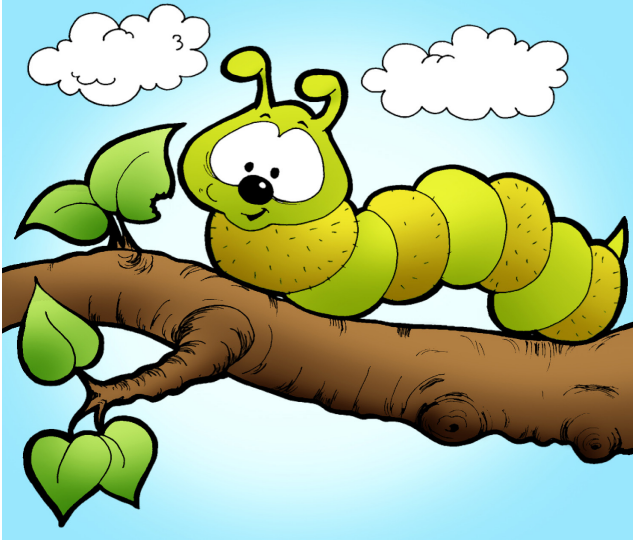


The River and the Caterpillar



*"Oh, how I wish that I could
fly
Up there amongst the trees
And like the bird, from place
to place
I'd glide along with ease.
But, alas, I'm forced to travel
In my earthbound, weighted
way,*

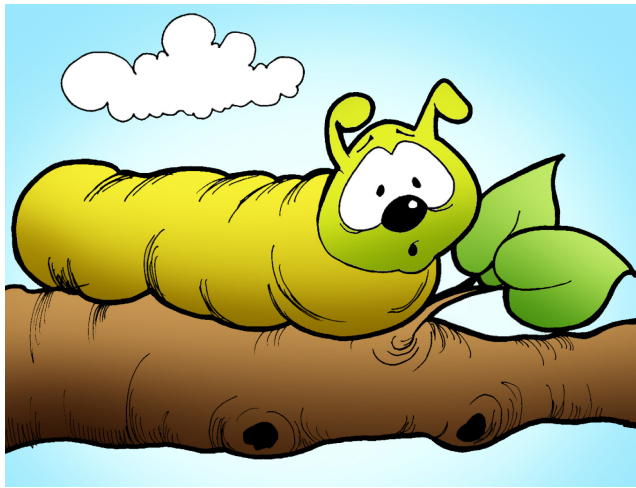


*Upon a branch that overhung
A river's sparkling flow,
A caterpillar inched along,
He seemed to go so slow.
He lifted up his hairy neck
To view a wondrous sight
A bird that soared upon the
breeze,
So carefree in its flight.*

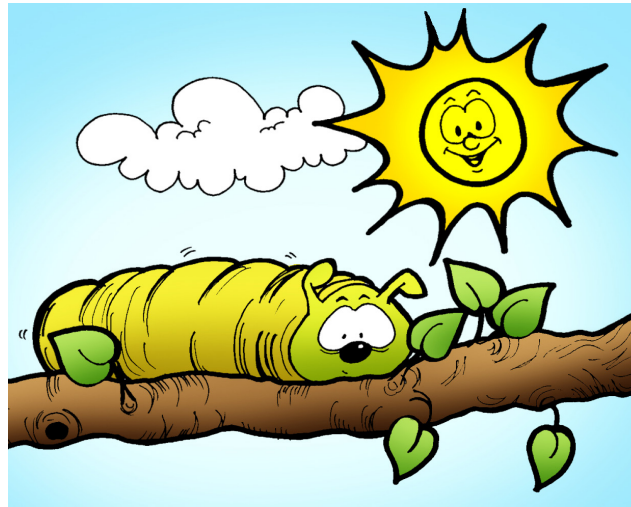


*Amid the jeers and laughter
Of those who stop to say,
'Oh, look at him, a hairy
worm,
Who crawls upon his tum—
A creature of the lowest
form;
I'm glad that I'm not one.'"*

*And so, discouraged with his
life,
He stopped to gloom and
pout.*



*When, suddenly, from inside of
him,
Some silky threads came out.
“Oh my,” he sighed, “what is
this now?
More troubles I must bear?
A sticky coat is covering me.*

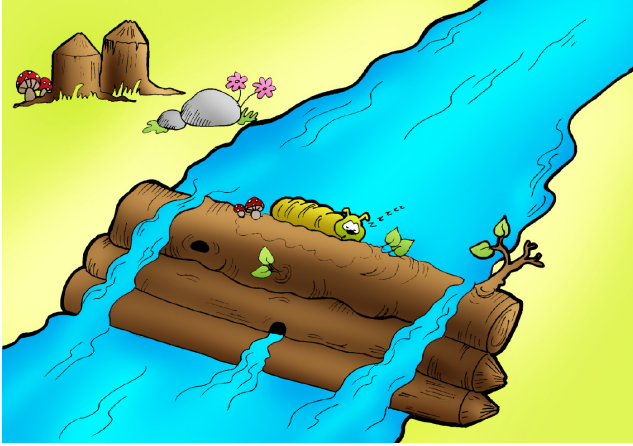


*I can't get anywhere!”
And so beyond his will or wish,
He spun himself a room;
And in the darkness, fastened
tight,
He slept in his cocoon.*

*The river sighed and thought,
“Hairy worm, your hardship's a
mere trifle
For I know what you'll be-
come,*

*I've often seen the cycle.
But look at me, and there
you'll see
What sadness really means,
For no children play or splash
in me—
Too shallow are my streams.”
Just then from off the river's
bend,
A beaver took a swim
With fresh-cut branches in his
mouth
Depositing them in.*





The river swelled. "What is this
mess?

You're blocking up my flow.

I'll wash it all away,

I must stay pure, you know."

But again, the beavers brought
more limbs

And anchored them in place

Branches upon branches;

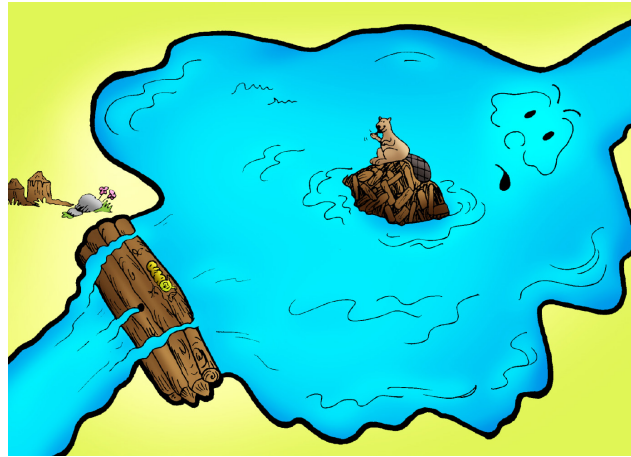
It was a mighty race.

The river flowed with all its force

To wash the sticks away,

But the beavers just would not
give up,

And so the branches stayed;
At last upon the very top,
The beaver put in place



The branch that held within its
limbs

The caterpillar's case.

The river grumbled all the while,

"My flow's been interrupted,

And I'm swelling up so big and
fat,

I feel like I am gluttoned!"

From high above the sun smiled
down

Upon the wooden dam,
And warmed the sleeping
caterpillar

Inside his silken strands.

As days went by, at last he woke

And saw a speck of light

And struggled through the
opening

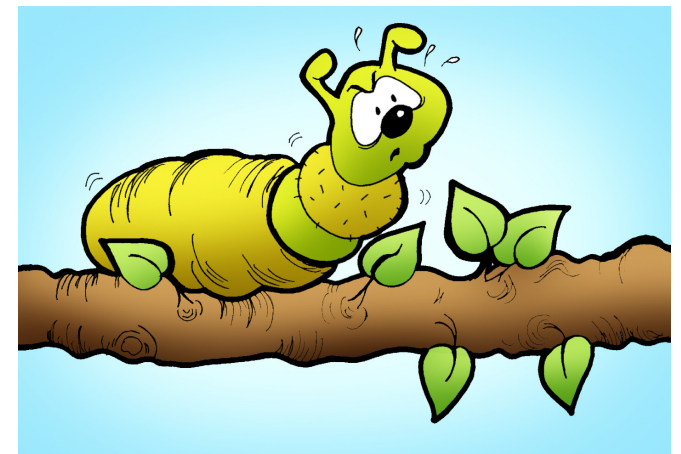
With every bit of might.

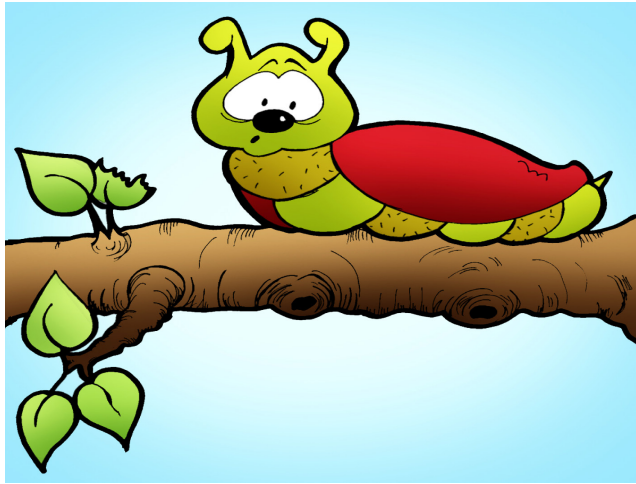
Oh, such pain—the hole was small

He barely made it through—

But once outside he noticed
something

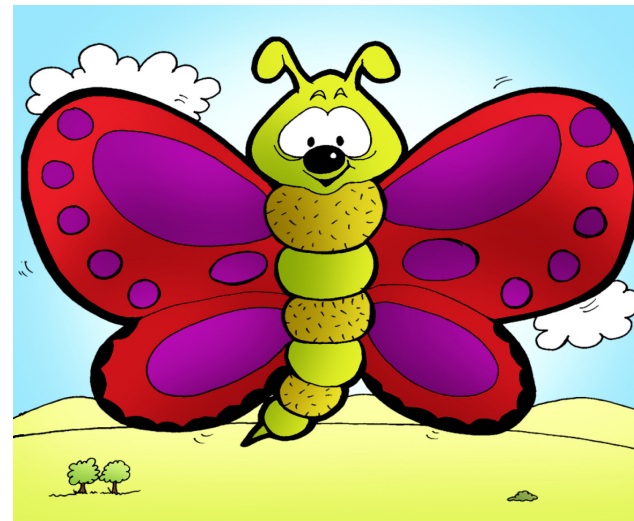
Wonderful and new!





*"What are these?" he gasped,
As he waved them in the
breeze,
And suddenly took to flight,
Reaching for the trees.
The creatures gazed upon his
wings,
Which shone in brilliant color,*

*For there upon his sides,
Two splendorous forms
unfolded,
Something that he'd never
seen before,
That in the dark was molded.*



*"I'm flying," he cried out for
joy,
And looked about in wonder.
And there below, the river,
Now a brimming, shining pool*

*In which the children laughed
and played,*



*Said, "I have now learned
too,
That difficulties and problems,
At which we do protest,
May be God's way of bringing
us
A life that's truly blessed."*