In Late October

“respicie finem” (“Regard the end”)
― engraved on Ivan Ilyich’s fob chain

for Deana

the maple near our backdoor stoop

yawns and celebrates in reds

and yellows months of rest to come,

while hemlock lies in low patches

of lacy green burgeoning

scattered along Paint Lick Pike

pretending Spring — whispering,

“See? Don’t worry — there’s only sleep.”

(An earlier version of this poem was published in *The Journal of Kentucky Studies.*)