

In Late October

“respice 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*.)