and Binta Therese

A Celebration of Life for Beth Wieting

Are we not all woven like bright blossoms
With strands of light into one flowering
wreath

- Those of us who breathe the breath of heaven

And those who breathe the naked air beneath.

So like one unfading cosmic garland,

So firmly, ever newly intertwined,

We weave the life-web of the seamless garment

Of the spirit being of mankind.

~Arvia MacKaye Ege

Saturday
December 14
4:00 PM sharp
Bothmer Hall
5919 SE Division
Portland, OR

Please join us as we gather to remember Beth

Bring fond memories or stories to share

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