

The Artist's Almanac August 2009

*Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide.*

Andrew Marvell

August 5th and at 8AM the temperature stands at a cool 69 degrees. Summers in Tennessee can be brutal, but not this year. Every day has brought us a good rain and in July the mercury topped 90 only four days – the highest being only 92. The National Weather Service tells us this ties the all-time record since records began in 1871. Temperature fell to 57 on the 19th.

August may yet change all that, with its customary heat and humidity. But maybe not this year. If you are lazy and there is a breeze, a chair in the midday shade is comfortable now and sitting out at night to hear the katydids and watch the lightning bugs is cool. Later in the month comes the spectacular Perseid Meteor Showers, while directly overhead Cygnus the Swan flies down the Milky Way. The stately oaks tower high in their well nourished robes of green, while Dry Fork runs like an Appalachian trout stream. The abundant light is painterly and August is awesome.



Bridge Over August

Even the springs are flowing. Water is our most urgent necessity, yet here in Tennessee, where we have so much water, we take it for granted. Spring branches, wells, ponds, creeks, rivers and lakes lace the land to make this one of the greenest areas of America. Today pure water comes from the faucet with as little thought as does food from the supermarket.

We use water not only to drink, but to cook, bathe, cool our cars, fight fire, nourish crops, cool our industrial plants, provide our recreation, and to make steam for turbines to generate electrical power to heat and cool our homes. Scientists tell us our bodies are mostly water and the very air we breathe is saturated with water, the universal medium. We use it in science and in our religious ceremonies. It is a favorite metaphor in literature and poetry and even in song, as in when David the Psalmist says... *All my fresh springs are in You.*

Water is our universal medium. As children we run to it and as grownups the sight of a sparkling stream or waterfall gladdens our hearts. This week I attended a farewell ceremony for an old friend in a lovely setting above the mouth of Bledsoe Creek. The tales of a life well lived were told by his family and friends and included his days as a B-54 pilot over Europe in WWII. They spoke of fishing trips, golf and bridge games, daring aerial stunts, dances and of the happy life he and his wife of 64 years had shared.

Now they were to be reunited, for at the foot of the slope below his fish camp where his boat awaits, his and his beloved wife's ashes are to be mingled and scattered on the water he loved so well, where he grew up, laughed and spent some of his happiest hours. Bon voyage, old friend.



Venues

Fall into Art – Third Annual Art Show benefiting Hendersonville High School’s Academic and Arts Program, October 2-4, 2009

View the prospectus for our book due out September 29th, now available for preorder at <http://www.cumberlandpioneers.com/volume1a.html>. Prepublication discount expires August 31st.