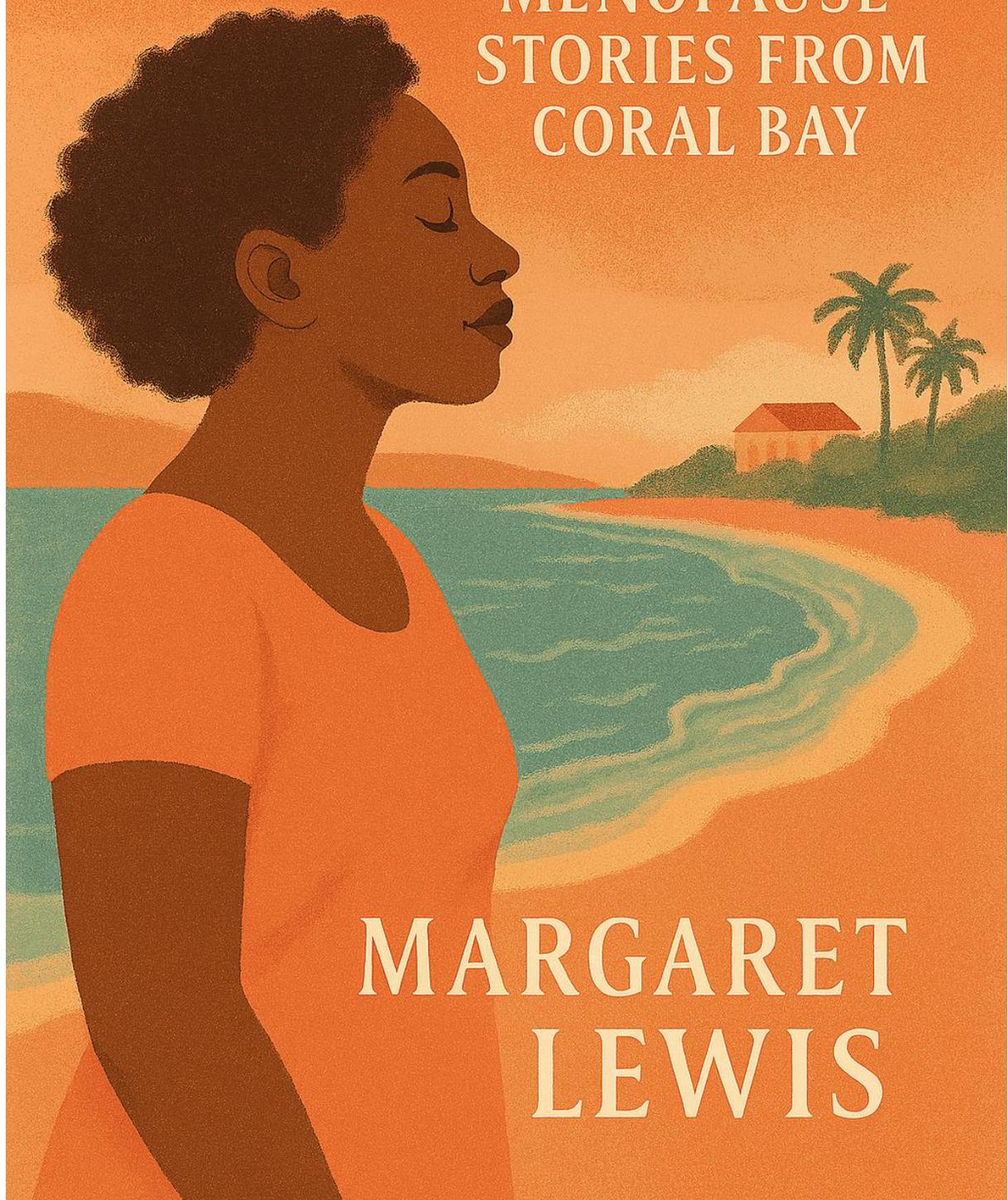


BECOMING

MENOPAUSE
STORIES FROM
CORAL BAY



MARGARET
LEWIS

WHEN THE BODY SPEAKS

Stories of Black Women in Menopause

A Coral Bay Anthology

By Margaret Lewis

Dedication

For every Black woman who has ever felt her body shifting beneath her feet.
For every woman who has carried silence, strength, and softness in equal measure.
For every woman who has been told to endure quietly.
For every woman who is learning to listen to herself again.

This book is for you.

Epigraph

“The body remembers what the mind tries to forget.”

Author’s Note

In many Black communities, menopause is wrapped in silence — a silence woven from cultural expectations, generational resilience, and the myth that we must always be strong. We inherit stories about endurance, about pushing through, about carrying more than our share. But we are rarely given stories about transition, softness, or the truth of what our bodies experience as we age.

This book was born from that silence.

I wanted to create a space where Black women could see themselves reflected — not in statistics or medical jargon, but in stories. Stories that honour our complexity. Stories that hold our tenderness. Stories that make room for our fear, our grief, our humour, our desire, our rebirth.

The women in these pages are fictional, but their experiences are deeply real. Their lineage is intentionally ambiguous so that any Black woman — from anywhere in the diaspora — can find herself here without feeling boxed into a specific heritage. Their stories are shaped by the emotional truths I’ve witnessed in my work as a creative director, wellbeing practitioner, and coach.

This Coral Bay edition brings the stories into a world shaped by tides, moon-paths, warm winds, and community rituals. Coral Bay is a place where healing is woven into the landscape, where humour is medicine, and where women gather to witness one another’s becoming.

This book blends narrative and coaching because menopause is not just a physical transition — it is emotional, mental, cultural, and spiritual. We need stories to feel seen. We need reflection to feel grounded. We need community to feel held.

You can read this book straight through, or you can dip into the chapters that call to you. You can journal after each story, or simply sit with the feelings that rise. You can read alone, or bring these stories into a circle of women.

However you choose to journey through these pages, I hope you feel accompanied. I hope you feel understood. I hope you feel less alone.

Most of all, I hope you feel permission —
to soften,
to rest,
to release,
to become.

With warmth,
Margaret

Introduction

When the Body Speaks

In Coral Bay, the women say that menopause is not a decline — it is a tide shift.

A turning of the inner moon.

A warming of the shoreline.

A soft cracking of old shells.

A rising of new currents.

Menopause is often described in clinical terms — hormones, cycles, symptoms, stages. But for many Black women, the experience is far more layered. It is physical, yes, but it is also emotional, cultural, ancestral, and deeply personal.

We carry histories in our bodies.

We carry expectations.

We carry silence.

And when menopause arrives, it doesn't just shift our hormones — it shifts our identity. It asks us to slow down in a world that demands we speed up. It asks us to feel in a culture that praises endurance. It asks us to listen to a body we were taught to push past.

This book is an invitation to pause.

To listen.

To reflect.

To honour the truth of your experience.

The five women in these pages represent different stages of menopause:

- Nia — early perimenopause, when the first signs whisper (or shout)
- Ama — mid-menopause, when the fog rolls in
- Lena — late menopause, when identities crack open
- Asha — post-menopause, when rebirth becomes possible
- The Circle — a gathering of women across all stages

Their stories are not meant to be perfect mirrors, but gentle companions. They offer emotional truth, not medical instruction. They offer resonance, not prescription.

After each chapter, you'll find a reflective page — a space for you to explore your own story, your own body, your own becoming. These pages are written like journal entries because menopause is not something we simply read about — it's something we live through.

This book is not about surviving menopause.
It's about transforming through it.

It's about reclaiming softness.

Releasing perfection.

Letting identities fall away.

Welcoming new versions of ourselves.

Finding community.

Finding breath.

Finding truth.

When the body speaks, it is not betraying you.

It is calling you home.

THE BODY BEGINS TO SPEAK

CHAPTER ONE - Nia — The First Heat

Stage: Early Perimenopause

Theme: Listening to the Body Before It Shouts

The Warm Wind

The morning sun had barely risen over Coral Bay when Nia stepped into the Tide Office, her favourite place to feel competent. The glass walls reflected the soft shimmer of the sea, and the air smelled faintly of salt and eucalyptus from the diffuser she insisted on keeping at her desk.

She stood at the front of the meeting room, laser pointer in hand, her slides glowing behind her. Presentations were her element — structured, predictable, controllable.

“Quarterly growth is up by twelve percent,” she said, clicking to the next slide. “If we maintain this trajectory—”

The heat hit her mid-sentence.

It began as a flicker in her chest, like the Warm Wind that sometimes swept across the Coral Bay shoreline at dusk. Then it rose — fast, fierce, unstoppable — a wave of heat that flushed her face and dampened her hairline.

Her breath shortened.

Her vision shimmered.

Her blouse clung to her back.

She gripped the edge of the table.

“Is it warm in here?” she asked lightly.

Her colleagues shook their heads. One man pulled his cardigan tighter.

Nia’s stomach dropped.

She finished the presentation on autopilot, her voice steady but her mind racing. As soon as the meeting ended, she slipped out and headed straight for the washroom.

Inside the cool stone cubicle, she pressed her palms to her cheeks.

“This can’t be happening,” she whispered.

But her body had already spoken.

The Denial

That evening, Nia sat on her balcony overlooking the bay. The tide was low, the air soft, the sky streaked with coral and gold. It should have calmed her.

It didn't.

She replayed the moment in her mind — the heat, the panic, the way her heart had fluttered like a startled seabird.

She opened her notebook and wrote:

“Sudden heat episodes at 42.”

The words looked ridiculous on the page.

She crossed them out.

Wrote them again.

Crossed them out again.

“No,” she said aloud. “Not me. Not now.”

She had too much going on — a demanding job, a relationship that was already wobbling, a life that depended on her being sharp.

She closed the notebook and stared at the horizon.

But the truth lingered like the tide — quiet, insistent, returning no matter how she tried to push it away.

The Train to Moon-Path Station

Two days later, it happened again — this time on the morning train that curved along the Moon-Path cliffs.

The carriage was full.

Bodies pressed together.

The air smelled of coffee, sea breeze, and damp coats.

Nia felt the heat rising before it fully hit — a warning tremor beneath her skin.

“No, no, not now,” she whispered.

She tugged at her scarf, fanned herself with her travel card, tried to breathe through it. But the heat surged anyway, flooding her chest, her face, her scalp.

A woman beside her glanced over.

“You alright, love?”

Nia nodded quickly, mortified.

She got off one stop early just to breathe.

Standing on the platform, she leaned against a pillar and closed her eyes.

Her body wasn't whispering anymore.

It was shouting.

The Coaching Moment

That evening, she sat at her kitchen table with a cup of peppermint tea. She didn't even like peppermint tea — she'd bought it because an article said it might help.

She opened her journal.

She wrote:

“What is happening to me?”

Then:

“What if this isn't a crisis?

What if this is a message?”

She stared at the words.

Her body wasn't betraying her.

It was trying to get her attention.

She placed a hand on her chest.

“Okay,” she whispered. “I'm listening.”

The First Act of Care

The next morning, she slowed down.

She woke ten minutes earlier.

She sat on the edge of her bed and breathed.

She drank water before coffee.

She wore lighter layers.

She packed a small hand-fan in her bag.

Small things.

But they felt like a beginning.

On the train, she didn't scroll through emails.

She looked out at the sea and let her mind rest.

Her body felt... not calm, exactly, but acknowledged.

And that mattered.

The Turning Point

At work, she booked a GP appointment.

When the receptionist asked, “What’s the appointment for?” Nia hesitated.

She almost said “fatigue.”

She almost said “stress.”

She almost said “just a check-up.”

Instead, she said:

“I think I might be starting perimenopause.”

The words felt strange — heavy, honest, real.

The receptionist didn’t flinch.

“Okay, we’ll get you seen.”

Nia exhaled.

She wasn’t in control.

But she wasn’t hiding anymore.

Closing Scene — The Quiet Shift

That night, she lit a candle and sat on her balcony. The tide was rising, the moon soft and full.

She whispered:

“I’m changing. And I’m allowed to change.”

The heat didn’t come that night.

But even if it had, she knew she would meet it differently.

Not with fear.

Not with denial.

But with attention.

And that was the beginning of everything.

Reflection Page

For the Woman at the First Threshold**

Where did Nia's story meet you today?

Write freely. Let your truth rise without judgement.

Journal Prompts

- What early signs has my body been giving me?
- How do I respond when my body asks for attention?
- What beliefs about age or strength shape my reaction to change?
- What am I afraid to admit to myself?

Body Check-In

Place a hand on your chest or belly.

Ask quietly:

“What do you need from me today?”

Affirmation

I honour the first signals. I am allowed to listen to myself.

CHAPTER TWO – Ama: The Fog Between Us

Stage: Mid-Menopause

Theme: Releasing the Weight of Perfection

The Mist Season

Ama woke before her alarm, which was rude because she had specifically asked her body for one more hour. She lay still, staring at the ceiling beams of her Coral Bay cottage.

“Lord, if this is what 49 feels like, I need a refund.”

Her joints cracked as she sat up — loudly.

“Okay, disrespectful,” she muttered.

She shuffled to the kitchen, filled the kettle, and then stood there staring at it like it had personally betrayed her.

Had she already boiled it?

Had she not?

Was this kettle gaslighting her?

Malik wandered in, yawning.

“Morning, Mum.”

“Morning,” she said, trying to sound like a woman who had her life together.

“What’s for breakfast?”

She opened the fridge.

Milk. Eggs. Bread.

All familiar.

None forming a plan.

“I... don’t know,” she snapped. “Can’t you just make something?”

Malik blinked.

“Okay... sorry.”

Ama leaned on the counter, shame rising like steam.

She wasn’t angry at him.

She was angry at her brain for taking an unscheduled holiday.

The Forgotten Tide Report

At work — a small Coral Bay community office overlooking the harbour — the fog followed her.

She stared at her spreadsheet. The numbers blurred. Her brain said, “Not today, sweetheart.”

Claire approached.

“Ama, did you send the tide-impact report to Finance?”

Ama’s stomach dropped.

The report.

The one she’d promised yesterday.

The one she’d forgotten like it was a man who owed her money.

“Oh... I’m just finishing it now,” she lied.

Claire smiled kindly. “No rush.”

Ama nodded, but inside she was screaming.

She used to be sharp.

She used to be reliable.

Now she was one foggy morning away from forgetting her own name.

The Breaking Point

That evening, she sat scrolling on her phone, pretending everything was fine. Malik sat beside her doing homework.

“Mum,” he said softly, “are you okay?”

She didn’t look up. “I’m fine.”

“You don’t seem fine.”

She sighed. “Malik, I said I’m fine.”

He closed his notebook.

“Mum... you’ve been forgetting things. You’re tired all the time. You snapped at me this morning. I’m just worried.”

Ama froze.

Her son — her baby — was worried about her.

She put her phone down.

“I don’t know what’s happening to me,” she whispered.

Malik wrapped an arm around her shoulders — awkward, tender, teenage.

“It’s okay, Mum. You don’t have to pretend.”

Ama burst into tears.

Not cute tears.

Not movie tears.

Ugly, snotty, “why is this happening” tears.

And Malik held her.

The Coaching Moment

Later, she sat at the kitchen table with chamomile tea (which tasted like disappointment). She opened her journal.

She wrote:

“I feel like I’m disappearing.”

Then:

“I’m scared people will see I’m not coping.”

Then:

“I don’t know how to be anything other than perfect.”

She stared at the words.

Then wrote:

“Maybe I don’t have to be perfect to be loved.”

She blinked.

“Well... that’s deep.”

The First Act of Honesty

The next morning, she made breakfast slowly.

Toast.

Eggs.

Fruit.

Nothing burnt. A miracle.

When Malik came in, she said, “Sorry about yesterday. I’m... going through something.”

He nodded. “We’ll figure it out.”

At work, she approached Claire.

“I think I might be going through menopause,” she said.

Claire nodded. “Thank you for telling me. Let’s work around it.”

Ama exhaled.
Honesty didn't kill her.
It freed her.

Closing Scene — The Fog Lifts

That night, she lit a candle and wrote:

**“I am still me.
Just a softer version.”**

The fog didn't vanish.
But it felt less frightening.

She wasn't lost.
She was changing.

And she was allowed to change.

Reflection Page

For the Woman Lost in the Fog**

Where did Ama's story meet you today?

Write freely. Let your truth rise without judgement.

Journal Prompts

- Where am I holding myself to impossible standards?
- What would it feel like to let someone help me?
- What am I afraid will happen if I'm not perfect?
- What version of me is trying to emerge beneath the fog?

A Letter to Yourself

Write a note beginning with:

“It's okay that I...”

Finish it five times.

Affirmation

I release perfection. I choose honesty and softness.

CHAPTER THREE – Lena: The Cracking Ground

Stage: Late Menopause

Theme: Letting Old Identities Break Open

The Weight of Being Needed

Lena stood in her Coral Bay kitchen staring at her to-do list like it had personally wronged her.

Groceries.

Medication reminders for her father.

A note to call her sister back.

Snacks for the Tide Youth Group.

Her whole life was a list.

A list she didn't remember signing up for.

Her knees cracked as she moved — loudly.

“Alright,” she muttered. “I’m not even that old.”

The house was quiet except for the distant sound of waves brushing the shoreline.

Coral Bay was peaceful.

She wasn't.

She pressed her palms into the counter and whispered, “Get it together.”

But her body didn't respond the way it used to.

The Sunday Unravelling

Church in Coral Bay was always warm — not temperature warm, but heart warm.

The choir's voices rose like tidewater, filling the small wooden hall with sound.

But that Sunday, as they sang a hymn she'd known since childhood, something inside her cracked.

The voices rose.

The harmonies swelled.

And Lena felt tears rising like a tide she couldn't hold back.

“Oh no,” she whispered. “Not today. Not in front of Sister Pauline.”

She slipped out of the pew and walked quickly toward the exit. Outside, the cool sea breeze hit her face, but the tears kept coming.

She crossed the road to the cliff-top bench overlooking the bay and sat down.

“What is happening to me?” she whispered.

The waves rolled in.
Children laughed in the distance.
Life continued.

But Lena felt like she was falling apart.

The Identity Earthquake

Later that afternoon, she visited her father. He sat in his favourite chair, watching an old Coral Bay documentary with the volume too loud.

“You’re quiet today,” he said.

“Just tired,” she replied.

He studied her face.

“You don’t always have to be strong, you know.”

Lena blinked.

“Excuse me? I’ve been strong since 1989.”

He shrugged. “Maybe it’s time to rest.”

Rest?

Lena didn’t know her.

The Coaching Moment

That evening, she lit a candle and sat at her writing desk. She opened her journal.

She wrote:

“I am tired of being strong.”

Then:

“I don’t know how to rest.”

Then:

“Who am I if I’m not useful?”

She paused.

Then wrote:

“Maybe this cracking is making space.”

She sat back.

“Well... that’s something.”

The First Act of Release

The next day, her sister called.

“Can you host Sunday dinner?”

“No,” Lena said. “I need to rest.”

Silence.

Then: “Oh... okay.”

Lena hung up and exhaled.

She felt ten pounds lighter.

She made tea, sat by the window, and watched the sky shift from coral to gold.

She wasn't holding everything together.

And the world didn't end.

Closing Scene — Becoming Someone New

That night, she wrote:

“I am allowed to change.

I am allowed to rest.”

The cracking wasn't destruction.

It was rebirth.

****Reflection Page**

For the Woman Whose Ground Is Shifting**

Where did Lena's story meet you today?

Write freely.

Journal Prompts

- What roles have defined me for years?
- Which roles feel too heavy now?
- What am I afraid will happen if I stop being “the strong one”?
- What new space is opening inside me?

Affirmation

I am allowed to change. I am allowed to become.

CHAPTER FOUR – Asha: The Warm River

Stage: Post-Menopause

Theme: Claiming the Power of Rebirth

The Quiet After the Storm

Asha stood at her bedroom window, sipping tea and watching the Coral Bay street below. The world outside was calm — children riding bikes, neighbours chatting, the distant hum of the tide.

Her body felt calm too.

After years of heatwaves, fog, mood swings, and sleepless nights, she had finally reached the other side of menopause. The storms had passed. The waters had settled.

She whispered, “Thank God. I thought I’d be sweating forever.”

But now that the storms were gone, something else stirred — a restlessness she couldn’t name.

“What now?” she asked the universe.

The universe said nothing.

Typical.

The Life She Put on Hold

She climbed the ladder to her loft and opened old boxes.

Inside:

Poems she wrote at twenty.

Sketches she never finished.

A list of places she wanted to travel.

A letter she wrote to herself at thirty.

She sat on the floor surrounded by her younger selves.

“I forgot about you,” she whispered.

Life had taken over — children, work, responsibilities, relationships.

But now?

Now she had time.

The River Walk

That evening, she walked along the Coral Bay River path. The water shimmered under the lanterns, warm and slow.

She sat on a bench.

“I’m still here,” she whispered.

The river flowed steadily, as if answering.

The Coaching Moment

She opened her journal.

She wrote:

“I survived the storms. Now I want to live.”

Then:

“What do I want for myself now?”

She listed:

- Joy
- Creativity
- Rest
- Travel
- A little mischief

She smiled.

“Yes. Mischief.”

The First Act of Rebirth

The next morning, she signed up for a pottery class at the Coral Bay Arts House.

She bought a new notebook.

She booked a weekend trip.

She rearranged her living room to create a creative corner.

Small acts.

Big energy.

She wasn’t returning to who she used to be.

She was becoming someone new.

Closing Scene — The Warm River Within

That night, she whispered:

“I rise renewed. My wisdom is a gift.”

And she felt it — the warm river inside her.

Reflection Page

For the Woman Rising Into Her Next Chapter

Where did Asha’s story meet you today?

Write without editing.

Journal Prompts

- What dreams did I postpone?
- What desires are resurfacing?
- What kind of woman do I want to be now?
- What small act of rebirth can I take this week?

Affirmation

I rise renewed. My wisdom is a gift.

CHAPTER FIVE - The Circle We Make

Stage: All Stages

Theme: Community as Medicine

The First Gathering

The Tide Hall smelled faintly of peppermint tea and old wood — the kind of scent that held generations of Coral Bay gatherings.

Chairs were arranged in a circle.

Soft lanterns glowed.

A table of herbal teas waited patiently.

Women trickled in slowly, each carrying something:

A blanket.

A notebook.

A flask of ginger tea.

A fan (the battery-powered kind — essential).

A sense of “I don’t know what this is, but I need it.”

Nia arrived first, clutching her notebook like a shield.

Ama came next, already fanning herself even though the room was cool.

Lena walked in quietly, scanning the room like she was checking for exits.

Asha entered last, calm and glowing like she’d just come from a nap — which she had.

They greeted each other with soft smiles and the unspoken understanding of women who had lived through storms.

The Sharing Begins

Miriam, the facilitator — a warm-voiced woman with silver locs and the energy of someone who had seen everything and survived it — invited them to speak.

“Let’s begin with whatever brought you here,” she said.

Nia went first.

“I’m just starting this journey. I feel... unprepared. And hot. Mostly hot.”

The group chuckled.

Ama nodded.

“I’m in the thick of it. My brain has left the chat. If anyone finds it, please return it.”

More laughter.

Lena took a breath.

“I’m learning to let go of who I used to be. Apparently, my knees have already let go.”

Asha smiled.

“I’m on the other side. And I’m beginning again. Also, I sleep now. I just want to testify.”

The room erupted in laughter — the kind that releases tension from the shoulders.

They weren’t the same age.

They weren’t in the same stage.

But they were connected.

The Coaching Moment

Miriam asked them to close their eyes.

“Place a hand on your heart,” she said.

“Feel your breath.

Feel your body.

Feel the women around you.”

The room softened.

“You are not alone,” Miriam said.

“You never were.”

A few women wiped tears.

A few smiled.

A few breathed deeper.

The circle held them.

The Candle Ritual

At the end of the session, Miriam lit a candle and passed it around the circle.

Each woman whispered something she was releasing:

“Fear.”

“Shame.”

“Perfection.”

“Exhaustion.”

“Pretending.”

“Trying to do everything myself.”

“Wearing bras that don’t fit.”

The group cackled at that last one.

Then each woman whispered something she was welcoming:

“Rest.”

“Joy.”

“Support.”

“Rebirth.”

“Truth.”

“Better bras.”

The flame never went out.

Closing Scene — The Circle Continues

As they packed up, the women lingered — because Coral Bay women don’t leave gatherings quickly. There must be:

A recap.

A side conversation.

A “girl, let me tell you.”

A “text me when you get home.”

They exchanged numbers.

They promised to return.

They walked out into the night, held by the warmth of community.

The circle had become medicine.

Reflection Page

For the Woman Who Needs a Circle**

Where did this story touch you today?

Write freely.

Journal Prompts

- Who are the women I trust with my truth?
- What stops me from reaching out?
- What kind of circle do I need right now?
- What would it feel like to be witnessed?

Connection Practice

Send a message to one woman today:

“I’ve been thinking of you. How are you really.”

Affirmation

I am not alone. My story belongs in a circle.

INTERLUDE-THE FIVE STAGES OF BECOMING

A Coral Bay Reflection

In Coral Bay, the women say that menopause is not a decline —
it is a tide shift.

A turning of the inner moon.
A warming of the shoreline.
A soft cracking of old shells.
A rising of new currents.

These five stages are not linear.
You may move back and forth.
You may experience two at once.
You may skip one entirely.

This is not a map.
It is a mirror.

1. THE FIRST HEAT — Awareness

“The tide is turning.”

The first heat is called **The Warm Wind** —
a sudden inner breeze that rises from the chest and sweeps upward.

It is the body’s first whisper:
Pay attention.

Like Nia, you begin to notice:
your body is speaking in a new language.

2. THE FOG — Honesty

“The mist rolls in.”

This stage is known as **The Mist Season** —
a time when thoughts drift like morning fog over the harbour.

It is not failure.
It is transition.

Like Ama, you learn that honesty is the first act of clarity.

3. THE CRACKING GROUND — Release

“The old shell breaks.”

Along the Coral Bay cliffs, the earth sometimes cracks after long dry spells —
not to collapse,
but to make space for new roots.

This stage is called **The Breaking Open**.

Like Lena, you discover that cracking is not the end.
It is the beginning of truth.

4. THE WARM RIVER — Rebirth

“The inner waters rise again.”

In Coral Bay, the river warms in late summer.
The elders say it mirrors the body —
after the storms, the waters settle and glow.

This stage is called **The Returning**.

Like Asha, you realise you are not fading.
You are ripening.

5. THE CIRCLE — Belonging

“We rise together.”

Every full moon, the women of Coral Bay gather in Tide Hall.
They bring blankets, stories, laughter, and truth.

This stage is called **The Gathering**.

Like the women in the circle, you learn:
Becoming is not a solitary act.
It is a shared tide.

RESOURCES FOR THE JOURNEY

A Coral Bay Guide

These resources blend real-world support with Coral Bay's gentle, symbolic language. They are written to feel timeless, accessible, and emotionally grounding.

1. COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

The Tide Hall Gatherings

A Coral Bay tradition where women meet to share stories, laughter, and truth. Readers are encouraged to create their own version — a living room circle, a café meet-up, a WhatsApp group, or a monthly shoreline walk.

Sisterhood Spaces (Real-World)

Look for:

- Black women's wellbeing circles
- Menopause support groups
- Online communities for Black women
- Faith-based women's gatherings
- Local community centres

These spaces offer what medical leaflets don't: humour, honesty, and "girl, same."

2. EDUCATION & UNDERSTANDING

Menopause Knowledge for Black Women

Seek resources that acknowledge:

- earlier onset
- stronger symptoms
- cultural silence
- emotional and identity shifts
- holistic approaches

Trusted Voices

Podcasts, books, and educators who speak with cultural nuance and compassion.

3. BODY & WELLBEING

Coral Bay-Inspired Practices

- **The Warm Wind Walk** — a gentle shoreline walk during a hot flash
- **The Mist Journal** — writing through brain fog
- **The Cracking Ground Ritual** — releasing old identities
- **The Warm River Bath** — a rebirth soak
- **The Moon-Path Meditation** — grounding under the night sky

Everyday Support

- Hydration
 - Balanced meals
 - Restorative movement
 - Breathwork
 - Cooling fans (the battery-powered kind — essential)
-

4. CREATIVE & SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

Creative Practices

- Poetry
- Pottery
- Sketching
- Collage
- Storytelling
- Music playlists for each stage of becoming

Spiritual Practices

- Candle rituals
- Gratitude lists
- Nature walks
- Prayer or meditation
- Ancestral reflection

These practices help you reconnect with yourself.

GLOSSARY

A Coral Bay Companion

The Warm Wind

A Coral Bay term for the first hot flash — a sudden inner heat that signals change.

The Mist Season

A gentle name for brain fog — when thoughts drift like morning mist.

The Breaking Open

The emotional stage where old identities crack and fall away.

The Returning

The post-menopause rebirth — when creativity, desire, and joy rise again.

The Gathering

The circle of women who walk the journey together.

Perimenopause

The transition before menopause — the tide beginning to shift.

Menopause

Twelve months without a period — a milestone, not an ending.

Post-Menopause

Everything after — the warm river stage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the women of Coral Bay — real and imagined — who taught me that healing is communal, humour is medicine, and becoming is a tide that carries us all.

To every Black woman who has ever whispered her truth into the wind, into a journal, into a friend's ear — this book honours your courage.

To the women who laugh through the madness, who cry in the quiet, who rise again and again — you are the heartbeat of this work.

To the ancestors who held us, the aunties who guided us, the sisters who walk beside us — thank you.

And to every reader stepping onto the Moon-Path — may you feel seen, held, and accompanied.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Margaret is a creative director, wellbeing practitioner, and life coach who blends emotional literacy, cultural wisdom, and imaginative worldbuilding. She is the creator of Coral Bay — a story world where healing, humour, and transformation live side by side.

Her work centres Black women's voices and experiences, offering spaces where truth, softness, and rebirth can unfold. She believes in the power of story as medicine, community as healing, and creativity as a pathway home to oneself.

When she's not writing or guiding others through transition, she can be found walking the shoreline, tending to her creative rituals, or laughing with the women who inspire her most.