

The Smell of Leaves

Her coat was browns and yellows and reds in big squares.
A felt beret, orange, hid the tops of her ears.
“Cold?” she asked him, pulling their front door closed.

He’d thrown on an old sweater the color of fog,
the knit as open as chain mail.
“No,” he answered, head down, hands in his pockets.

Without touching, they walked five blocks to the park,
the sky above a hard blue, like some stone.
Lapis, maybe.

At the entrance they skirted the big fountain, dry now,
circled the swings,
headed for the merry-go-round.

In front of the log fort she kicked a pile of leaves.
“Oh,” she said, “That smell.
What does it make you think of?”

“Dust,” he answered, shoulders hunched into the weather.
“Or dryness.
Dead leaves just smell dry.”

“Not to me,” she said.
“To me they smell like fun.
Like all the colors of fall.”

He shook his head. “Dead leaves are brown.
Too late for fun
bye-bye, all gone.”

She slipped her arm through his, hugged it with her own.
“I think the colors are still there,” she said.
“You just have to work harder to see them.”