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The Writer as an Old Woman

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Abstract

A sample of 19 American and British women authors, born before 1910 and still publishing, shows a consistent life pattern: their first publication was relatively late (median 31 years) and they were recognized late (median 39 years). Follow-up research will assemble biographical data for a larger

number of living women writers over 65 years of age, comparing these with women authors (1) born before 1800, (2) born 1800–1850, (3) born 1851–1899, (4) born 1900–1910. Because these individuals are (1) middle-class, (2) educated above the level of their cohorts, (3) engaged in socially acceptable mental activity, their life patterns may yield interesting information about the relationship between social class, continued meaningful activity, and longevity in different historical periods.

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