The Transformation of Wooly Bear

Once upon a time, in the Enchanted Forest, a little wooly bear crawled out from under a log. The fuzzy black and brown caterpillar had spent all winter curled into a little ball under the leaves. Now spring had come to the forest. The rain fairies had soaked the forest floor, and the sun fairies had warmed it with golden rays of sunshine. The plants and creatures of the forest had begun to stir.

Wooly Bear crawled along the ground looking for a young, sturdy, sapling with lots of new leaves. He was very hungry, and a little grumpy. Shortly, he came upon Charlie Gnome, who was scattering bergamot and aster seeds in a little clearing.

"I see that you're awake, my little Wooly Bear! The seeds I spread will soon transform to flowers, everywhere! The bees will be so happy, and the butterflies will swoon. Come and throw some seeds with me - let's see what soon shall bloom!"

But Wooly Bear would have none of Charlie Gnome's happy mood. He groaned, "I'm *still* a caterpillar! I went to bed last winter a caterpillar and I woke up a caterpillar! It seems I'm *never* going to be a butterfly!"

Charlie Gnome stopped scattering seeds and looked at Wooly Bear with great consideration.

"I'm afraid in this, you're right my friend. You're not a butterfly. But you'll transform to something new, and bravely soar the sky. And when the sun goes down, you'll work into the night. A messenger to all of us; a tiger taking flight!"

"A tiger?! Silly gnome - caterpillars don't turn into tigers!" grumbled Wooly Bear as he scooted off to find a green leaf for breakfast. Charlie Gnome had a twinkle in his eye as he watched the grumpy caterpillar crawl away. He gave a little chuckle and returned to scattering seeds.

Spring continued to transform the forest. The buds on the trees turned to leaves. Charlie Gnome's little seeds had also transformed into lovely plants with fat little buds that would soon open into beautiful flowers. Wooly Bear, who had filled his tummy with lots of green leaves, had gone back to bed in a cocoon he had made for himself.

One late, spring evening, as the sun was going down, Wooly Bear broke out of his cocoon. It had finally happened! He was no longer a caterpillar! He had transformed, just as Charlie Gnome had told him that he would! It was true – he was *not* a butterfly. And though he wasn't *exactly* a mighty jungle tiger, Wooly Bear had transformed into a lovely tiger moth, with orange, tiger stripes and yellow, leopard spots! The lovely moth flew bravely into the dark, stopping briefly to drink the nectar from the flowers that Charlie Gnome had planted, before continuing into the night sky to begin his important work of delivering messages.

From *Seasons of Chalk In the Enchanted Forest* (Stories & Illustrations by Jennifer Moore)