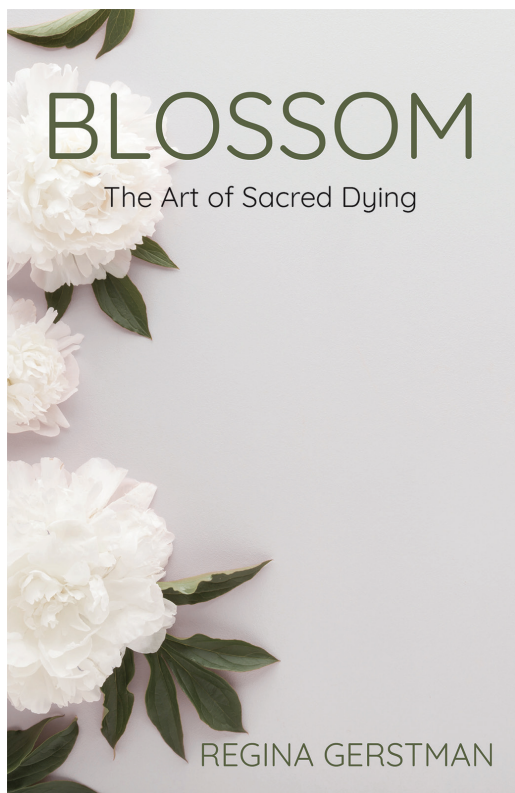


## The Art of Sacred Dying

REGINA GERSTMAN

A Memoir of a Transcendent  
Friendship at a Time of Dying



From author Regina Gerstman comes a sensitive portrait of an elder who enters the last nine months of her life. Gerstman was invited into the mysterious and metaphysical world of Blossom Flowers Ford Burns through private meetings at her studio house in Austin, Texas. As Blossom navigates the tasks of living alone after receiving a terminal diagnosis, Gerstman reaped the rewards of an intellectual friendship stoked with reading assignments, introductions to important friends, co-hosting a neighborhood meeting, and a peek into a private prayer room.

Written in sixteen picturesque chapters of their encounters, Gerstman's rendering of a brilliant woman in decline is intimate and compelling. A session of singing with Blossom's childhood boyfriend ends in a small banquet. There is a brief interlude at hospice from which Blossom recovers. She unexpectedly contributes a final gift to her community. People of all ages and faith traditions have something to glean from this stoic and proud march towards her final days. So many want to die at home in our time; this story displays the Eastern philosophy Blossom used to show how it is done.

### About the Author



**Dr. Regina Gerstman** holds a doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and taught Human Development for nine years. She is also a licensed clinical social worker who has focused on people in midlife and late life for thirty years, after more than twenty years of working in outpatient mental health. Although Blossom was the first person she spent time with while dying, she more directly participated in the caretaking of first her husband and then her mother over the next ten years when they became ill and passed away. Blossom considered Dr. Gerstman to be a scholar and included her in her inner circle ten months before her death.

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Genre: Memoir		Distributed by Lightning Source / Ingram	
Printed Book Size: 5.5 x 8.5"		Printed Page Count: 90	
Format	Hardcover	Paperback	Ebook
ISBN	978-1-962416-86-3	978-1-962416-85-6	978-1-962416-87-0
Price	\$24.95	\$13.95	\$9.99

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