

## The Artist's Almanac October 2006

*But thought's the slave of life,  
and life time's fool;  
And time, that takes survey of all the world,  
Must have a stop.*

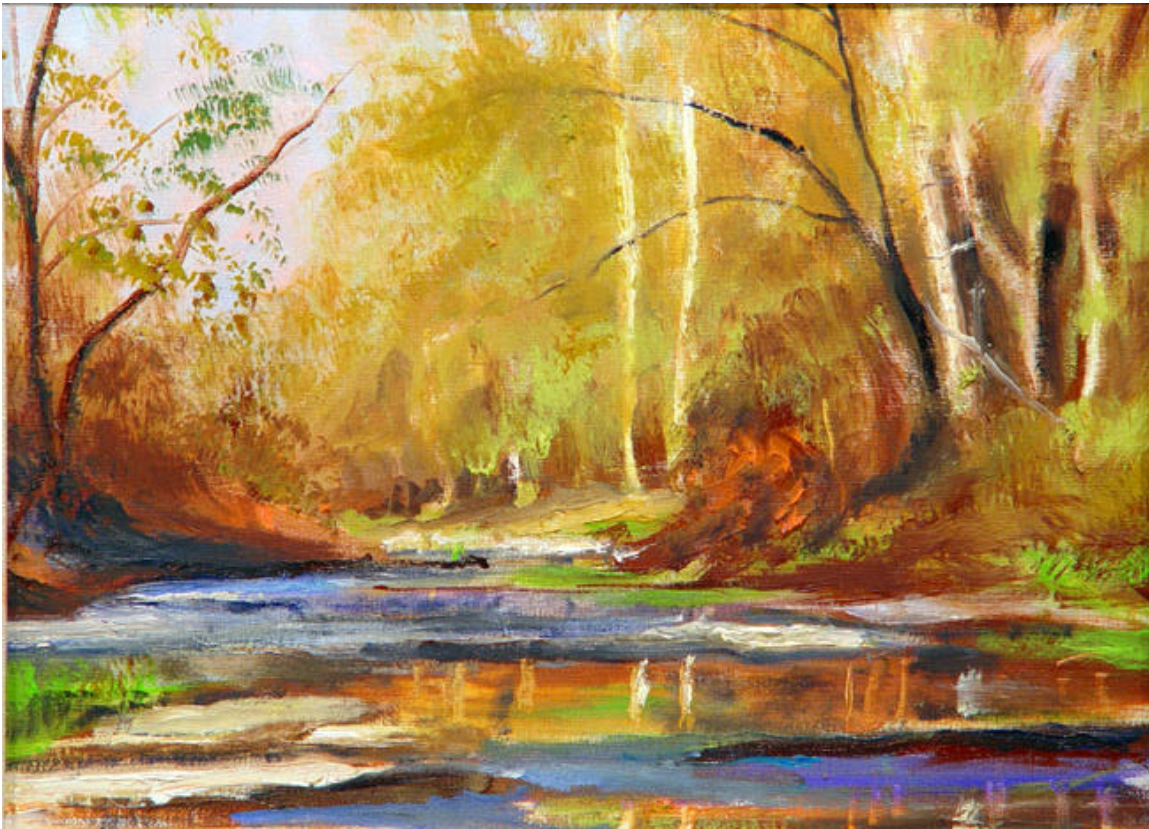
- Shakespeare, *Henry IV*

The pace quickens. Thanksgiving and Christmas loom. Halloween has its costs and duties. We schedule football and soccer trips, and fill our calendars through January.

We live in a culture that traps us into doing too many things, taking on too many responsibilities, facing too many choices, and saying yes to too many opportunities. We are overwhelmed by plans that cannot be carried out, appointments that cannot be honored and deadlines that cannot be met. This is the new poverty - we are a time-poor society. Our todays are hostages to our tomorrows.

We know what time it is, but not what time is.

But October, in her serene beauty, tells us, very gently - *every season has its end.*



October holds her breath now, blues the distant hills, and tells us, *See, see what I can do.*

We dare not waste a day now. If we had the choice, this would be the present I would choose to live in. October asks of us, what have you done with this gorgeous day I have

given you?

The artist has the answer in his art, for Art is the eternal present. The artist is privileged to go there, while he paints. But this privilege comes at a cost – Guilt. The painter who wastes an October day not painting has killed a bit of himself, and knows it. For inspiration and the passion to paint are perishable, and cannot be preserved, except in paint.

A true work of art lives outside of time. Cezanne's peaches are forever ripe and the wind, sun and stars forever swirl through Van Gogh's Provence. Even his stone houses seem to tossing on the land like ships on the sea, fragile and flowing with the tides of time.

As we on our planet hurl through space, we seek our anchorage to the familiar hills surrounding us. Yet the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius reminds us:

*Think often of the speed with which all that is and comes to be  
passes away and vanishes ...  
Scarcely anything is stable, even that which is close at hand.  
Dwell too, on the infinite gulf of the past and the future,  
In which all things vanish away.*



