



healing the world one book at a time

Village of Care Press

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Foreword Excerpt

I invite you to be drenched in kindness as you receive these heart-felt offerings for *House of Kindness*. *Chesed* is one of the five Retreat House core values. Translated from Hebrew, it means “loving kindness” and is characteristic of the way God gazes upon God’s peoples and creations. . . .

Kindness is making space not just for those who exude kindness, but also for those who need to discover kindness. Whether you are fully aware of loving kindness or you are seeking kindness during a difficult time in your life, may the offerings in *House of Kindness* be an open door of invitation to embracing your belovedness. If you are looking for a community in person or online, where all are welcome, we hope you will stop by and walk in the door.

Lil Smith, Retreat House Founder

Preface Excerpt

Kindness, and her companions, compassion and empathy, are integral to our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Kindness connects us to each other and is of essence what it means to be human—to love and care for one another, to provide physical safety and emotional security, and to be present with and for each other. Kindness reminds us that we are not alone and that we matter. It invites us to soften, to listen deeply, and to choose gentleness in an increasingly unkind world. When we act with kindness, we plant seeds and impact lives in ways we may never witness. In this sense, kindness is an act of faith.

Gretchen Martens

Sample Poem
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Kindness Haikus

By Sherry Ward

Kindness and goodness
And smiles together bring joy
smiles and gratitude

Kind smile extended
A grateful heart receives it
A kind smile returned

Flowers for Edna Inez

By Gretchen Martens

Who were you, Edna Inez?
Dead and buried just after your fifth birthday
The crisp details of your short life
Etched into an unremarkable marble tombstone
Your grave, like your life, fading into obscurity
In a forgotten country cemetery
On the narrow asphalt road to Poetry, Texas
(who knew there could be such a place)
A wrought-iron fence demarcating the place
Where life ends and death begins

More than a century since you drew your last breath
You, too young to leave a legacy
Your family long dead
Yet on this day I discovered your grave
It is adorned with fresh-cut flowers
Atop the heat-parched buffalo grass
In the fever dream of a Texas summer
Proof that you are remembered
A testament that your life mattered
Who remembers you, Edna Inez?

Carnations white as cumulus clouds
Bursting forth from a glorious blue sky
Your tiny grave bewitches me
Among tombstones far more opulent
Fresh cut flowers on your grave
As if you alone could defy death
Wide-eyed innocence staring down oblivion
Death denied with guilelessness
Your memory held tenderly by a stranger
Who performed this act of loving kindness?

Amid the hum of cicadas
A gentle breeze whispers your name
Connecting us through time and space
Haunted still, I honor you with words
This soul who knows only your tiny marble grave
Perhaps hoping I, too, will be remembered
Loved like you were loved
And those flowers, those fresh-cut flowers
Persistent in their shadow speak
Who were you, Edna Inez?