

Growing Older: Good Days, Bad Days

By Phyllis Chesler

Someone once told me that as you get older, “you have good days and bad days. Get used to it.” Oh true words.

I’ve had Covid three times and since then, I’ve been reluctant to go out into crowds. This means that I haven’t gone to shul, to the cinema, the theater, or the opera. I’ve been forced to turn down invitations to lecture and to attend important conferences if it means serious traveling. That’s all Ok. I’m an 84-year-old grandmother who is not starving, or homeless, or about to die of a fatal disease—nor am I in prison or exile. I don’t live in a hot military war zone, only in an even hotter cognitive and intellectual one—an area in which I hold my own every single day.

But don’t cry for me Argentina! I have the very best books to read; films to stream, films via Vimeo sent by distributors or by directors, in the hope that I’ll review them, which I often do. I am also editing a new book, trying to perfect it. And always, always I am writing. It is how I breathe.

Do I go out at all?

Well, not that often. After far too many surgeries, and far too many negative consequences, if and when I go out, I must take a car. And where do I go? To my son and his family, (who live within a mile of me), to a friend, to a nearby restaurant. Of course, to doctors and therapists of all kinds. Sometimes, even to a dear friend’s in the country who has decorated a suite of rooms just for me. And so, I read and write there instead of here, where I can view lazy sailboats on the water or, come winter, view “bare ruin’d choirs where late the sweet birds sang.”



Last Saturday night was a major exception and I was thrilled that I finally could do it. With more than a little fear and trembling, I attended an opera at the Metropolitan Opera House. It was Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (the Troubadour). I do not want to review it here—but I will share a photo of our dinner there before the opera. We did not stay beyond the intermission. But at least I made it there.

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