

CROW'S FEET

Life As We Age



**Stories that inspire joy and defy
stereotypes about the last decades of life.**

EDITED BY NANCY PECKENHAM

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

Print book ISBN 978-1-7352686-0-6

Ebook ISBN 978-1-7352686-1-3

First published October 2020.

Cover photo by Cristian Newman on Unsplash

Part One photo by Nancy Peckenham

Part Two photo by Anthony Metcalfe on Unsplash

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Typesetting by Fundamental Capabilities Inc.

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INTRODUCTION



It's going to happen to all of us one day, if we're lucky enough to live that long. We will look in the mirror and it will hit us that we have aged. It's a fact of a nature — and one that we can embrace or fear.

Fear of aging comes from a culture that devalues older folks and depicts them as feeble and unproductive. Embracing aging erases these negative stereotypes and allows people to savor the joy and new-found wisdom that comes with each advancing year.

In this collection of essays and poems you will find the voices of women and men who are exploring their own attitudes about aging, shedding outdated images and redefining how we experience life in our final decades. The pieces have been written by people who are delighted with the freedoms they have discovered in their fifties and sixties even as they confront ageist attitudes.

The roots of ageism go deep. Half-a-century ago, men could expect to die in their sixties and women would follow in their early seventies. In popular culture, only the young were endowed with glamour, happiness and adventure, while those older than 60 were thought to be in a slow and steady decline. After people retired from the workplace, they were considered irrelevant.

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Today, our understanding of aging has changed. Advances in medical care, along with a parallel movement that emphasizes healthy eating and exercise, have brought new vigor to life in our sixties, seventies and eighties. People feel better, have more energy, and are more active. Each day, each year that older people prosper, we defy the ageist stereotypes of inevitable mental and physical decline.

The stories in this volume show how these changes are occurring. They are written by people from around the world who want to share their excitement in life as they age. They represent a small portion of the 100 writers who are part of *Crow's Feet: Life As We Age*, a publication on *Medium.com*, where the essays and poems first appeared.

At *Crow's Feet*, our mission is to turn aging on its head. We are doing it by shattering negative stereotypes and replacing them with the strength and wisdom that grows with the years. The challenge of deconstructing aging isn't easy. It permeates so many parts of life. But we are raising our voices to be part of the conversation and we will be heard.

The writers in this edition of *Crow's Feet* speak from the frontlines because they write from the heart about their personal experiences with being older, with discovering that their daily lives are filled with both adventures and with a wisdom that allows them to savor life. Their personal stories reveal the lie about aging and prove it to be a fact of life to be embraced, not feared.

In these pages you will find anger and disappointment but also laughter and joy. You will discover truth in the words of Frank Lloyd Wright, who wrote:

"The longer I live the more beautiful life becomes."