

October Artist's Almanac

October means eighth in old Roman Latin and survives as a root in *Octave*, *Octet*, and *Octogenarian*, one of which I count myself. Pope Gregory gave us our modern Gregorian calendar, in which October is the tenth, which would be December in the Latin idiom.

For many moderns, it is a sad time, with bright leaves falling to be raked and burned. We attempt to escape from fall by watching our favorite football teams on our glowing televisions and adjusting our auto visors to escape the glowering searchlight sun. It is no use; the heat we so recently complained of in September goes away, and we have chilly mornings, which feature heavy dews, turning to frosts and to freezes, which send us shivering to our fires. Those are some things that make many moderns maudlin.

Not to our agricultural antecedents: they name it *Harvest*, the month of merry making, the month of pumpkins, shocks of corn, and of the rolled hay bales, which will ultimately turn into steaks and hamburgers to grace our celebrations of the season and tailgate parties and make it the season of thanksgiving; giving thanks for our dear dead at All Hallows Eve; at Thanksgiving, when we gather with our living family to count our blessings; and at Christmas, when we welcome into the family of man our Savior of Mankind.

We know what time it is, but not what time is. We try, with our clocks and calendars, to pretend we control time: that we regulate it and order it around.

But we don't. If we divide the pie and distribute it as we live out our days, it is always our Maker who makes the pie and determines the size of each piece we consume.

Scientists in their conceit tell us they know of what it is made, but only the Maker does. Einstein was nibbling at its edges when he discovered the spatial dimensions of time in his Theory of Relativity, in which he claimed the passage of



Windrows – Bill Puryear, Artist

time was but another dimension of moving in space. We can experience this by traveling a few hours through space to Australia or Argentina, where spring is just beginning in October. Yet Einstein was humble when he asserted that *God doesn't play at dice*.

If we but had a place to stand, we octogenarians might see ourselves in high school. Jesus expressed this ineffable mystery when he told his Pharisaic taunters, *Before Moses was, I am*. Hence, the eternal present, in which he advised us to live.

So in this merry month, let us not be sad, but glad, thankful of our harvest of good things, and as the change of leaves from the monotonous greens, which limit our sight in summer, now distinguish each tree from the other, and the winds open sky holes in the foliage, may we be thankful for our harvest of good days and see eternity through them.





Bledsoe Autumnal – Bill Puryear, Artist

Last Friday's book signing hosted by *The Friends of the Gallatin Public Library* come off well, with lines stretching beyond quitting time. Many old friends rendezvoused and new friends were made. There are still a few left of both *Letters to Claudia* and *An Artist's Almanac*.

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