

Thank you for wanting to spend more time talking and thinking about the novel, *Comfort Songs*.

Despite what you might think after reading this novel, I'm not a huge Country Music fan. Ironic, isn't it? I have, on the other hand, been fascinated with the highs and the fallout of celebrity. There might be a pair of musicians I based the characters of Roger and July upon, but I'd say they are more of a composite than an ode to anyone.

When I was a child, I did know a girl named Autumn Joy and I thought that was a beautiful name. Putting this girl into the complicated life stories of Inez, Roger, and July was a bit of puzzle. Having recently experienced the strange disappearance of people suffering with Alzheimer's Disease, I knew that if I were in Inez's shoes, I'd want someone to know my story—even if I were incapable to tell it. Isn't that what we all want; to be seen, to be known, and hopefully, to be remembered? Those chapters between the main story are something you discover about Inez, but her family never finds out.

Family patterns are a complicated thing; for good and bad. I realized, as many of us do, that habits and personality traits can be passed down as easily as a love for fried chicken. Writing about that intersection between Inez, July, and AJ seemed a fitting way to explore the ways I've repeated patterns in my family life, too. Maybe you have, also. Really, I wanted to give tribute to the grey-headed, hunched back people we overlook every day—our older generation. They all lived interesting lives and if we don't stop and explore that, we're doomed to the fate of invisibility in broad daylight.

On a lighter note, I also am a closet lavender farmer. Every spring I buy a new plant, attempt a new spot in my yard, and almost every year face the inevitable demise of lavender to either shade, rain, or pests. My fantasies of bringing in bunches of lavender to arrange around my house are just that—illusions. Still, my imagination can make the unthinkable happen and I indulged my ideal garden store in this book. I did borrow from one of my favorite *actual* garden stores, Blue Moon Gardens in Edom, Texas, for much of the layout and function of Lavender Hill. The fact that lavender grows beautifully in Blanco, Texas, made it an easy stretch to consider it growing well in Comfort, also.

Do you have plants you want to grow, but just won't thrive in your neck of the woods?

What career or business would you pursue if money and age were no object?

Have you ever watched some disappear in front of you from the ravages of Alzheimer's Disease? Anything learned from that experience to impact how you want to be cared for if the unthinkable happens to you?

Have you had to grow up with a narcissist in your family? How old were you when you recognized the pattern?

How did you think Luke's role in the story played with all the narcissistic people in the mix?

AJ is a woman who routinely puts others ahead of herself. In watching her develop, could you relate to her struggles? Her inability to “let go?” What can you do to lighten up your responsibilities?

Though the characters of Roger and July were hard to love, what did you find about them that would give them redemption?

P.S. As a thank you gift to those who follow my newsletters, one Christmas, a few years ago, I wrote a special story exclusive for subscribers. It was the wedding of AJ and Luke, with a few special surprise guests, a humdinger of a reception, and a tribute with AJ’s godmother that left the crowd in tears. If you’d like a copy, email me and I’ll send you the link to the download of the story. Please consider subscribing to my newsletter. I try to not bore with too many issues, but I do love to write exclusive content for the followers. You can register by email at my website, [kimberlyfish.com](http://kimberlyfish.com)

Thanks again,  
Kimberly