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## Winter

Patricia Bender

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# WINTER

By Patricia Bender

Portulaca seeds keep in baby food jars  
on shelves high overhead in the cellar.  
Other seeds, purple, drying  
in waxed paper packages  
will need to be soaked  
and soaked in rain water.

Even after the soaking you'll need to  
take each tiny ball  
between your fingers  
moving it round  
for several seconds  
before dropping it into the ground.

Even after the soaking  
and the squeezing  
the seed will be hard.  
And ready.

Currently serving as a Grant Specialist, **Patricia Bender**, founded and directed the Rutgers University -Newark Writing Center (1998-2008). A National Writing Project consultant, she has taught writing, and offered community writing workshops both nationally and internationally for more than 25 years. Her publications include the co-authored book chapter "Observe, Reflect, Act," in *Using Qualitative Methods in Action Research*, published by the American Library Association. Her poetry and short fiction have appeared in a variety of publications including *Good Foot*, *LIPS*, the *Paterson Literary Review*, *Peregrine*, and *THE GREAT FALLS ANTHOLOGY*. She remains grateful for a writing practice founded in a Paterson childhood spent listening to many languages spoken, broken, shared and strengthened.