

# 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

