

Artists Almanac – November 2020

The little hackberry leaves are frittering to the ground as in a slow snow and even the brilliant maples are now giving up theirs. The russet pin oaks hang on to theirs for dear life and will only give them up when the new buds of spring forces the old leaves away. The sturdy sycamores along the creeks shed their dark bark and look like skinny dippers ready to dive in. November is the time of far seeing; there is no bluer sky than that of a fair, calm, clear November day when we can see through the naked limbs the blue hills masked from our sight in summer by blowsy foliage making our country lanes' green tunnels.

There is an old tradition that Halloween evolved from *Samhain*, a Celtic holiday designating end of summer. This somehow evolved into the evening, or *Eve*, of the Christian holiday, *All Hallows*, in which the faithful honor and pray for their dear departed the following day, All Saints Day, November 1st. This tradition is still honored in many churches, including Methodist, Catholic, Episcopal, Nazarene, Lutheran, and others – nowhere more than in *Día de los Muertos, of the Hispanic Culture*, in which families gather at the tombs of their dear dead with food, flowers and fond memories. In our culture, after going through a synthesis of spooks and ghosts it has developed into an entirely secular evening of children donning dress up and going door-to-door to beg for treats and glut on candy.

Whatever the tradition, the calendar has got it right – it is the end of summer, and we, like grasshoppers, prepare to shrink from winter. For the Artist, it is a time for reflection. For time is not an event but a series of events, and only we as human animals may use this season to reflect on these, seek patterns in our lives, and reflect how time has served us and how we fit into those patterns, pray for those who have gone before and for reconciliation and reunion with them. Hence, it is a season for Thanksgiving prayers, for reunion with our living, and for remembrance of our dear dead. No wonder that for many of us it is our favorite holiday.

The Artist is tasked with discovering the face behind nature's green mask – a mask that is a little more transparent every year at this season. Let us give Thanks.



Windrows – Bill Puryear



Digging Sweet Potatoes at the Old Homeplace – Bill Puryear



Freedom from Want – Norman Rockwell