



Sixty: A Diary of My Sixty-First Year: The Beginning of the End, or the End of the Beginning?

Ian Brown

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This is the thing, you see: I am on my way to being an old man. But at sixty, I am still the youngest of old men.

As Ian Brown's sixtieth birthday loomed, every moment seemed to present a choice: Confront, or deny, the biological fact that the end was now closer than the beginning. True, he was beginning to notice memory lapses, creaking knees, and a certain social invisibility—and yet, it troubled him that many people think of sixty as “old,” because he rarely felt older than at forty.

An award-winning writer, Brown instead chose to notice every moment, try to understand it, capture it . . . all without panicking. *Sixty* is the result: Brown's uncensored account of his sixty-first year, and, informed by his reportorial gifts, his investigation of the many changes—physical, mental, and emotional—that come to all of us as we age.

Brown is a master of the seriocomic, and his day-to-day dramas—as a husband, father, brother, son, friend, and neighbor—are rendered, inseparably, with wistfulness and laugh-out-loud wit. He is also a discerning, prolific reader, and it is a pure pleasure being privy to his thoughts on the dozens of writers—including Virginia Woolf, Philip Larkin, A. J. Liebling, Wisława Szymborska, Clive James, Sharon Olds, and Karl Ove Knausgaard—who speak to him most, at sixty.

From an author on whom the telling detail is never lost, *Sixty* is a richly informative, candid report from the line between middle-aged and soon-to-be-elderly. It perfectly captures the obsessions of a generation realizing that they are no longer young.

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