

Holiday Letter from Flamenco Romántico 2016



I sit in front of the fire at our long, mahogany dining room table where I love to write. Still taking writing classes, I worked all year on editing “Becoming the Oldest Generation”. Excitement grows as my writing grows and blossoms. Will I ever be finished with this book? I do know I will. The flames flicker up from the red coals and the owls outside hoot as I write.

Family and tears. 2016 started with mourning. And yet life continued. I teach three Flamenco dance classes a week, see psychotherapy clients, facilitate my shamanic drumming circle, do shamanic work, manage the vacation rentals, and write. Freddie has been working on guitars and improving his health.

As we age, we are even more grateful for my sister Elaine, for Freddie’s sister Dorothy, brother Timmie and their wonderful spouses.

I developed a Blog to post excerpts of my writing. “They” say that if I have a good following it will help in finding a publisher, so please visit, follow and like the blog: mariannamejia.com/

This year Martín our angel, along with other projects, re-did our gardening beds –raising them higher, adding amended soil, and bird-proofing them. The garden that resulted was overflowingly abundant, letting us give away excess tomatoes, cucumbers, jalapeños, kale, corn, strawberries, watermelon, and more. What a delight to hang out in the garden picking,



Martín in the garden



weeding, and eating. New delicious recipes inspired by this garden. We feel so lucky to have Martín in our lives.

Our little community here continues to support and embrace us. James is still in the trailer, Nick and Michelle in the cottage, and Ricardo in the small trailer. We feel very grateful.

Snapshots of Our Year:

New Year's Eve

Winter Writing Retreat started, taught by Andy Couturier –4 days here.

January 1, 2016

8 AM phone rang –Dear friend Madeline had died suddenly. Disbelief, tears, emptiness. The next piece I wrote in the retreat was about Madeline, whom we had been very close to since the 70's.

February

*Freddie's sister Dorothy and family, and brother Tim and wife here to celebrate their mother Bea's 97th Birthday. Family party. Bea feisty as ever.

*Flamenco artists Javi and Rina, great friends, visited for 10 days from Spain and taught an inspiring 2-day Flamenco workshop.

*Freddie started homeopathic treatments with Cynthia, Andy's partner.

March

*Began taking two writing classes a week –each day gone from home between 10 AM and 4 PM. Exhausting but useful.



Rina, Marianna, Freddie, Javi

*Still addressing my stubborn high blood pressure issue, I found a doctor of Functional Medicine – diagnosed with SIBO (small intestine bacterial overgrowth) and put on a restrictive, low FODMAP diet that is helping.

April

*Recent friend Elektra brought Mahendra to teach a breathing workshop in our yurt. We loved it.

*Shamanic plant ceremony here with a Bolivian shaman.

May

*Another 4-day Writing Retreat. End of May finally finished taking two writing classes a week. It was well worth the extra energy. My writing grew.

*Popular Flamenco maestro Juan Paredes came from Spain and taught a 2-day Flamenco workshop.

June

*Celebrated Freddie's 77nd birthday and our 16th wedding anniversary with a big party. Missed Madeline like mad. How quickly time passes ... and then it is over.

*Heightened sense of mortality prompted us to test drive our dream car, a new Tesla.



Madeline & Marianna after a Flamenco show



Marianna, Josie, Elun, and my 96-year-old father Jack

*Son Elun and his 10-year old daughter Josie arrived for a week in order to visit my father. Again, Elun's wife Donna was unable accompany them. I talk with Josie weekly, by phone or Facetime, and can see her maturity rapidly developing. She

studies trumpet and piano and I love listening to her concerts by Facetime.

*Joined a hybrid writing class (also taught by my teacher Andy) –online, phone, and in-person for three months, in addition to my weekly class.

July

*To drive more safely in spite of occasional high blood pressure dizziness, we bought a semi-self-driving electrical car. The sleek white Tesla glides along like a running panther. We drove Elun and Josie in it to sister Elaine and Ken’s, where we all ate dinner and said goodbye



Freddie, Josie, Marianna, & Elun picking up the Tesla

for another year. What a help this car is with getting to the many medical appointments Freddie had in Palo Alto while preparing for and having a nasal cavity cyst removed. Now he is left with resistant residual high blood pressure.

I can drive the spaceship Tesla on automatic almost all the way to my Dad and Peggy’s house in Monterey; it makes my weekly visits much easier.

August

Writing Retreat –4 days. I love that it takes place here on our property.

September

Celebrated my Dad’s 97th birthday –Freddie and I, Elaine and Ken –all for lunch which we brought. Dad and Peggy spend most of their time resting.

October

*Juan Bacan, a wonderful singer from a legendary Gypsy Flamenco dynasty, came from Spain and stayed with us for a week. We laughed a lot, refreshed our Spanish, and I got to dance to Juan’s amazing singing. Ethan

and Cihltli joined him here and presented a fusion Flamenco Show in SC. – So great to spend time with these friends –more laughter and fun.

*Celebrated my 72nd Birthday with a wonderful party and friends. Juan and Cihltli were both there. Missed Madeline like mad, as we have almost every day, but her daughter and family stopped by to represent her. Madeline was always an integral part of our landmark events. The years keep rolling forward with the unexpected.



November

*Freddie's Auntie Lolita died at 92. Funeral at San Juan Bautista Mission.



*Bought a small blue Gypsy Vardo Wagon

*Thanksgiving with Elaine, Ken, Bea, Ricardo and 4 more wonderful friends.

*Tried to deal with emotionally trying events – the election results and the Dakota Access Pipeline

resistance. Post-election PTSD runs rampant.

December

*The holidays have come quickly. We still miss Madeline terribly –an emptiness has pervaded all year.

*Friend Christina visited from Colorado. We enjoyed catching up with each other's lives.

*Freddie's sister Dorothy and her husband John, who just recovered from throat cancer, will visit between Christmas and New Year's again, with more family. We look forward to seeing them.

*We miss seeing Freddie's son Mano and his wife who live in Nevada, and Freddie's daughter Maggie and her family who live in San Diego, but hope for visits in the near future.

For this coming year, Freddie and I wish you joy and happiness. We pray for the health and safety of the planet and our environment. We mourn with those who suffer. May we bring a little more light to the world and to the future generations.

