



By Himself: The Older Man's Experience of Widowhood

Deborah van den Hoonaard

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What happens when older men become widowers? Popular books, movies, and television present widowers as lost and unable to cope or care for themselves. These stereotypes do not encapsulate the experiences of real widowers, how their daily lives change, and what being a widower means to individuals in both sociological and practical ways.

By Himself is based on in-depth interviews with twenty-six widowers over the age of sixty living in the United States and Canada. Using these interviews, Deborah K. van den Hoonaard explores masculine identity and traces the stories that widowers tell about their wives' illnesses and deaths. She also focuses on the widowers' changed relationships with their children and friends, as well as with women, and details the men's encounters with tasks such as housework and cooking. An eminently readable and accessible book, *By Himself* sheds new light on the social meaning of being a widower.

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