

Directions: In this section, there is a passage with ten blanks. You are required to select one word for each blank from a list of choices given in a word bank following the passage. Read the passage through carefully before making your choices. Each choice in the bank is identified by a letter. Please mark the corresponding letter for each item on **Answer Sheet 2** with a single line through the centre. You may not use any of the words in the bank more than once.

At 43, I've reached the stage where women are warned to watch out for the creeping sadness of middle age. We're served up an endless stream of advice on "how to survive your 40s", as if we're in the endurance stage of a slow limp toward 26. This is the age women start to become "invisible"—our value, attractiveness and power supposedly 27 by the vanishing of youth. But I don't feel like I'm fading into 28. I feel more seen than I ever have, and for the first time in my life, I have a clear-eyed view of myself that is 29, compassionate and accepting.

When I look in the mirror, I'm proud of who I am—even those "broken" parts that for so long seemed impossible to love. So when advertisers try to sell me ways to "turn back the clock", I have to 30 a laugh. I wouldn't go back to the crippling self-consciousness of my youth if you paid me. This hard-won sense of self-acceptance is one of the joys of being an older woman. But it's a narrative often 31 out by the shame that marketers rely on to peddle us their diet pills, miracle face creams and breathable yoga pants—as if self-love is a 32 commodity.

For some women I know, this sense of trust and self-belief later in life gave them the courage to leave dysfunctional relationships or 33 on new career paths. Others talked about enjoying their own company, of growth through 34, deepening bonds of friendships, the ability to be more compassionate, less judgmental and to listen more and appreciate the small pleasures. Life past 40 is far from smooth sailing, but it's so much more than the reductive 35 we see in women's magazines and on the Hollywood big screen.

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| A) adversity | I) neglected |
| B) authentic | J) obscurity |
| C) convey | K) outlines |
| D) depictions | L) prevalent |
| E) diminished | M) purchasable |
| F) drowned | N) submit |
| G) embark | O) suppress |
| H) fragility | |