

Time Flies

by Jason E. Rolfe

I want to explain how my fortieth birthday became my forty-first and, subsequently, my forty-second, forty-third and forty-fourth birthdays respectively. I want to write a story about my forty-fourth birthday and how it became, that very same day, my forty-fifth and then, quite suddenly, my forty-sixth birthday. I shall now attempt to recount the day I turned forty-seven, forty-eight and forty-nine. I say 'attempt' because now that I am fifty my memory is not what it once was. To be honest, it was not very good to begin with. I do recall, however, the day I turned fifty-one, fifty-two, and fifty-three. I remember it like it was yesterday!

The night before my fifty-fourth birthday I went to bed early. I felt tired and knew the ensuing day would be busy. My wife had planned a surprise fifty-fifth birthday party for me, complete with guests, gifts, and a monstrous birthday cake that would overflow with fifty-six candles. I slept uneasily the night before my fifty-seventh birthday. Fifty-eight years weighed heavily on my heart. As I lay there it occurred to me that time had slipped by disappointingly fast. I found it difficult to believe that when I awoke I would turn fifty-nine. "Sixty is a milestone," my wife told me before kissing me goodnight. "Sixty-one is just another number," I'd said in response. "No sense celebrating sixty-two."

My ever-faithful wife. I was twenty-three when I met her, thirty when we married. I was thirty-six when our first and only child arrived. It all seemed so recent, so fresh. Yet when I awoke I would be sixty-three. "I don't want to get old," I told my wife. "Sixty-four isn't old," she replied. "Sixty-five is the new forty-five." "Yes," I replied, "but forty-five is old too." They say you're only as old as you feel. That's cold comfort for someone who feels old. I will turn sixty-six, sixty-seven and sixty-eight tomorrow. Time slips by so quickly I can barely recall the life I lived during my forties and fifties. "Sixty-nine is a good number," my wife had said. "It means something," she'd added with a sly wink. "Yes," I replied. "It means I'm not as

young as I used to be." "Seventy is a milestone," she'd said before kissing me goodnight. "There is no shame in being seventy-one."

I was born in '72 and tomorrow I will turn seventy-two.

Time has wings. They are bright and beautiful, like those of a butterfly. They are delicate wings, and they carry the years away from my decaying mind. I would break those wings if I could, for tomorrow I turn seventy-three, and I grow weary of their incessant flapping.

