

April the Month of Many Moods

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As I step into my 88th year, I've found that April is prone to changes. It can be a time of hoped for dreams coming true or unexpected disappointments. Truly April is the mother month of all caprice. I was so hoping this April would usher in a spring like I knew as a kid, when the larks and robins and all my beloved birds would be singing their way back right on schedule. I've seen too many recent Aprils bring disappointment. And for birders, this April has turned out to be dismal.

The only birds to return in late March and now mid April, are red wings, grackles, and too few robins, and doves which arrived two weeks late. Truly something dire has ravaged the spring bird population. I've heard it might be avian flue, but whatever it is, we are now experiencing an almost silent spring. And that to me spells real trouble.

We were blessed not to get the horrendous flooding rains the mid- south got, where lots of folks have been badly flooded out, but my favorite nearby bird-watch road, "meadowlark lane," which has always been home to larks, killdeers, bobolinks, vesper sparrows, and many other grassland singers, this year has no birds of any kind. That my friends is a grim omen.

These lines from a John Maesfield poem bring back a hint of the birding we used to expect: "It's a warm wind, the west wind/ Full of bird cries./ I never hear the west wind, but tears are in my eyes// For it blows from the west lands, the old brown hills,/ And April's in the west wind, and daffodils."

And Robert Browning had these longing thoughts of home: "Oh to be in England/ Now that April's there ...// And the chaffinch sings on the orchard bow/ In England now."

Historically, April has been a month of momentous beginnings: 'Twas the 18th of April in '75/ Hardly a man is still alive/ Who remembers that famous day and year/

And the midnight ride of Paul Revere.” Those April throes heralded the birth of our nation. And on a late April day in 1898, Adolph Hitler was born; to become Satan’s own minister of death to millions of innocents.

But let’s keep this column innocent and hopeful. How about, “April in Paris; Chestnuts in blossom” etc., or how about the song I listened to with Rosalita Gomez, my Mexican sweetheart, many times, “April Love,” sung by Pat Boone in the movie by that name showing in the Aztec Theater in San Antonio in 1957. I was hospitalized at Randolph AFB from June to November, being treated for the eyeritis, which would prove to be my ticket home to my future as a graduate and teacher at NDSSS. I could only see Rosalita on afternoon weekend passes, so we’d sit in the Aztec and smooch: *April Love* was our accompaniment.

But April also heralded the greatest story of love and sacrifice in history: the scourging, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, our Messiah. Were it not for this one momentous event, the dark signs and omens of April, 2025 would have me deeply worried. But thanks to my precious Jesus, I have high hope for an abundant life “in that bright land where/ You never grow old.”

Glen Campbell sang about it beautifully: “No more night, no more pain, no more tears/ never crying again// And praises to/ The Great I Am,/ We shall live/ in the Light/ of The Risen Lamb.” Rev 21:4. I’d like that sung at my funeral; that would be good both “going out and coming in.” Psalm 121:8.

Gene Pinkney 04-05-2025 for the Daily News