

Using Your Time When Retired

Stanley finally retired at 70. He had worked diligently since 20 and just as diligently looked forward to no longer working. Suddenly, after decades, he was here.

Where was here?

He knew he would not miss working—what he would miss was doing something, that sense of purpose a job brought, no matter how lousy the duties. He went golfing the first day—it was the start of Spring. And he got a fish tank to breed purple balloon mollies. He purchased a series of concert tickets for he and his wife. He looked for volunteer work. Stanley had a plan.

As Summer drew on, hot and dry except for the odd drenching rains, money was tight. Inflation rose, gas prices soared, he drove less (although he received a stipend for his volunteer work driving cancer patients to chemotherapy treatments.) No second series of concert tickets, but he found free concerts in a park. He did not like most of the music.

The Fall saw ick kill his mollies. Stanley used medications and bought more balloon mollies, though he was more cautious now. Arthritis pain stopped his golfing—no swings above the neck—and tennis, which he had just started. He read long, immersive novels, watched any new TV show or movie. Stanley realized he was distracting himself.

It was a cold, difficult Winter, snow and ice, shoveling and slipping. Stanley moved the fish tank from an outside wall, turned up the heater—ick had returned. He bought more mollies, pondering their biggest talent was quickly dying. Outdoor sports was out so he purchased a treadmill, set it up in the second bedroom and spent hours slowly walking to nowhere, waiting for Spring.

He knew the cycles. There would always be Spring.