**Back to School for Little Gnome**

 ***Susan Perrow © October 2021***

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**A story for children to help soothe anxieties about returning to school after lockdown**

*Note: This story is a sequel to ‘*The Little Gnome who had to stay home’, *written back in March 2020 for use with young children who were required to stay home during the C-19 pandemic. This original story and the 28 translated versions are available on my website link:*[**http://susanperrow.com/stories**](http://susanperrow.com/stories)

Little Gnome was excited.

When he woke that morning Mother Tree had whispered to him:

*Little Gnome - you are now free to roam - all the way to school then back to your home.*

Little Gnome knew in his heart that he could always trust Mother Tree.

Mother Tree was as wise as wise could be.

And after all this time staying home, oh how Little Gnome was looking forward to roam!

He quickly dressed, prepared his lunch, and put his lunch box in his pack. Then he opened his front door, all ready to set out along the forest track.

But - things seemed a little busier than what he was used to when sitting by his window in his tree-roots home.

And things seemed a little noisier than what he was used to when sitting by his window all alone.

Little ants were scurrying by – but they seemed to be going so fast!

Brightly coloured crickets caught his eye – but they were chirping so loudly!

Floppy eared rabbits hopped up and down, in and out the bushes and round and around.

Little Gnome was beginning to feel dizzy with all the noise and movement.

Then the wind whooshed past, shaking the trees, and stirring up the dust and leaves.

Suddenly Little Gnome was not so sure about being outside in the world.

Suddenly Little Gnome was not so sure about following the forest track all the way to school.

He turned around and ran back to his tree-roots home. But before he could open his front door, a golden bird flew down and landed on a low branch of Mother Tree, just above his head. The bird began to sing sweet music to him.

Little Gnome stood very still, listening to the bird’s beautiful song. Then he sighed, took a deep breath, and set off along the forest track.

After a few steps he looked back over his shoulder and called goodbye to the golden bird and to Mother Tree.

Then he continued walking, singing softly to himself.

*With my pack on my back, I will follow the track,*

*I will sing my way to my school today.*

**(Music notes for simple tune: GG CCC DDD EEE D; GG CC D E F E CC)**

It wasn’t long before Little Gnome met up with some of his friends, and he taught them the song.

*With our packs on our backs, we will follow the track,*

*We will sing our way to our school today.*

When Little Gnome and his friends reached their school, it was such a joy to see their teachers again. It was such a joy to be back in the classroom again.

Many little gnomes having fun together.

Many little gnomes learning together.

Stories to share, paintings to paint, dances to dance. Crafts to weave and sew, and hammer and screw, and cut and glue - so much to do!

At the end of the day, Little Gnome and his friends headed back along the forest track, singing together:

*With our packs on our backs, we will follow the track,*

*We will sing our way to our home today.*