The Tin Forest

There was once a wide, windswept place, near nowhere and close to forgotten, that was filled with all the things that no one wanted.

Right in the middle was a small house, with small windows, that looked out on other people's garbage and bad weather.

In the house lived an old man.

Every day he tried to clear away the garbage, sifting and sorting, burning and burying.

And every night the old man dreamed.

He dreamed he lived in a forest full of wild animals. There were colorful birds, tropical trees, exotic flowers, toucans, tree frogs and tigers.

But when he awoke, the world outside was still the same.

One day something caught the old man's eye, and an idea planted itself in his mind.

The idea grew roots and sprouted.

Feeding on the garbage, it grew leaves.

It grew branches.

It grew bigger and bigger.

Under the old man's hand, a forest emerged.

A forest made of garbage. A forest made of tin. It was not the forest of his dreams, but it was a forest just the same.

Then one day across the barren plain, the wind swept a small bird. The old man spilled crumbs from his sandwich onto the ground. The bird ate the crumbs and perched to sing in the branches of a tin tree.

But the next morning, the visitor was gone.

All day the old man walked through the silence, and his heart ached with emptiness.

That night, by moonlight, he made a wish...

In the morning the old man woke to the sound of birdsong. The visitor had returned, and his mate had come with him. The birds carried seeds in their beaks. They dropped them to the dry ground. Green shoots broke through the earth.

Soon the song of birds mingled with the buzzing of insects and the rustle of leaves. Time passed.

Small creatures appeared, creeping among the forest of trees. Wild animals slipped through the green shadows.

There was once a forest, near nowhere and close to forgotten, that was filled with all the things that everyone wanted.

Right in the middle was a small house, with small windows. And in the house lived an old man who never stopped dreaming.