



Hi,

Well, I almost didn't write a letter this year. Not much happens when you are semi-retired and work from home. It's mainly because you are almost always at home. It's hard to write about nothing. Getting older is strange; you start to become more of a homebody. You no longer want to deal with, or have to deal with, daily stress, traffic, waiting in lines, or the many things that upset you. With the Internet you can even get most things on line and delivered to your front door and don't have to deal with going shopping, the crowds, and finding a parking space. All the things you put up with to go to work and all the other life

events you had to deal with seem to become minimal and fade away. You no longer are into fashion, image, impressing people, bars, and hot spots to go to. All the days seem almost the same and one of the hardest things is remembering what day it is. I'm not sure if this is good or bad.

Being cool is not the same as it was in my twenties. In your twenties you want to be accepted and try to fit in to your social circle (your tribe). In my generation, if your group had long hair or wore jeans and a t-shirt, you did too. Things haven't changed. In today's generation if their group of friends has tattoos, they feel like they should get one too. They think it's a form of rebellion, doing something their parents hate, but actually it's a form of conformity to fit in and be accepted. Everyone seems to do it in different ways depending on who you hang out with. When you are young to be accepted is what makes you cool. Things change when you are older. I think that when you are older and retired you are cool when you can talk about something besides your kids, the expensive trip you took or your old job.

Now, all this doesn't mean that you become a hermit, which is really easy to do. It means that you have to come up with things to do that interest you or stimulate your mind. You end up contemplating your past failures, successes and how you got to where you are now. You realize you only have so many years left, so you don't want to waste them on boring people, stupid events, bad movies, and unproductive tasks. I've always said that the hardest thing in life is not getting what you want, but knowing what you want and being happy with what you have now.

There is a certain freedom that comes with age. It's similar to the freedom you had when you were a kid. You are again on the quest to discover what defines who you are. You no longer have to fit into the restraints of the working world. You can do whatever you always wanted to do. The only thing is that most of the time you forget what that is. Heck, sometimes you even forget why you walked into a certain room.

Anyhow, Christmas and New Years seem to be way markers in your life. They are a time when you get to stop and see where you have been, where you are, and where you are going. Hopefully, you appreciate what you have, the friends that have shared your life, and the fact that you are still here.

As I've said not much has gone on in the past year. I'm still doing graphic design work for my last company as a consultant. It keeps me somewhat busy. When I'm not doing graphics, I try to do some art or work on my house. I'm still doing sci-fi and fantasy illustrations and even got to do another book

cover. I'm also doing some fine art and photography too. I won some more art show awards, which is always nice, but having people buy my art is always better. Sales have been going down the last few years. I'm not sure why.

My cats have changed. Ramone passed away. He was a very nice cat. His nickname was "Mr. Mello". He has been replaced by Sally. One of my neighbors moved away and left her. She was somewhat feral and ran away from them when they tried to get her. They told me that she hated to be touched. It took me about a month or so before I could pet her. Now she lives in the house. She is like a clingy girlfriend. She seems to always want to be on my lap and loves being petted. At night she sleeps by my head. She is a really old sweet cat. My other cats Frank (the gourmet) and Cindy (the gray ghost) are doing fine and get along with her.

There isn't too much else to talk about. My house is good. It's a slow constant project. I'm still trying to update it. My car is still running fine. I keep tinkering with it to make it even better. I'm doing fine too. I have been lucky. There really isn't anything wrong with me, just the usual getting old aches and pains and basic memory loss. I still exercise and walk fast for a mile or two up and down the hills almost every day. I've always exercised and taken vitamins for most of my life. Guess it was a good thing.

Well that's about it. I hope you have a Happy Christmas and a great New Year.

Take care,

Bob

Here is some of the art that I've done this past year.

