



---

## November 2017 Artist's Almanac

---

*The day becomes more solemn and serene  
When noon is past---there is a harmony  
In autumn, and lustre in its sky,  
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,  
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!*

Percy Bysshe Shelly, *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* (1816)}

My children say Thanksgiving is their favorite holiday.

Why?

Darkness surrounds us, shrinking the light at both ends of the day. We wear a coat now whenever we go forth. Darkened days drop chilling rain for days on end, chill, drizzling rain, so

different from the prayed-for short summer showers that ended in sunlight and sparkling meadows. The clouds that gave those showers then rose into the stratosphere, carrying our dreams and visions with them. That was then; but now is now.

The clouds now change to sullen gray,  
Or march in lines like fresh cut hay.  
Despite the best fall sunny day  
We just can't make old autumn stay.  
We harvest now our final roses  
To save them from a killing frost,  
Forecast above by lines of cirrus,  
Reminding us that summer's lost.  
Maple leaves that flamed this fall,  
Now finally begin to fall,  
To fires and writhing rising smoke,  
Leaving us majestic oak  
Still clad in somber russet brown,  
To further turn our thoughts to ground.  
How short our shortening stay is here,  
In life once green and now so sere,  
And seeing ahead our ending year,  
We fear.

With man-made tools distract ourselves,  
As one into his bookshelves delves,  
Spends weekends now at tailgate parties,  
While others try to be great artists,  
Choose alcohol, or betting pools,  
Or wasting time with prattling fools,  
From wide screen TVs wall-to-wall  
We suck up horrors dread to all.  
Yet none of this will work at last,  
To relive now our seasons past,  
But that not given, review *our* story,  
So join us now to praise God's glory.

Now, just when needed, comes Thanksgiving, a time for reflecting, and for family. At Christmas time we give gifts; in late November we give thanks. Giving gifts is easier than giving thanks; giving thanks is hard on pride, discerning gifts is harder still. Neither time nor memory is given us to recall them all, so we remember only the latest.

Thanks then now to linemen, who climb tall poles in foulest weather, to restore our power and communication after a storm, to police who risk their very lives to save our own, to firemen who enter burning buildings, saving both people and property, for ambulance drivers and all first responders, who go out in all hours and seasons to help us in our most urgent needs, for pastors and for those who pray for us, for teachers, caregivers, plumbers, trash haulers, house cleaners, roofers, blood donors, medical researchers, nurses, doctors, and the list goes on and on.

The surest cure for depression is to give to someone in need. As Dr. Samuel Johnson once observed, *Affection descends*. So it does, descending from the One above who made us and still loves each of us particularly. How often do we thank Him?

God in his grace gave us our life and the grace of being grateful. Unlike the Christmas gifts we rush to buy for ourselves, Thanksgiving, giving thanks costs us nothing, yet benefits both the recipient and ourselves. More than just a zero sum game, this gift doubles values, once for the one whose cell of self is thus unlocked, another whose heart is filled with thankfulness for what is given to him. Thus is doubled value added, indeed.

Thanks be to God!

\*\*\*\*\*

Books still available for Christmas giving: Go to [www.billpuryear.com](http://www.billpuryear.com) and press submenu SHOP