

Unleaving

by David Ackley

They'll leave soon

for the drive north on the interstate

to see the leaves flagrantly die

oranges,

reds, leftover green,

reluctant green,

in buses—

behind smoked windows, white blobs

in the dark,

stalking

the peak of decay as

We all go to look at things,

damped by the dark windows

forgetting why we're here

I could tell them to walk the trail,

and watch the dog lope ahead,

over the spattered

maple, beech and birch,

dead and dying, orange, yellow, red,

hitched to this fringe of silver bark

turning on a stem,

speckled, tattered, frayed and

unstitched, and underfoot

in pewter and rust,

browning, awful and inevitable

flattening into the damp

scent of stale

cinnamon, huff of dog his

tongue lolling, trees gratefully moulting,

to be stripped in the icy wind
the next great solace of trees,

Single leaves rock down a faint air,
 ahead more still
spill over the filigreed trail,
 petals tossed at a wedding,
golden and turning in that light
 they used to weave into life

