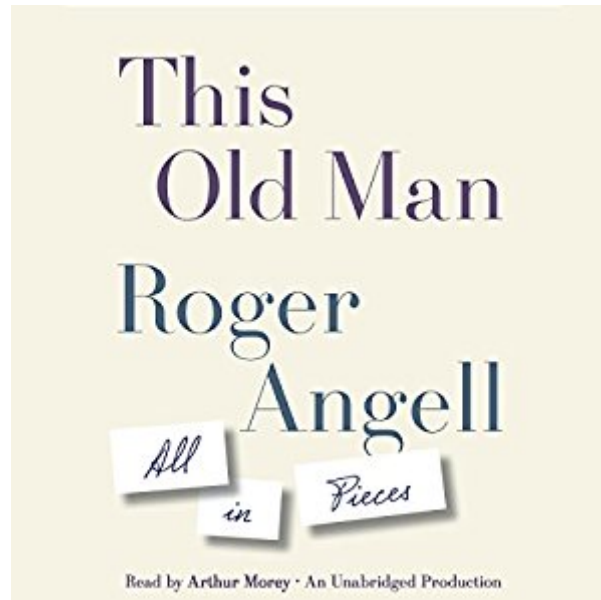




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# **This Old Man: All In Pieces**



## Synopsis

Roger Angell, the acclaimed New Yorker writer and editor, returns with a selection of writings that celebrate a view from the tenth decade of an engaged, vibrant life. Long known for his range and supple prose (he is the only writer elected to membership in both the Baseball Hall of Fame and the American Academy of Arts and Letters), Angell won the 2015 American Society of Magazine Editors' Best Essay award for "This Old Man", which forms a centerpiece for this audiobook. This deeply personal account is a survey of the limitations and discoveries of great age, with abundant life, poignant loss, jokes, retrieved moments, and fresh love, set down in an informal and moving fashion. A flood of listeners from different generations have discovered and shared this classic piece. Angell's fluid prose and native curiosity make him an amiable and compelling companion. The book gathers essays, letters, light verse, book reviews, Talk of the Town stories, farewells, haikus, profiles, Christmas greetings, and late thoughts on the costs of war. Whether it's a Fourth of July in rural Maine, a beloved British author at work, Derek Jeter's departure, the final game of the 2014 World Series, an all-dog opera, editorial exchanges with John Updike, or a letter to a son, what links the pieces is the author's perceptions and humor, his utter absence of self-pity, and his appreciation of friends and colleagues - writers, ballplayers, editors, artists - encountered over the course of a full and generous life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This Old Man: All in Pieces by Roger Angell Roger Angell is like an 'institution' among writers and

New Yorkers. Writers? That's easy, because he's been a fiction editor and contributor at The New Yorker for decades now. New Yorkers? Ah, that's mostly because of baseball, of course, and Angell's many columns, articles and books about America's favorite pastime that have piled up over the past fifty years or so. And New Yorkers do love their baseball, dating back to the days of the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants - and New York-born Angell, at 95, certainly does date back that far, demonstrating in vivid terms his memories of Lefty Grove, Duke Snider, Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle and others. Me, I love Angell because of the books, the writers, all the literary connections he's made and maintained throughout the years. Giants like John Updike. "Colleagues for more than half a century," Angell collaborated with Updike - by phone, courier and email - in editing the scores of Updike short stories that graced the pages of their magazine over the years. An Updike enthusiast since college, I relished this description of the shy, gentle man - "Now and then he would turn up at the office, startling me once again with his height and his tweeds, that major nose, and his bright eyes and up-bent smile; he spoke in a light half-whisper and, near the end of each visit, somehow withdrew a little, growing more private and less visible even before he turned away. The fadeaway, as I came to think of it ..." There are small, equally incisive portraits of other literary figures, some famous, some not - Bobbie Ann Mason, Philip Levine, Ann Beattie, Donald Barthelme, Nabokov, William Steig, as well as his famous stepfather, E.B. "Andy" White. And many farewell tributes to famous people, some he knew personally, others he did not, but admired from afar: Bob Feller, Duke Snider, Earl Weaver, Don Zimmer and other sports heroes; V.S. Pritchett, Harold Ross, Gardner Botsford, William Steig. There are even a few humorous haikus here, written at the suggestion of his current wife, Peggy, whose fifth graders were learning the haiku form. There is not a bad piece in this whole book, when you come right down to it. Roger Angell writes in a way that makes you think, "Why I could have written that." That's how easy he makes it look, but he admits repeatedly that writing is hard. And he's right. If you make it look easy, that means you have worked and worked at it. I have two favorite pieces here, and both of them are infused in equal parts with grief and humor, which is a pretty hard thing to pull off. But Angell does it, first in "Over the Wall," in which he writes about the death of Carol, his wife of forty-eight years and how he struggled to cope with it. And second, in the book's title piece, "This Old Man," all about the pains and problems of growing old, and remembering dear ones who are gone, but also about the occasional and unexpected joys that come along to surprise you. I loved this book. And by the way, if you've not read Angell's memoir, LET ME FINISH, don't miss that one either. Roger Angell is an American treasure. My highest recommendation. - Tim Bazzett, author of the memoir, BOOKLOVER

Simply put, Roger Angell, senior fiction editor and a long-time contributor with The New Yorker magazine, is one of the greatest living (thankfully) American writers. *This Old Man -- All in Pieces* is a compelling and enjoyable gathering of essays, book reviews, *Talk of the Town* columns, letters, short stories, and more. Known for writing *The Summer Game*, the seminal book about baseball in the 1960s (to the early 70s) *This Old Man* is a compilation of his writings about baseball, and a number of other subjects, including getting older, and the various people he has worked with at The New Yorker. His style is very fluid, smooth and conversational; he reminds me much of Red Smith, the great sportswriter who worked (when I was a growing up in New York) for the New York Times. At just under 300 pages, the book is very easy to read, since each chapter is relatively short, and for me books like this are best enjoyed in small increments. Just pick it up when you have a few minutes and read 10 to 20 pages. By doing so you will be reading a writer who still is able to deliver, well into his 90s. That alone is very gratifying, as is Angell's writing. Highly recommended.

Any compilation is a mixed bag. My favorite essay is the one entitled, like the title of the book, "This Old Man". Maybe that's because I'm approaching the age where things begin to happen to you he so perfectly illustrates. A gathering of old stories about people I've never heard of and many baseball games I never attended were of only minimal interest. The saving grace is he's such a wonderful writer it's a joy to read almost any story or reminiscence.

The man at the nexus of everything good about life (literature, EB White, baseball, and The New Yorker) takes us on his journey through growing old gracefully with his customary keen eye, gentle wit, and wonderful turn of phrase. We all wish we had his memories, and he's kind enough to share them. This book is like what I imagine spending a lazy afternoon with him, watching a spring training game, would be -- speaking about everything imaginable under the sun. So much fun. So magical. He's a continuing treasure.

Wonderful essays and insights on so many topics. A kind of buffet for the mind. Something here for everyone. Angell's essays range from baseball to V.S. Pritchett to the facts and foibles of growing to be 94, which is Angell's age. Probably most enjoyable to those in middle age because those readers will be familiar with many more of Angell's subjects. However, all readers of any age who appreciate great writing style coupled with a generous dash of sharp insight and understanding of

the human condition will love these essays.

As a long-time fan of Roger Angell (via many yrs of reading The New Yorker) the book didn't disappoint me---far from it. Simple math finds me 8 yrs his junior, so the title alone was enough to get me to buy it. A lot of it does in fact relate to the magazine and his experiences as an editor from early in his post-college life, so I'm not sure how much appeal those parts will have for general readers. For me it was basically a pleasure---I'm glad he won't be editing this contribution!

This man is a treasure still producing extraordinary writing and editing in his 10th decade

I already knew Mr. Angell from his baseball writing and knew that the title 'Poet Laureate of Baseball' was a richly deserved if unwanted title. However, I had not read any of his other works. This book, which covers much of his life in vignettes of varying lengths helps to flesh out Mr. Angell. I enjoyed it all and read slowly to extend the time before it was over. I highly recommend this book to everyone, but especially to those who have not read Mr. Angell's other works.

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