

So Late, So Soon: Telling It Like It Is

Linda K. Anderson

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Anderson and her friends capture the poise and wisdom of women who have lived fulfilling lives.

So Late, So Soon, Linda K. Anderson's compilation of essays, features thirty of Anderson's female friends and their personal opinions on aging. The stories reflect back on the women's individual lives with the clarity and wisdom possessed only by people of a certain age. Honest, witty, and engaging, the essays found in *So Late, So Soon* give examples of how to age gracefully.

Beginning with a detailed account of her childhood, Anderson recounts her progression through adulthood, marriage, motherhood, and finally widowhood. These are common themes found in the rest of the essays, made unique by the women's different approaches to everything life could throw at them. Anderson recounts growing up in West Virginia, moving from suburbia to a mining town, then moving to Florida. Along with a writing career, she was involved in politics; in a particularly interesting vignette, she describes being personally invited to the White House in 1978 for the signing of the Israel-Egypt Camp David Accords, where she met Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

Each essay or poem begins with a picture of the author as a child, and concludes with a picture of her at her present age. Since most of the stories follow a journey through the writer's life, this visual bookending of youth and age around the short passages mirrors the women's feelings: life goes by too quickly. Anderson set out to write a brutally honest account of growing old, and she accomplishes her goal. Her fellow "elders" (her preferred term for people of advanced age) do not mince words when describing the hardships they face, but all of them retain a good attitude and seem thankful for the years that have passed.

Recipes with sentimental value are inserted among the tales of aging. The accomplished women featured in the book range from PhDs to secretaries, and the recipes are just as varied. Though the recipes disrupt the flow from essay to essay, these intimate pieces of the women's memories make the book feel less like a memoir about the blunt truth of aging and more like a scrapbook passed down full of memories and invaluable advice.

Anderson and her friends capture the poise and wisdom of women who have lived fulfilling lives. Humor, permeated with truth, adds charm to this memoir dedicated to communicating real stories about aging.

SARAH KOHOUT (May 31, 2016)

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