

THOUGHTS OF AUTUMN

John F. Hall

There is a maple tree across the circular road from my farm house. Every autumn the green leaves on that tree turn a bright yellow color. Olivia Newton-John was three years younger than me when she passed away this year. She was a Grammy-Award winning



singer and actress. She said: "Nature is the most beautiful thing we have. It's better than art because it's from the creator." Many of my stories are about Nature, such as the amber fields of grain, the green pastures that I bush hogged, the cedar trees lining Dyers Hill Road, the crickets and frogs in the three ponds in front of my house, and so many other Nature stories.

Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones wrote the song, "Try to Remember." These are their lyrics: "Try to remember the kind of September when life was slow and oh, so mellow. Try to remember the kind of September when grass was green and grain was yellow. Try to remember the kind of September when you were a tender and callow fellow. Try to remember and if you remember then follow, follow. Try to remember when life was so tender that no one wept except the willow. Try to remember the kind of September when love was an ember about to billow. Try to remember and if you remember then follow, follow. Deep in December, it's nice to remember the fire of September that made us mellow. Deep in December, our hearts should remember and follow, follow, follow."

John Farrar wrote the song, "Have You Never Been Mellow." Olivia Newton-John made that song popular. When I hear that song, I think of her. These are John Farrar's lyrics: "There was a time when I was in a hurry as you are. I was like you. There was a day when I just had to tell my point of View. I was like you. Now I don't mean to make you frown. No, I just want you to slow down. Have you never been mellow? Have you never been happy just to hear your song? Have you never let someone else be strong? Running around as you do with your head up in the clouds. I was like you. Never had time to lay back, kick off your shoes, close your eyes. I was like you. Now you're not hard to understand, you need someone to take your hand, hey. Have you never been mellow? Have you never tried to find a comfort from inside you? Have you never been happy just to hear your song? Have you never let someone else be strong?"

One Autumn day, that seems like an eternity ago, I was refueling my car at the Flying J Travel Center in Oak Grove, Kentucky. I just came out of that truck stop, after paying for a snack, as country singer Willie Nelson was walking in. I said: "Hi Willie! How are you?" He smiled and said: "Just fine, son." I watched Willie Nelson on TV last night. He was the last one to perform on "Farm Aid." It's an annual benefit show to help farmers in need. Willie is 89 years old and he is still singing strong. As he was walking off the stage, he stopped and hugged a little Indian girl in costume. I thought, Willie is really getting mellow in his old age. The little Indian girl may not have realized that she got a hug from a singing icon. and legend in his own time. He wrote a song called, "Funny How Time Slips Away."

Elvis Presley released that song in 1971. It's about a man who runs into an old love. These are Willie Nelson's lyrics: "Well, hello there. My, it's been a long, long time. How am I doing? Oh, well, I guess I'm doin' fine. It's been so long now and it seems that it was only yesterday. Mmm, ain't it funny how times slips away. How's your new love? I hope he's doin' fine. Heard that you told him, yes, baby that you'd love him to the end of time. Well, you know, that's the same thing that you told me. Well, it seems like just the other day. Mmm, ain't it funny how times slip away. Yeah, baby, yeah. I got to go now. I've got to go. Guess I'll see you around. I don't know when though, cause I don't know when I'll be back in town. But remember what I told you cause in time your gonna pay. Ain't it funny how time slips away. Oh it's surprising how time slips away."

Some of my Autumn thoughts are about granddaughter, Jade Hakes and her godmother, Trish Cunningham. They both keep me young at heart, and give me a reason to write my stories. Deborah Ann Belka wrote a poem called "Autumn Blessings." These are her words: "Autumn brings to the soul relief, as hot summer days slip to an end, God sent the season for weary hearts to restore, repair and mend. Unlike the Autumn trees that shed their changing leaves, God sent the season for failing hearts to adhere, embrace and cleave. Just as with the Autumn winds, there comes a refreshing rain, God sent the season for fraying hearts to increase, grow and gain. The Autumn sun is slow to climb, and dips earlier into the night, God sent the season for sleepy hearts to rise, shine and await in His Light. God gave us the Autumn season, so we could have a respite and rest, for it is the season for our beset souls to see how much we are truly blessed."

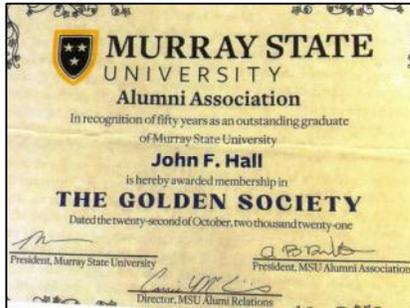
Today, my wife, Paula wants me to help decorate the front porch for Halloween. This is the first year that I did not have to get those decorations out of the attic. My son, John Andrew, built me a garage and attached it to my well house. I put all of our decorations, and one car, in that garage. We decorate the front porch for our great nieces, Lilly and Katie Harrison. Lilly is five years old and Katie is eight years old. They live an "arrow's throw," down Dyers Hill Road, from our old house. They look forward to seeing those decorations as they joyfully come to "Trick or Treat" at our house. I drove past their house the other day and I noticed that they had more than a dozen pumpkins on their front porch and front steps.

One special Autumn thought is the upcoming wedding of Skyler Crisp to Kendall Lancaster. The wedding ceremony will be held at ten o'clock in the morning on Saturday, - October 22, 2022 in the War Memorial Building in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. I've been in the role of surrogate grandfather to Skyler and her sister, Lexie, since my grandson, John-John was in Skyler's kindergarten class at Heritage Christian Academy. I'm the only grandparent in Skyler's life. I've driven by the building, where Skyler will be married, hundreds of times, yet, I've never been inside of that building. Skyler's dad, Jason has been my friend before Skyler was born. Jason and I are retired military.

Another special Autumn thought is the Murray State University (MSU) Homecoming festivities scheduled for October 29, 2022.

MSU will celebrate its 100th Anniversary on October 29th. COVID-19 put a hold on Paula and me to watch the MSU Homecoming parade. We usually have breakfast in the Murray Middle School before the parade starts at 9:30 am. That school, formerly the Murray High School, was where MSU held its first classes, one hundred years ago. After breakfast, I would take two chairs out of my car, that I brought for the occasion, and put them on the side of the road, in front of the school, and Paula and I would watch the Homecoming parade.

Last year, I was awarded membership in the Golden Society in recognition of fifty years



as an outstanding graduate of MSU. I don't know what the requirements are to be an outstanding graduate. Paula would tell me that she thought I was a perpetual student. In some ways, she was spot on. My first college course was at night in 1964, when I was 18. My last college course was in 2016, when I was 70. I was certainly, not an outstanding student my first four years of college. The entire time that I was a student at Murray State, I never had a writing or journalism

course. It is because of Christ's grace upon grace and His Inspiration that allowed me to become a prolific story writer.

I'll end this story with a short piece by James Huesgen called, "Gratefulness." These are his words: "I thank You, for my pillow, Lord, on which I raise my head; the things some take for granted - a warm, comfy bed. I have a roof above me, a stomach full of food; I'm grateful, Lord, You chose me for all this grateful good. I have loved ones all around me and love each single day; oh, how empty life would be were it all taken away. My Lord you have provided all I see in my view. Please help me with the words I need to give my thanks to You."

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*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:

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