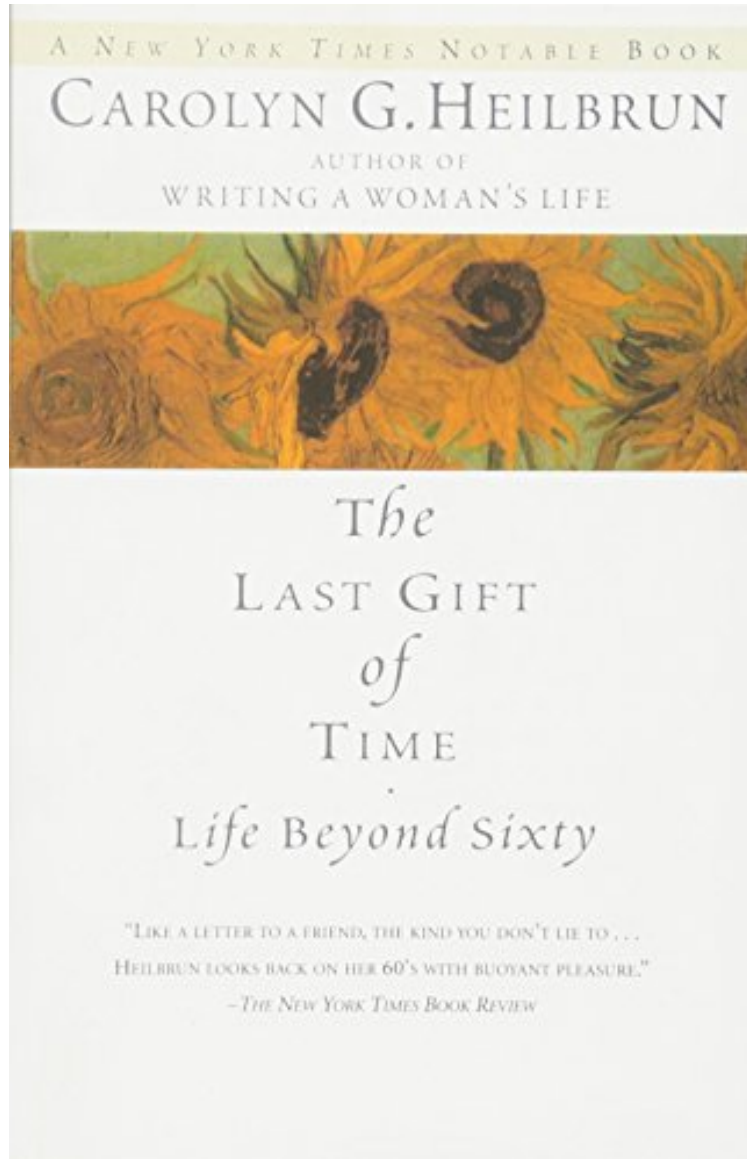


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## The Last Gift of Time: Life Beyond Sixty

Carolyn G. Heilbrun

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#415477 in Books 1998-04-07 1998-04-07Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF #1 7.98 x .49 x 5.18l, .55 #File Name: 0345422953225 pagesCarolyn G. HeilbrunagingWomen's StudiesFeminist Theory | File size: 63.Mb

**Carolyn G. Heilbrun : The Last Gift of Time: Life Beyond Sixty** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Last Gift of Time: Life Beyond Sixty:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a lovely readBy Riobeautiful book0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The gifts of ageBy RedbegoniaGreat read for those of us over 60. Well written, thoughtful, and an excellent reminder of the gifts of age.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting BookBy Tamsen E.

George I was expecting more from the book but found it interesting to read. Just not as inspirational as I had hoped. It had been assigned as reading before a 55th high school reunion.

When she was young, distinguished author and critic Carolyn Heilbrun solemnly vowed to end her life when she turned seventy. But on the advent of that fateful birthday, she realized that her golden years had been full of unforeseen pleasures. Now, the astute and ever-insightful Heilbrun muses on the emotional and intellectual insights that brought her "to choose each day for now, to live." There are reflections on her new house and her sturdy, comfortable marriage; sweet solitude and the pleasures of sex at an advanced age; the fascination with e-mail and the joy of discovering unexpected friends. Even the encroachments of loss, pain, and sadness that come with age cannot spoil Heilbrun's moveable feast. They are merely the price of bountiful living.

Years ago Carolyn Heilbrun, a long-time feminist (*Writing a Woman's Life*) 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. 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. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Heilbrun (*The Education of a Woman*, LJ 11/1/95) will also be known to many readers as mystery writer Amanda Cross. In these essays, on knowledge gained in her fifties and sixties, she often refers to "unmet friends," as the reader feels toward her persona here. The pace is suitably reflective, but this in no way diminishes her clarity, humor, or deeply held feminist conviction. Among other topics, Heilbrun examines the unexpected pleasures of E-mail, her love for her dogs, a declaration of freedom from dresses and heels, the perils of finally getting a longed-for "room of one's own," her relationship with poet May Sarton, appreciation for the wisdom of the young, and the company of men. Heilbrun decided years ago to end her life at 70 but now chooses to live each day that comes. These essays bear witness to her continued reasons for doing so. Recommended. -?Barbara Hutcheson, Greater Victoria P.L., British Columbia Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.