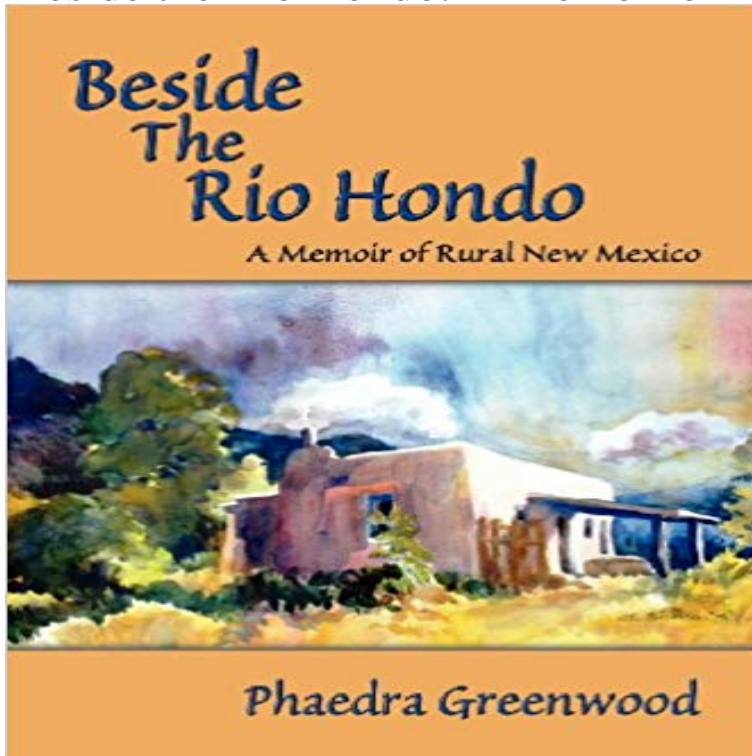


## Beside the Rio Hondo: A Memoir of Rural New Mexico



How can a lone female of a certain age take her last stand on a stony wedge of land in the mountains of Northern New Mexico? Will she find a job, learn to chop wood, be eaten by a bear or give it up and fall in love again? *Beside the Rio Hondo* is a memoir that explores in depth Phaedra Greenwood's connection with the natural world and simultaneous need for community. Her ex-husband gives her a year to live in the old adobe where they raised their children; then he plans to sell it so they can split the proceeds. But she wants to stay in the house forever. She has a year to come up with her own financing to buy out his half of the property or negotiate a deal with the neighbors. The house is falling apart, her money is running out and she has never applied for a loan in her life. It's a hell of a time to decide to have an epiphany. For over three decades I have made my home in the Taos area of Northern New Mexico, the author says, not just because I love the spare and dramatic landscape, but also because I am intrigued by the complex layers of history and culture. I admire the devotion of the artists and craftsmen to their work, the loving care New Mexicans bestow on their churches and the close family ties that bond them in community. As I struggle with my garden, my orchard and old adobe casa, I absorb with gratitude my neighbors' rural savvy and the skills these tenacious hunters, fishermen, and ranchers have developed over the centuries to survive and thrive in the high mountain desert. Life here is hard, but often delicious. The energy, exotic flavors and bright colors of Taos are unique. PHAEDRA GREENWOOD Greenwood is a freelance writer/photographer whose poems, essays and stories have appeared in many local newspapers, magazines and anthologies. She has won numerous literary prizes including the Katherine Anne Porter Award. As a journalist and columnist for *The Taos News*, she received two first

place awards in 2000 from the New Mexico Press Association for Best Review and Columns. In 1995 she won the PEN New Mexico Award for a short story included in this book: Dogs and Sheep.

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