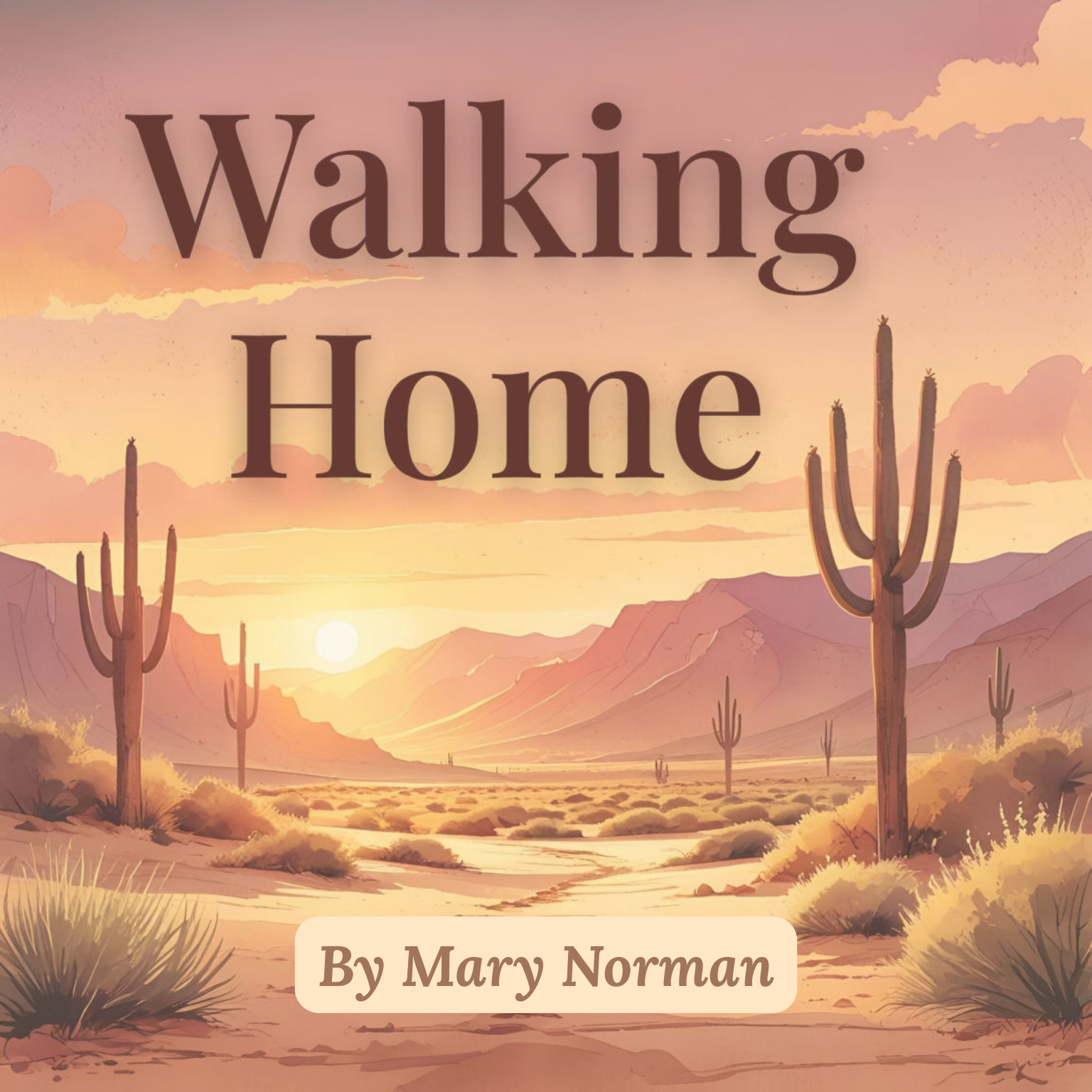


Walking Home



By Mary Norman

I walk in faith.

I am calm.

The diagnosis is clear.

Cancer of the pancreas.





I refused chemo and radiation.

After more than **ninety-four years** of living fully, would it not be downright churlish to whine for more time?

Better to make the most of whatever time I have left.

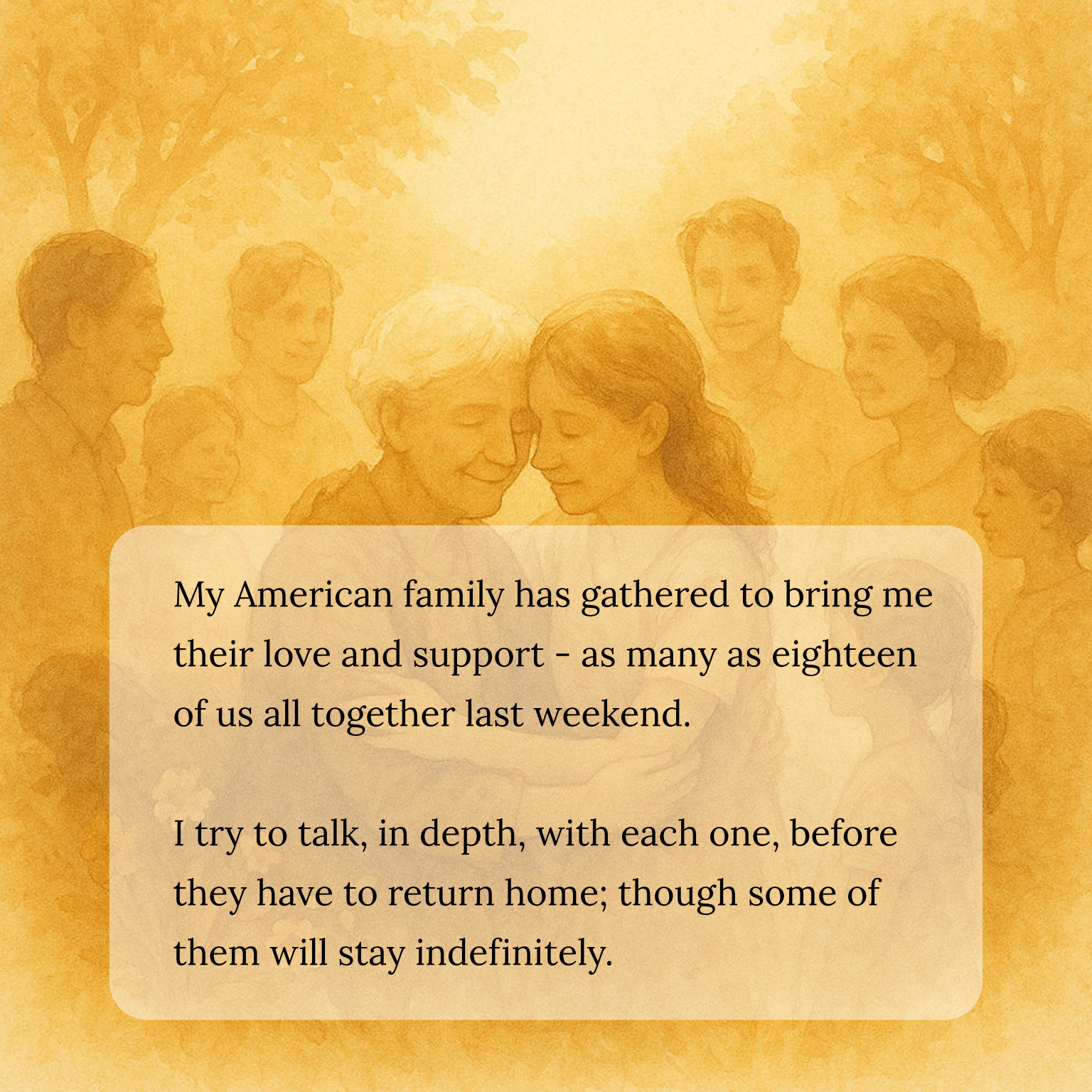




I'm learning to live in something called
“The Sacrament of the Present Moment”, an idea
promoted and taught by Jean Pierre de Caussade,
a French priest who lived three hundred years ago.

It's about living totally in the
present, letting go of the past
and what we might imagine
the future to be and just being
fully aware only of each
particular moment.

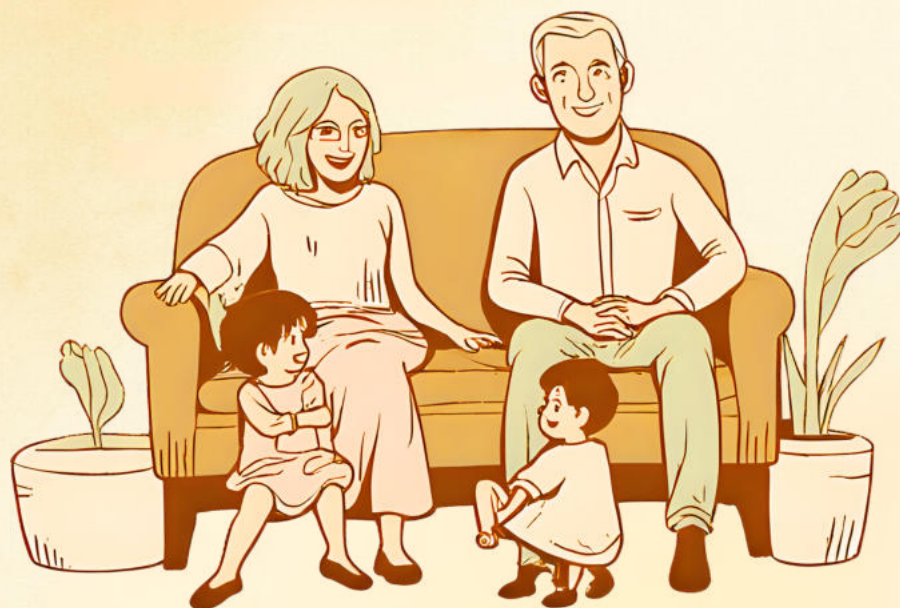




My American family has gathered to bring me their love and support - as many as eighteen of us all together last weekend.

I try to talk, in depth, with each one, before they have to return home; though some of them will stay indefinitely.

My oldest son is almost seventy, the great-granddaughter is three - and each one of my loved ones has something to teach me, to tell me or to give me the gift of listening to me.



We pretty much know one another's shortcomings
but I am astonished, every day, to be seeing
each of them in the shining light of the present
moment where much is revealed.





How blind I have been!
And how dear each
one of them is to me.

The family in England has been on the phone and
on the internet.

Six thousand miles and a lifetime of memories do
not dim our loving concern for one another.





There is teasing and laughter, too, in this Present Moment, especially since the three-year-old is precocious and full of charm, entertaining all of us with her chatter and antics.

And rumors abound, even in this desert area where we live, outside the city limits.

One of our neighbors heard something, put the proverbial two and two together and came up with five - left at my son's door a vase full of beautiful flowers and a sympathy card saying how much they would miss seeing "Granny Mary" and Johnny Cash (my dog) going past in the golf cart to check the mail each day!



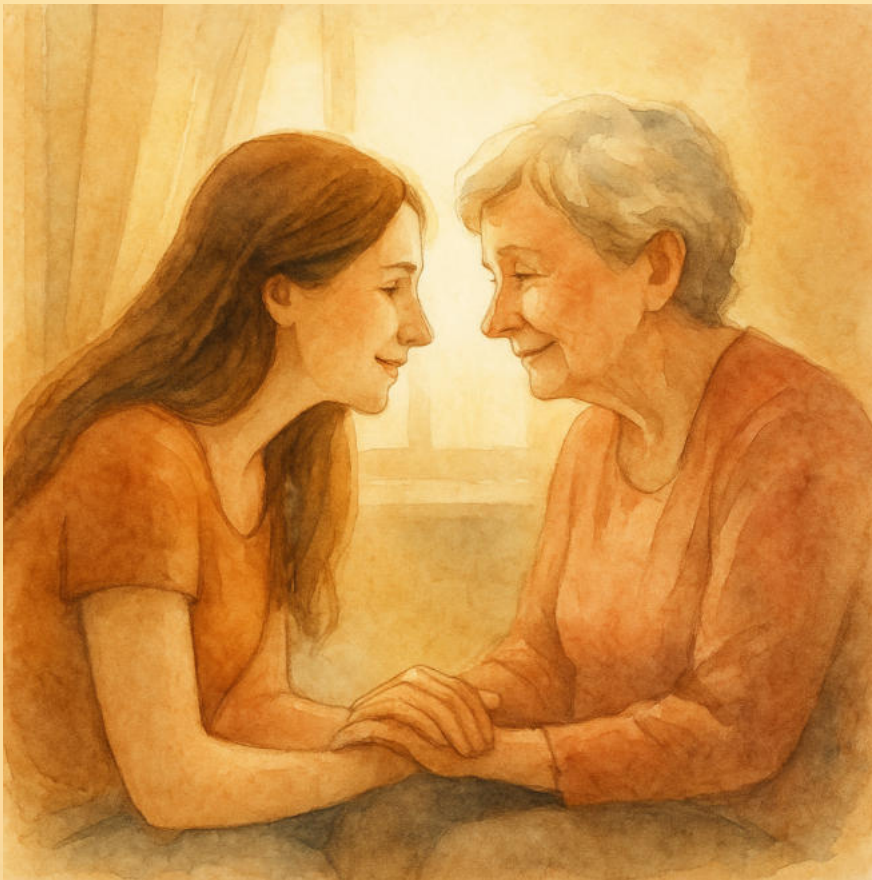
My son emailed a thank you, explaining gently that “Mom is still with us”. We had a good laugh while still appreciating the kindness of the gesture.





Sitting on the back porch, looking South to the scenic Santa Rita Mountains, I have had good, deep conversations with three of my grandsons - each very different but each strong, physically and emotionally, fine family men of whom I am so proud.

My daughter, a granddaughter - we
spoke frankly and with love.



**Now we are learning how to be in Hospice,
where things happen at astonishing speed.**



A chair for the shower was delivered overnight. Medication came to the door at 9pm!



A personable social worker spent a couple of hours asking me about my life story. She copied my Power of Attorney and Do Not Resusitate documents and she explained her job description.



Then came Michelle, the nurse assigned to me permanently - that is as permanent as anything in Hospice can be.

**MY PRIVATE LIFE
HAS BEEN INVADED.**





**Yet I rest easy
in the Sacrament
of the
Present Moment.**

For my family,
with all my love.

