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First Contact

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First Contact

Kathryn Harlan-Gran

My lover told me once that as a child he
tried to catch falling leaves
before they touched the ground
because then he would get to hold them before
they were ever introduced to soil
and isn't it a childish thing?—
to realize that leaves
have only ever touched sky and dust and
wind and morning sunlight?
Imagine the expectation of dark earth
 interrupted
by the oily soft of fingerprints,
smudging little imprints somewhere between
start and finish.

When autumn slivers out of its foliage like
a satin dress,
how would you choose which ones to catch?
Which threads to follow down
 bark body narrative
to something resembling conclusion?

I snatch you, longing, out of the sky and you say

“Isn't it strange?
I've never touched earth before,”
and I say,
“Me neither,
not like you will.”