

[PDF] The Last Gift Of Time: Life Beyond Sixty

Carolyn G. Heilbrun - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The Last Gift of Time: Life B

Author: Carolyn G. Heilbrun

Released: 1998-04-07

Language:

Pages: 225

ISBN: 0345422953

ISBN13: 978-0345422958

ASIN: 0345422953



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Description:

Years ago Carolyn Heilbrun, a long-time feminist () who also writes mysteries as Amanda Cross (*The James Joyce Murder*), decided to leave before age dragged her down by committing suicide at 70. Fortunately, she reneged, and chose instead to chronicle moments from her 60s. Always erudite, often deliciously wry, if sometimes pretentious, Heilbrun hits the mark more often than not in this book of essays. She speaks of "unmet friends" whose lives have paralleled her own and blessed deliverance from the academic bustle and backstabbing of Columbia University, the tyranny of memory, and foolish feminine clothes. Throughout, her sense of renewal is as welcome as her determination to go against the grain. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly The word "gift" in German means "poison" and, to a linguist, the title might imply some bitterness. Heilbrun, former Columbia University English professor and noted literary critic, is a woman who obviously chooses her words well. Threading through the 15 essays is the theme of her youthful intention to commit suicide when she turned 70; several of the chapters convey the tone of an apology for not having done so. The essays reflect and resonate with the general female experience of growing old: comfort in established family and home, loss of socially construed femininity, and a certain resentment at having been too often ignored or dismissed by the prevailing (male-dominated) culture. Heilbrun (*The Education of a Woman*) concedes that the past was probably not better than the present, only different, and looks to the young, especially her children, to teach the significance of those differences: "Those gentler times to which we old hark back imprisoned and excluded too many of us." In her most poignant chapter, "The Family Lost and Found," Heilbrun tells of her rediscovery of the courageous and intelligent immigrant women who were part of her father's family, although he had not seen fit to tell his only daughter about them. Her rediscovery of that lost half of her family, late in her life, was both encouraging and bittersweet. Heilbrun offers observations and stories, not lessons or polemics, but she is a perceptive witness to the vagaries of life.

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