

# Falling Leaves

*By Chick BeVier*



The gust of wind that tore it from the tree separated the brightly colored leaf from its fellows who were also spinning to the ground. The boy, who had been studying the blue autumn sky, was dreaming of things and places far away, but when that leaf drifted from the others it ceased to be a leaf.

Running to get beneath it, in the same way his father had taught him to line up a fly ball, he waited until it gently fell into his hands. He had done it; he had saved this leaf from touching the ground.

A few months later, on Christmas morning, the boy stood before his father grinning in the way that boys, who have done something good, often do. His father waited for the boy to speak.

“Dad, when does a leaf die?”

The father, replied, “You have to tell me a little more. I don’t know what you mean.”

“Does a leaf die when it breaks free from the tree, or does it die when it hits the ground?”

The boy’s thinking took his father by surprise. It also made his reply cautious. “I’ve never considered that before. Why do you ask?”

“This fall, when I was watching the leaves change color it made me wonder. When a leaf is torn from the tree it is still beautiful, and I wondered if it might still be alive.

The boy paused as a troubled look clouded his face. A new thought had suddenly complicated his thinking, “Of course, some leaves, like the oaks, never do turn color; they just hang on and turn brown.”

Sensing the boy had come upon an idea he was not yet ready for, his father broke the train of thought by asking, “What do you have behind your back?”

Beaming, the boy revealed a roughly wrapped package. As he held it out he said, "I think that leaves don't die until they touch the ground. This is for you, Merry Christmas."

When his father opened the package, he found a picture frame, which contained, pressed beneath its glass, a single brightly colored leaf. Beneath the leaf were words written in the unsteady hand of a ten year old, "I caught this leaf before it touched the ground, which means it's still alive. Daddy, please don't ever touch the ground."

Decades later, the frame containing the still living leaf hung in the father's office. As the aged man sat looking at the leaf, he recalled his son's words "Of course, some leaves, like the oaks, never do turn color, they just hang on and turn brown."

Then, sitting back in his chair, he considered, "It's during the 'green' that we gain the faith to blaze as we should, and then fall exhausted, but still 'alive', into the waiting hands of a loving God."

He hoped the boy had come to the same thought.