Leaf Man
Lois Ehlert

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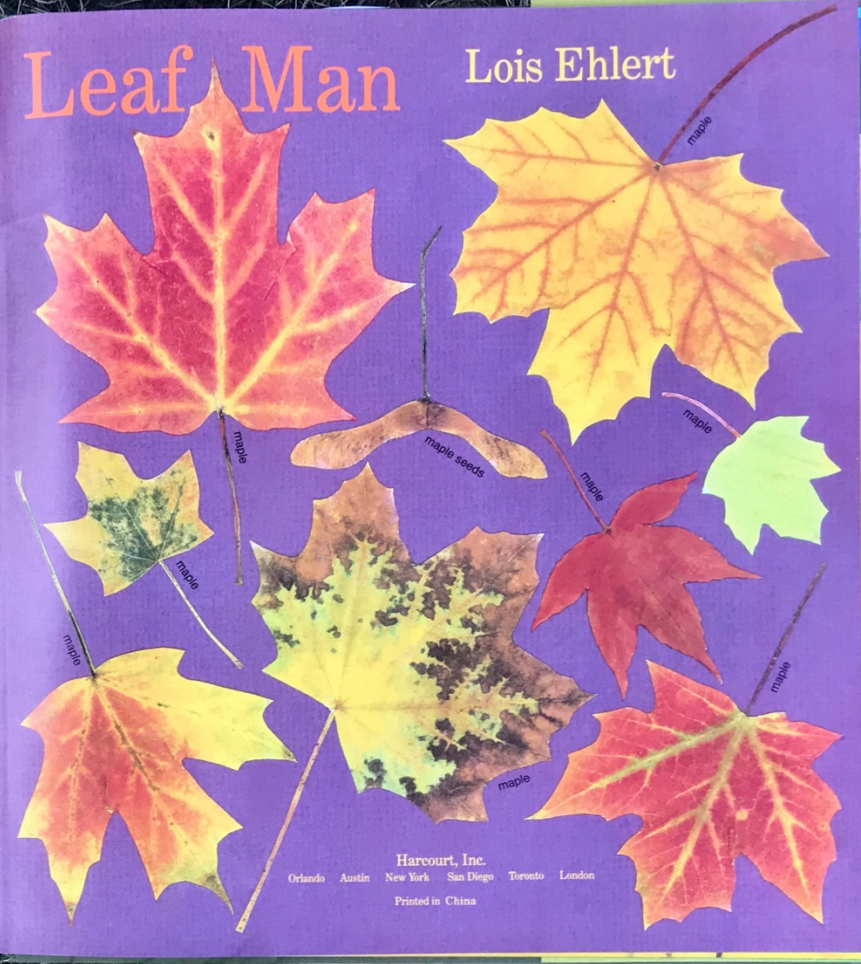

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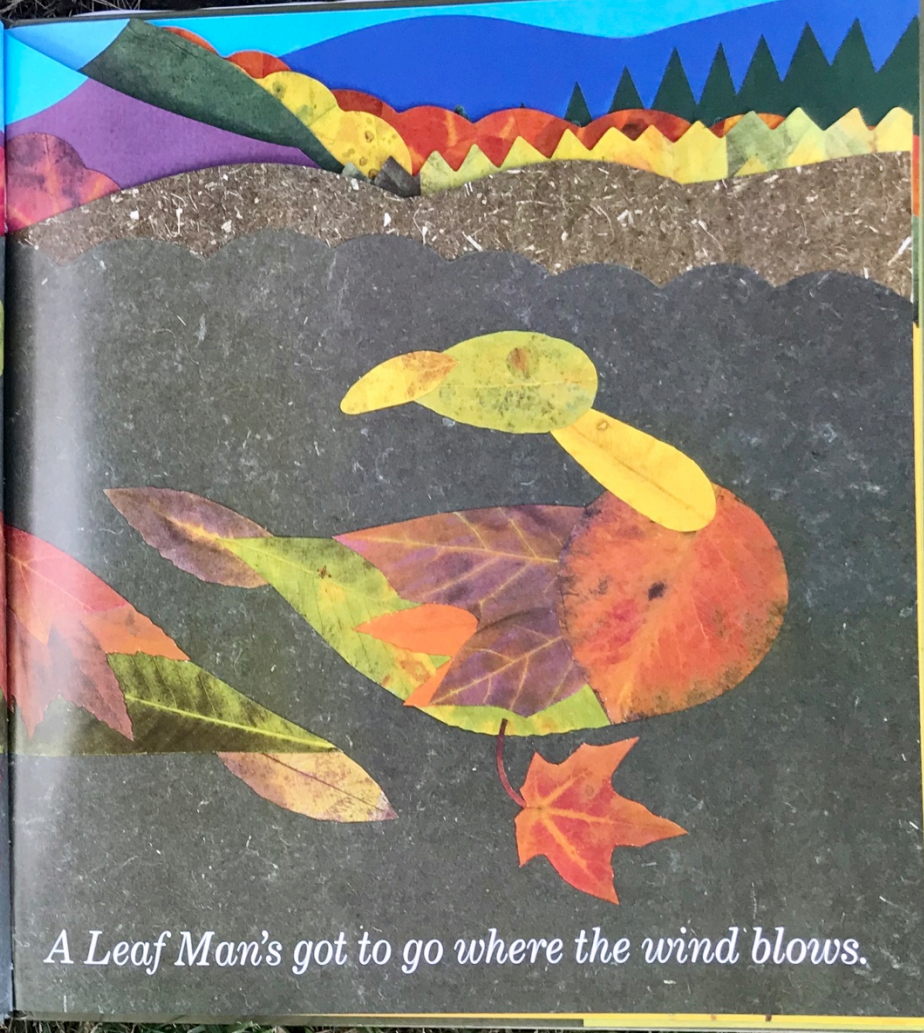
Leaf Man used to live near me,

in a pile of leaves.

But yesterday the wind blew Leaf Man away.
He left no travel plans.

The last time I saw him,
he was headed east—
past the chickens,

toward the marsh, over the ducks and geese.



A Leaf Man's got to go where the wind blows.

He blew over the fields

of pumpkins and winter squash,

and flew over the turkey,
past potatoes, carrots, and cabbages in rows.

Then he blew out of sight.

Is he drifting west, above the orchards?

Or over the prairie meadows,

and past the spotted cows? *Well,*

a Leaf Man's got to go where the wind blows.

Maybe Leaf Man's gliding on a lake breeze,

or flying along the river,

tion

following butterflies going south. *Well, a Leaf Man's got to go where the wind blows.*

He might even be traveling north,

above leaves that look like him,

or flying over mountains,

with a flock of birds.

When Leaf Man looks down on earth,
is he lonesome for a home?

This I *do* know:
Where a Leaf Man
will land, only the wind knows.

So listen for a rustle in the leaves.

Maybe *you'll*
find a Leaf Man
waiting to go
home with you.

Author's Note

Whenever I see a beautiful leaf, I have to pick it up. I can't help myself; it's something I've done all my life. I used to press leaves in my phone book, only to find them later—dull, dry, and crumbling. When researching maple leaves for the illustrations in my book *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf,* I made color copies of the leaves I'd collected for reference as soon as I found them so I could capture their magnificent colors before they faded. When I began thinking about making *Leaf Man,* I carried a plastic bag with me, picking up treasures wherever I went—sweet gum fruit from Kansas City, oak leaves from Ithaca, fig leaves from Washington, D.C.—and color-copying them as soon as possible. My leaf file became chubby, but I didn't stop collecting until snow finally covered the last Wisconsin maple leaves of fall. Then I created the *Leaf Man* art with my color copies of leaves, which I believe are among the most beautiful art supplies in the world.

Special thanks to my leaf pickers from far and wide: Dick, Pat, Shirley, Allyn, Liza, Audrey, Phil, Mary, Al, Lillian, and the Reading Reptiles.

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Ages 4 to 8

hawthorn
birch
linden
cottonwood
horse chestnut
the world.
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