

## Economic Seasons

It's springtime here in Mill Valley, California, and over the last few days the fruit trees have been quietly erupting in blossoms. Underneath heavy boughs of pink, white, and lavender petals, I've spotted the crowning heads of purple crocuses pushing their way through the dark, cold dirt. Overnight, cheerful daffodils have popped up, their bright yellow heads bobbing on slender green stalks. Red and pink camellias have suddenly unfurled amongst the deep green waxy leaves of trees that I had not noticed all winter. The speed at which the natural tapestry has altered is dizzying; it's a riot of nature clamoring to be noticed.

Equally dizzying is the rate at which the economy has altered over the last few weeks. But, unlike the docile, moot eruptions of the springtime flowers, the marketplace explosions have been deafening and the number of casualties is alarming. Every day, without fail, there is a new story about another firm, or firms, [laying off attorneys and staff](#). Every day, without fail, there is a new story about banks collapsing, investors defrauded, life- savings evaporating, and people losing their homes.

We are in the midst of a sea-change, an economic upheaval like none other and meanwhile, amidst the hand-wringing and tossing and turning, Mother Nature is conducting one of the most lavish springs that I've ever witnessed, and it's only getting better with each new rain storm and each sunny day that follows. Perhaps this spring appears more colorful and bursting because it marks a stark contrast to the darkly ominous daily news cycles; it's a welcome, gorgeous respite from the noise and fear.

Whatever the psychology may be, this particular colorful and flourishing spring serves as a persuasive reminder that markets, like seasons, are cyclical. And, with all things cyclical, we know that change is inevitable. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus puts it "nothing steadfastly is, everything is becoming."

That is, the present is a dynamic force that is constantly evolving and becoming something else. And so it follows that if right now things really suck for you, if you've been laid off, are close to losing your house, and/or have witnessed the nauseating disappearance of your 401(k), take heart: this will change. With the northern hemisphere shifting from winter to spring, it's becoming easier to feel a bit more optimistic about the future. Things just aren't as scary when it's not dark and cold out.

On that note, enjoy the spring, take a break from worrisome thoughts, and instead think about the crocus. The crocus is an amazing little bulb that lays blind and unseen all winter, buried deeply in the ground. As spring approaches, its metabolic rate increases and the energy the crocus puts out is enough to warm the earth around it so that it can push up and break through to the surface.

This is why if you spot a crocus in a snowy field, there will be small circles of melted snow around its purple shoots. Because of their determination, I find crocus inspiring. Then again, they are also just very pretty flowers and I look forward to seeing them every spring. But enough talk, I'm heading out for a walk now to admire what new blossoms and blooms have unfolded over the day. And I think I may just keep the news off when I get back...