

# In the Winter of My Thirty-Eighth Year

Those who know me, may know that I celebrated my 38<sup>th</sup> successful revolution around the sun this winter. Though this is part of the reason I have chosen this poem, there is a much larger one. More than anything, I was captured by the images Merwin attaches to this particular winter. The fog and rain blind our narrator from so much they could be experiencing. This line is followed by the disappearance of time and an intimate moment where age becomes relevant. Most of us consider that age bring wisdom. But there is a theme of separation sprinkled within this poem. A separation of age and wisdom. A separation of will and ability. A separation between what this person could be and who they are. It makes us ask ourselves, are we the best version our 'young' self had imagined? If I got a chance to make a change, would I? A birthday is the star- when I'm 20, I'm moving out. When I'm 30, I'll start my Masters. I will retire when I hit 60. But the emptiness between is really what matters. How do we reconcile the stars we shoot for when we live most of the time between the emptiness?



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BY [W. S. MERWIN](#)

It sounds unconvincing to say *When I was young*  
Though I have long wondered what it would be like  
To be me now  
No older at all it seems from here  
As far from myself as ever

Walking in fog and rain and seeing nothing  
I imagine all the clocks have died in the night  
Now no one is looking I could choose my age  
It would be younger I suppose so I am older  
It is there at hand I could take it  
Except for the things I think I would do differently  
They keep coming between they are what I am  
They have taught me little I did not know when I was young

There is nothing wrong with my age now probably  
It is how I have come to it  
Like a thing I kept putting off as I did my youth

There is nothing the matter with speech  
Just because it lent itself  
To my uses

Of course there is nothing the matter with the stars  
It is my emptiness among them  
While they drift farther away in the invisible morning