

A new start after 60 Life and style

A new start after 60: I went on 75 first dates - and wrote a book of Kama Sutra-inspired poetry

Zack Rogow thought he was ready for love after the end of a long relationship - but not everyone agreed. How did he get over the rejections?



📷 Rogow and his partner hiking the Nakasendo Trail in Japan, November 2025. Photograph: Courtesy of Zack Rogow

Paula Coccozza

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When Zack Rogow's relationship ended, he joined an online dating site. Aged 66, Rogow prepared for his first date with a mixture of grief at the loss of a love he'd thought would last a lifetime, and euphoria. "I was gaga - 'Oh, I'm single again. I can meet people!'" In the event, one match led to another and he notched up 75 first dates over 18 months.

Some dates were outdoorsy walks. Others took place in wine bars, in cafes or at the movies. He kept notes, jotting down each woman's career and family situation so he wouldn't put his foot in it on a second date. It must have started to feel like a job.

"You could say that," he says. "I knew I didn't want to live alone. I knew I wanted a long-term relationship."

Why didn't he want to live alone? "I'm a person who has a melancholy streak. And it's accentuated when I'm by myself," he says. "I enjoy the repartee and the warmth of a daily relationship."

Rogow, now 73, grew up in New York City. His father died in a plane crash when he was three, and he and his older sister were raised by their mother. "Nowadays, she would probably be described as bipolar," he says. She killed herself when Rogow was 19.

In the family home, creativity was valued "above all". Like his father, Rogow is a writer - he works part-time writing and editing for a law firm, and is also a poet, memoirist and translator. His new poetry collection, *The Kama Sutra for Senior Citizens*, tracks some of his findings from his dating marathon.

"I was unfamiliar with how the etiquette of dating had changed - what do you talk about, what do you *not* talk about?" He and his ex-partner, with whom he shares a son, had met in a carpool, so Rogow hadn't dated in decades.

His first foray went well - there was "a good volley of conversation" - but when they said goodnight, Rogow's companion gave him "a kind of scorecard and said, 'Here's what you did right, here's what you did wrong ... You really criticised your ex and I don't think you should do that because all it does is present you as someone who has poor judgment.'" She was further along the path than him; they didn't date again.

Two dates bloomed into brief affairs. The second of these ended when the woman asked, in exasperation, "Do you *ever* wear jeans?" The question stung. "I was wearing these old-man khakis. I realised: 'I'm not really with it any more,'" Rogow says. He wondered if he was still relationship material. "I was hurt, and yet I could see myself through her eyes. 'Am I going to be cool enough for anybody I really want to be with?'" he wondered. He bought jeans.

"It's a rollercoaster when you're dating. Your hopes are very high and they can be dashed very quickly."

Around the time of his 73rd first date, Rogow attended the launch of his translation of Isabelle Stibbe's *Bérénice 1934-44: An Actress in Occupied Paris*. A friend of a friend whom he had never met turned up. She had read the novel in French and asked interesting questions.

That was in 2019, and they have been together ever since. As well as a love of literature, "we both love to travel and we're physically very active". He has three children; she has two, and is a grandparent - Rogow also recently became one.

The Kama Sutra for Senior Citizens emerged from this "safe, secure relationship". But why that title?

"Some people might flinch at the idea of seniors having sex. But one of the things I wanted to explore is senior sexuality and how it's different and pleasurable and a positive part of life.

"When I was young, I was fascinated by all these positions and the weird names they had, like the blue lotus and the peacock's foot, which were very poetic. But as you get older, they become unattainable. What the title poem is really about is intimacy and release and the ability to feel pleasure in whatever way makes sense."

Alongside that, Rogow says he hopes "for continued health and wellbeing together, so that we can keep enjoying the things that we enjoy, and continue to deepen our ties with each other's families".

[The Kama Sutra for Senior Citizens ... and Other Poems on Aging](#) is available from Valley Press.

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