FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

El Circulo de las Calabazas
George Levenson
Tricycle Press
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"From pumpkin seeds come plants, and from plants pumpkins," writes the author, inspired by his backyard garden in California. The descriptive language and evocative photographs in this book build the experience of what it feels like to have the inner stringy fibers of a pumpkin squishing through hands and the sensation of seeds squirting out from between fingers, "seeds as slippery gems."

The exquisite photographs, by both the author and the photographer, communicate with richness and clarity the simplicity of the life cycle of the pumpkin so that it is easily equated to the life cycle of nature. The parallel text leads the reader through a variety of shapes and sizes of seeds and developing plants. A large, overflowing pumpkin patch jumps out of the first pages. The fruit and seeds are magnified; the views of rich soil and delicate seeds being planted and sprouting tiny brilliant green leaves are enchanting. The photographs allow both child and adult to feel transported to that pumpkin patch; it seems as though the smell of freshly cut pumpkin will float up from the book at any moment.

"Almost every minute a new plant wakes up, with roots of silk and leaves that dance," writes Levenson, who names the sprouts "Spooky, Max, and Lumina." A sea of green pumpkin plants flows across the pages as the floppy leaves, curly tendrils, and bright orange and yellow flowers begin to show. "The playful bees have told the story of the feast that awaits in our garden," Levenson continues. "One hundred days of sun and air, one hundred of care, and my garden grows: It's a pleasure to watch it!" As the story leads on, pumpkins are picked, branches are removed, pumpkin carving comes and goes, and the seeds melt back into the earth, readying them for next season.

Levenson, a filmmaker whose work includes a film of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, previously released The Circle of the Pumpkins in rhyming English. The flowing Spanish, translated by Alberto Jiménez Rioja, is a beautiful accompaniment to the realistic photos, creating strong mental images to go with the visuals. Thaler is an award-winning photographer and co-author of four books, including Photography: Take Your Best Shot, which

received an Outstanding Book Awards from the National Science Teachers' Association. Parents and teachers wishing to introduce the cycle of nature to children ages two through twelve would do well to choose and use this book.

The essence of El CÃ-rculo de las Calabazas is captured in one of the last lines: "Is it Mother Nature or is it King Pumpkin?"

Becky Rankens