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## October Comes to Ohio

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# October Comes to Ohio

by Richard Luftig

The maples in town  
have given up the ghost  
early this year. At the edge

of houses, shag bark hickories  
bombard cars and pets  
with projectiles harder

than summer hail  
while greedy squirrels,  
mouths already puffed

and full, dash happy to watch  
gravity and asphalt act  
as nutcrackers. Out in the fields,

doomed pig corn,  
husks pasty-white and frayed,  
stoop under the weight

of a quick darkening sky  
that yields an apple slice  
of moon even before milking time.

Back in town, the old  
in their clapboard houses,  
look at the sky and worry

about hipbones, heating oil,  
the portents of ice. They watch  
with distrust as if morning

and evening make no difference  
anymore, as if October  
and loneliness are conspiring

to force what's left  
of the living and the dead  
off in the same direction.

