



Tim Johnson

A Seasonal Perspective Makes the Heart Grow Stronger

Michael McAuliffe *Thursday, May 28, 2026 - 4:20pm*

Late May on Martha's Vineyard. The land is taking time to swell, mimicking the slow motion of my mind.

I'm a marginal, minor character of this Island, one who arrives at summer's start with anticipation.

Like many of my vintage ('63, reportedly a very good year) I don't relish finish lines like I used to, but I still so admire the curve in the narrow road and the crest of the gentle hill. So, I return to this place again and again.

Stripped of the accumulated weight of a thousand comparisons of work and accomplishment, maybe a million as it's hard to keep count, the summer version of me will settle into better routines, the ones relying on others for place and purpose (deck dinners with family and friends being the most welcome). Closer to these habits I move as the ferry docks (late) and my canine sidekick Scout launches toward yet another passenger for an embrace of sorts. She doesn't much like the engine's deep rumble, but she loves the new company.

In the coming months, I'll be stopped by beauty and kindness and love, often unexpected. With luck, I'll find myself suspended in a full moment, removed from the world of whirl and anger. My optimism, even joy, doesn't deny troubles that still lurk like shadows throughout the world, but it provides a path forward, even in darkness.

Water constantly flows around this Island because it's a small rock in an expanse of water with currents and tides. A grateful inhabitant (or visitor) here is a willing subject in the kingdom of here and now, with awareness that change is the moving part of the Vineyard's present.

Most gifts are not forever. For the seasonal, that reality is the pact we make to arrive. But don't forget to say hello even if we'll soon part.

Michael McAuliffe, a lawyer and author, is a seasonal resident of Chilmark.

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