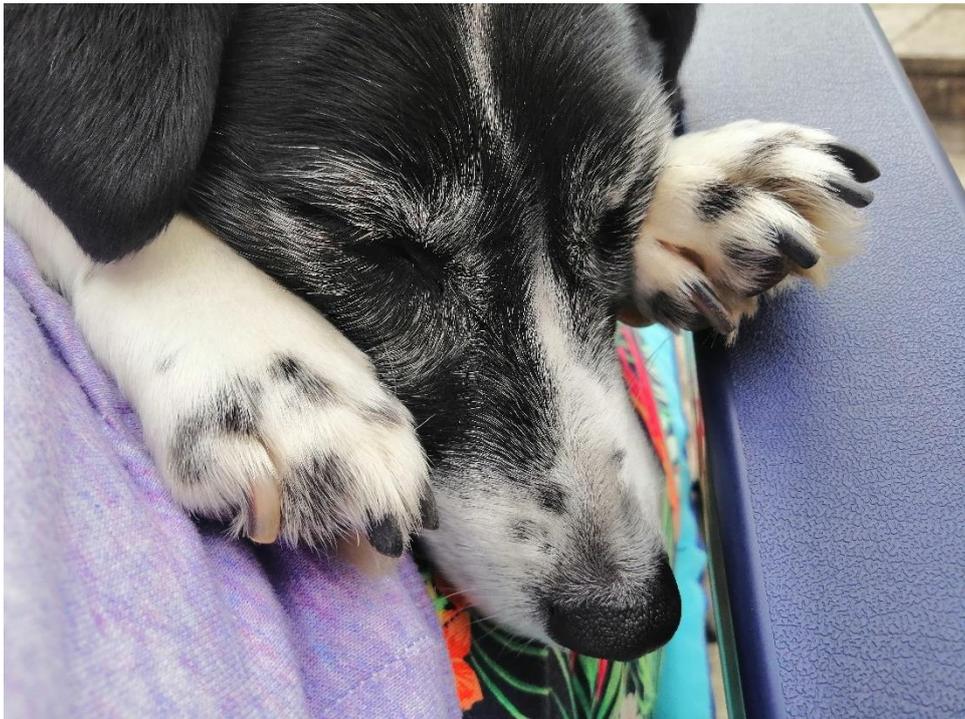




Submission by
Lisette Auton



You're as tall as my ruler with old lady eyebrows and a greying muzzle. Can you be kind?

It had been a rough day. A should have rested day. A should have gone to bed day.

A should have closed the curtains, listened to Radio 3, said to myself "Seep deep into the mattress, lose yourself in the space below duvet, cloud watch, wait for the stars," day.

I was in a tizzy, a fret, all of a dither, restless, angsty, full of pent up nothing, can't-settle-ness.

I eventually came outside and sat in our little back yard with the white washed walls and the plants exploding into colour in their mismatched pots. Couldn't sit still, about to leave, wander, circle once more.

There wasn't room for you on my chair. There was not room for anyone in my whirling swirling twitchy head.

You pawed at me. Swiped. Grazed my right leg with swift claw.

Growled, howled,

and eventually, when the ignoring was too much and you knew you knew the answer

I was just *not listening you ridiculous human*,

you leapt up onto my knee.

You crushed your weight upon me, usually so light, this time you were full of all the heavy I needed to make.

me.

stop.

You wedged your head between my thigh and the chair arm, your head squished between your paws.

You sighed.

When you did that and I felt that something loosen inside me and you became lighter, and so did I.

With each warm popcorn breath you became lighter, and so did I.

With each fresh biscuit breath you became lighter and further away, and so did I.

You slept, and so did I.

Maybe I just looked comfy. Maybe you wanted my seat.

Maybe my lap was at perfect height to catch the breeze, make nose tremble and wrinkle.

Maybe none of these things.

Maybe you just knew I was struggling and you knew I needed you.

Maybe you were being kind.

Does it matter that I don't know, that I don't know if you can be kind, whether you go beyond sleep, eat, poop?

I really don't think it does.

Writer Bio

My name is Lisette Auton and I'm a professional writer who works across multiple forms, and I'm also a disabled activist. I'm an award-winning published poet, a Penguin WriteNow mentee for my children's novel and on the TSS Publishing list of Best British & Irish Flash Fiction. I work with museums and galleries in the Tees Valley on literature and creative projects. I'm proud to have contributed to the Museum of Kindness.



My Moment of Kindness

by GABRIELLE KENT

One morning, I opened my front door to find my neighbour had left me some strawberry plants, just because she had heard my two year old daughter talking about how much she loved strawberries. My daughter loves watching the fruit grow and we baked a cake together to thank our neighbour for her kindness. It made her very happy.

Sitting

There on the doorstep,

Red bow tied

Around it,

Was a gift from a kind neighbour, a box of

Beautiful strawberry plants.

Every day, my daughter

Runs outside,

Ready to

Inspect the plants and

Eat any ripe, red

Strawberries. Delicious!



Writer Bio

Gabrielle Kent has worked on video-games, taught students how to make videogames, ran a festival about videogames, and now writes books based on videogames. She REALLY likes videogames, almost as much as she loves reading and writing stories, especially ones with magic in them. She lives in the North East of England with her husband, young daughter, and Bengal cat, Kali - Destroyer of Sofas.

Gabriellekent.com



Submission by Elizabeth Baker



Image courtesy of @helenfrancesillustration

Hands were in trouble.

Brain had made a declaration. Hands were to stop being, well, hands.

They were no longer safe to anyone. They must **not** touch.

Other hands, the face – anything really.

They must stay still, not reach out. In fact, it would be better if they hid.

Now, more than ever, Hands were trouble. Nearly the worst form of trouble (except for Mouth of course – everyone knew Mouth was the biggest troublemaker).

So Hands felt banished. Hidden. Useless.

And while Brain went off to make big plans the hands twitched.

It wasn't the first time Hands had been in trouble. In the beginning they had been important; the makers of light and fire and food. But that power had turned them until some had gone bad. Some had hurt and maimed. Others had made rude gestures. Or simply said "no".

But this was different. They hadn't had to hide away like this before.

The old hands wrung together and fiddled with fingers.

It was the young ones who knew the answer, as little hands often do. They picked up colours: red; orange; yellow; green; blue; indigo and violet – and made half circles in windows and on walls.

Artistic hands sent out images to bring smiles and hope. Some crafted and baked.

Hands that were used to jabbing and tapping on keyboards remembered how to hold a pen, form words.

"Miss you"

"Stay safe"

"Love you"

Even shy hands found themselves raised in greeting as they walked through quiet streets.

Strong hands packed boxes and bags. Drove vans and cars to deliver parcels of hope.

The old hands even learned new skills; how to tap at screens then flutter with delight at images new, yet familiar.

And they mostly stayed hidden, not touching. Just as Brain had instructed.

Only the hands cloaked in blue, who worked day and night and never complained, were still allowed to touch. Could mend and heal and, when they couldn't, they held other hands and stroked heads and said "I care". For them the hands all came together to make noise and say thank you.

Little by little, Hands found new ways to communicate. It wasn't the same and it didn't stop them fidgeting - itching to reach out and touch. But until that time came (which they knew it would) Hands did what hands do best.

They showed kindness in all the wonderful ways they possibly could.

Writer Bio

My name is Elizabeth Baker and I am a professional storyteller. I write stories that I perform myself and that are also performed by other people; many of them in museums and heritage sites. I work with museums in the Tees Valley to create stories about their collections and engage children and adults in creative writing. I'm delighted to contribute to the Museum of Kindness.

Museum of Kindness by Adam Bushnell

Kindness is a Super Power,
It can come to you in a flash.
It makes people feel as big as the Hulk,
As if you'd won some cash.

Sometimes things just happen,
And life doesn't follow our plan,
But when you show kindness
You're being just like Superman.

Wonder Woman saves the day,
She's a real woman of action.
You can be just like her,
A Coronavirus distraction.

Kindness is like Hawkeye,
It never misses its target.
Whether you're in the street,
Or in a super market.

Kindness can be a smile,
It can be towards a stranger,
It can be on a phone call,
It makes you a Power Ranger.

So be kind to your family,
Be kind to a friend.
Be the smile that makes a day,
Be the one that others can depend.

Kindness is a super power,
In these times its essential,
It also makes you feel good,
It helps you reach your potential.

You can do it at home,
You can do it in a queue,
You can do in a shop,
You can do it out of the blue.

Let's spread kindness all around,
Try to be kind to another,
It shows incredible strength.
So be kind to each other.



Writer Bio

Adam Bushnell is an author of fictional and academic books who delivers creative writing sessions to schools in the UK and internationally. He also regularly works in museums in and around the North East of England to inspire a love of reading and writing.