

# March 2018 – Artist's Almanac

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*Beware the Ides of March.*

Shakespeare

*March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.*

*16<sup>th</sup> century proverb.*

Who does not know these familiar quotes? Both relate to change, and fickle March is of all our months least to be trusted. In the middle of it the most powerful man in the world, worshipped in the Imperial Cult as a god, Julius Caesar, was betrayed and killed by his friends in the Roman Senate. They took turns stabbing him, the last of them being his best friend, Brutus. This has since been known as *The Ides of March*.

An ill omen this, for a month regarded with such a lack of trust that my grandfather refused even to have his hair cut in March. And as to the common proverb about lions and lambs, his laconic brother, my Uncle Alf, said the proverb was backwards: in his experience the month began with mild weather but went out in frozen sleet and storms. Today is sunny and mild; before March is out we might yet have serious floods or even snow; by then our drying winds could morph into tornadoes

But winter is losing and knows it. While she may counterattack here and there with a late freeze, ultimately, she will lose this war. March is the month for joyous flying of colorful kites that teach us all how to be a child again. The strong winds that topple weakened trees dry February's sodden soil and make it friable to plow and plant. In a few days winter will be dead and buried under greening grass. We celebrate Spring by bringing fragrant yellow jonquils inside as houseguests to join us at table, and the graceful willows on our lawn glaze green. Ancient pear trees flaunt their bridal white, and their seedlings escape abandoned orchards to frolic like profligate daughters across abandoned fields. In town their sterile cousins, the Bradfords, blanket lawns to boredom, while here and there a brilliant Tulip Magnolia, with pink blooms brimming from laden boughs, graces an abandoned estate.

Spring is here.



*Guildwood* – Bill Puryear, Artist

But March has a reputation for cruel deceit, and we beware the Ides of March, the date Brutus betrayed Caesar. Caesar was once worshipped in the Roman Empire by the imperial cult as an immortal God but proved not to be. An itinerant carpenter who once paid taxes to him, and who was thought to be mortal, was likewise betrayed by a friend to His killers and abandoned by his followers. Yet He proved to be immortal and told his followers they would be as well if they followed Him and betook of His body and his teachings.

Today His is the largest kingdom in the world, infinitely greater than Caesar's is or ever was.

As March dies this year, it is followed on the first day of April by Easter, when we will celebrate His return to the land of the living.

He is risen.

He is risen indeed!

