



*healing the world one book at a time*

# Village of Care Press

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## Foreword Excerpt

It is a joy to pause today and reflect on the gratitude we experience at Retreat House. And it is more difficult than expected to put gratitude into words on this page. You see, gratitude for me is a felt sense experience. If you receive an email from me, the salutation will likely be “with a grateful heart,” because gratitude is a heart-felt experience for me. And I want to make sure the email I am sending exudes the gratitude I feel for the receiver(s).

Lil Smith, Retreat House Founder

## Foreword Excerpt

In Judaism, we are guided to repeat 100 blessings each day, many of them including a theme of gratitude. Each morning, with the dawn of a new day and the first inhalations of our conscious breath, we are instructed to thank God for restoring life in us as we take our first breath. No matter what happened yesterday, or what will happen in the future, the purity of morning’s first light and my first breath is fresh and untainted.

Karen Hoffman, Retreat House Board Member

### Preface Excerpt

Gratitude is a key element in all spiritual traditions. It lifts us up and connects us to the light, even in the darkest night of the Soul. I remember going through a divorce from the father of my children, such a difficult and painful period of my life. A colleague challenged me to take on a gratitude practice, and at first it was hard to find things to be grateful for—the sweetness of the blueberries on my oatmeal, the soft caress of the evening breeze. I often had to dig deep to speak gratitude aloud for two minutes. But as I relaxed into the practice, I found gratitude came pouring fourth. And I realized that, in spite of the challenges, I was indeed exceedingly blessed.

Gretchen Martens

Sample Poem

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### Gratitude for the Gift of Writing in Haiku

By Diane Clay

Gratitude comes when  
you realize writing frees  
you from old sadness.

If I stopped writing how  
would I release past hurts that  
come to mind unbidden?

Writing is magic.  
Your hurt and sadness melt away.  
Your pen heals the past.

Writing gave me a  
Voice I'd never used because  
No one listened.

Writing heals a wound  
You've carried for a long time.  
Ink and paper soothe.

Sample Poem  
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## Grateful for That Which He Gives

By Reginald Fitz Allan Thomas

God give me eyes today to see you.  
Ears to hear your voice.  
A heart that feels your presence that surrounds.  
Your touch  
Your whisper  
Your calm  
Your balm to heal.  
All of you lord, all of you for me.  
All of you, when I am weak, trapped deep  
in my sighs and groans.  
Uncertain  
Quiet me through the Breath  
Silence the noise so I hear your whisperer of my name.  
My song. My Amen. My Hallelujah.  
Let it be.