# The Little Tree That Longed for Other Leaves

by Friedrieh Ruckert

There was a little tree that stood in the woods through both good and stormy weather, and it was covered from top to bottom with needles instead of leaves. The needles were sharp and prickly, so the little tree said to itself:

"All my tree comrades have beautiful green leaves, and I have only sharp needles. No one will touch me. If I could have a wish I would ask for leaves of pure gold."

When night came the little tree fell asleep, and it woke early and found itself covered with glistening, golden leaves.

"Ah, ah!" said the little tree, "how grand I am! No other tree in the woods is dressed in gold."

But at evening time there came a peddler with a great sack and a long beard. He saw the glitter of the golden leaves. He picked them all and hurried away leaving the little tree cold and bare.

"Alas! alas!" cried the little tree in sorrow; "all my golden leaves are gone! I am ashamed to stand among the other trees that have such beautiful leaves. If I only had another wish I would ask for leaves of glass."

Then the little tree fell asleep, and when it woke early, it found itself covered with bright and shining leaves of glass.

"Now," said the little tree, "I am happy. No tree in the woods glistens like me."

But there came a fierce storm - wind driving through the woods. It struck the glass, and in a moment all the shining leaves lay shattered on the ground.

"My leaves, my glass leaves!" moaned the little tree, "they lie broken in the dust, while all the other trees are still dressed in their beautiful foliage. Oh! if I had another wish I would ask for green leaves."

Then the little tree slept again, and in the morning, it was covered with fresh, green foliage. And it laughed merrily, and said, "Now, I need not be ashamed any more. I am like my comrades of the woods."

But along came a mother goat, looking for grass and herbs for herself and her young ones. She saw the crisp, new leaves; and she nibbled, and nibbled, and nibbled them all away, and she ate up both stems and tender shoots, till the little tree stood bare.

"Alas!" cried the little tree in pain, "I want no more leaves, neither gold ones nor glass ones, nor green and red and yellow ones! If I could only have my needles once more, I would never complain again."

437