



On Turning Sixty-Five: Notes from the Field

John Jerome

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"Personally, I've got a lot invested in reaching my stunning current age, and I'm damned if I'm going to hang on to that youthful crap. (I liked the idea of being a sixty-year-old so much I started claiming that age before I turned fifty-nine.) Parts of it, I don't like--the loss of energy that seems its inevitable accompaniment, for example--but when I consider how I used to boil that energy away as a younger man, and the things I boiled it away on, I am happy to accept a shorter tether and a more reflective way of going at things."

John Jerome, author of such beloved books as *Truck and Stone Work*, entered his sixty-fifth year with a number of goals in mind: to battle the debilities of age, to master them through understanding when he could not physically defeat them, and to keep a journal of these efforts. As he puts it, "It was time to start planning an endgame."

The result is a warm, compassionate, and honest look at the twelve months that led him to the gateway of old age--a survey of this time of life which ranges from strict physiology to expansive philosophy, from delicate neurosurgery to rough weather on a Canadian canoeing trip, from the despair and isolation of illness to the love and comfort of a sound marriage. The writing, in its clarity, grace, and humor, matches its author's spirit. "The quality of our lives depends on the quality of our time," Jerome reminds us. Reading this wise and funny chronicle of one man's--and everyman's--journey toward citizenship, senior division, will be time well spent, for young and old alike. It is that rare kind of book which comes to life as a companion, and even a friend.

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