

# The Kindness of Birds

## Merlinda Bobis

An oriole sings to a dying father. A bleeding-heart dove saves the day. A crow wakes a woman's resolve. Owls help a boy endure isolation. Cockatoos attend the laying of the dead. Always there are birds in these linked stories that pay homage to kindness and the kinship among women and the planet. From Australia to the Philippines, across cultures and species, kindness inspires resilience amidst loss and grief. Being together ignites resistance against violence. We pull through in the company of others.

*Kindness cannot self-isolate. It moves both ways and all ways, like breath.*

*Merlinda Bobis is an utterly distinctive voice in Australian letters. In our ironic and cynical times, here are stories of heartfelt feeling — fulsome, tender and unabashed — in which grief and hope are equally things with feathers.*

— **Gail Jones, award-winning novelist**

*These stories are beyond beautiful and deeply moving, raw, tender, brimming with love and pain, death and life. Like “lit diamonds,” to borrow a phrase from Bobis’s own exquisite language. I love how birds are everywhere in attendance, signalling ancestral wisdom, pointing to the strength of the human spirit and its deep ties with all of life. I love how each story feels like a tonic for our time, illuminated from within by so much grace and kindness, it gives hope and inspires awe.*

— **Jennifer Ackerman, bestselling author of *The Genius of Birds***

**WINNER, CANBERRA CRITICS’ CIRCLE  
SHORTLISTED, CHRISTINA STEAD PRIZE FOR FICTION, NSW PREMIER’S  
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