

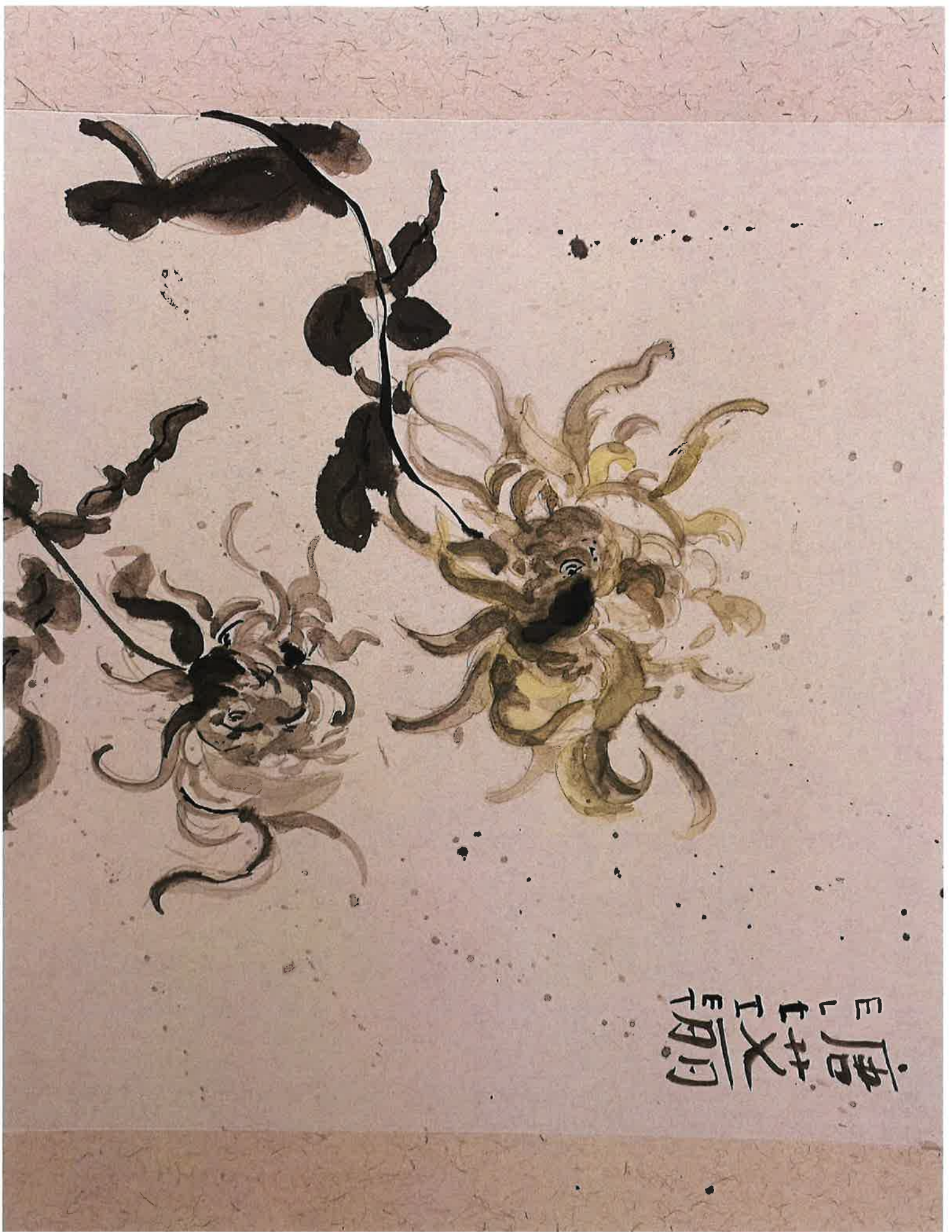
## Chrysanthemum

by Ellie Tang, Carson Middle School

Chrysanthemum, chrysanthemum,  
chry-san-the-mum,  
c-h-r-y-s-a-n-t-h-e-m-u-m.  
Red, pink, yellow, and purple,  
natural beauty and color.  
Glowing, loving, affectionate,  
petals spread like sun rays,  
a sunrise refreshment in a volume,  
a connection between mother and daughter.  
Chrysanthemum, chrysanthemum,  
chry-san-the-mum,  
c-h-r-y-s-a-n-t-h-e-m-u-m.  
something so light yet bitter,  
a tranquil joy in the heart,  
a thought...

I watch as the slow bud sinks towards the horizon.  
I listen to the petals' love in the orange bitterness of appreciation.  
I feel the warmth of the evening sun glowing past my shoulders.  
I sniff the warm fizz of tranquility and peace, oozing through my veins.  
And to take a sip;  
A taste easing me into my mother's arms.

Chrysanthemum, chrysanthemum,  
chry-san-the-mum,  
c-h-r-y-s-a-n-t-h-e-m-u-m.  
Frosted, white, covered, and frigid  
tucked in snow and cold.  
Shimmering, twinkling, adoring,  
Buds peaceful like an elder,  
a sunset glass that was once full,  
a memory that has once been told.  
Chrysanthemum, chrysanthemum,  
chry-san-the-mum,  
c-h-r-y-s-a-n-t-h-e-m-u-m.  
something so bright yet vague,  
a rebirth to be awaited in tempo,  
a memory.



唐  
艾  
翎

Reid Hall  
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11/09/21

### Plant Love Story

Both of my great-grandfathers had quite the green thumb, and both made huge gardens. One of my great-grandfathers had a garden that took up half of his yard, and the other owned a plant nursery and greenhouses which held a lot of different plants. That inspired my grandfather to make a garden of his own, which also inspired my mom to make a garden, too. When it came to me, though, I wasn't much of a gardener. I preferred playing video games and hanging out with my friends. But one day in 4th Grade, something changed in me.

It was towards the end of the year in my elementary school where I received a single sunflower seed in a cup. My class was to grow these seeds and report back with how they grew in a couple of weeks. I took my seed home and let it grow on my windowsill. Nothing happened at first, but within a few days and some water, a small sprout grew. I got encouraged by this, and kept watering it and caring for it. Eventually, it grew and grew some more, and we had to plant it outside in our garden. Over the course of a few months it grew to about 6 feet tall! After this amazing experience, I got into the hobby of gardening. I grew many different fruits and vegetables with my mother, and we eventually even got into the newspaper. Because I am disabled and in a wheelchair, we use raised plant beds to make it easier for me to garden. One day, someone wanted to interview us and our garden and post an article about it in the local newspaper which was a really great experience.

I have truly realized that watching something grow and thrive in your own backyard is as interesting and entertaining as video games could ever be. Now, I'm growing a bunch of different foods like strawberries, tomatoes, lettuce, green beans, peas, and others, too! Each year we try growing new things, and this year we tried growing Brussels sprouts. It didn't go too well, but that's ok because it's always fun to try something new. I also remember one year we tried growing corn but got only one ear. I have also realized that nature really is quite beautiful in its own way, and that something extraordinary can sprout from such a small seed. Nature provides us food, water, and oxygen for us to keep living each day. I hope many others can share this enjoyment and appreciation I have for nature.



Alannah Pavlic  
Avonworth Middle School

### Dandelions

When I was little, any time I saw a dandelion, I would run towards it, pick it, make a wish, and blow off the fuzzy seeds. I remember my parents would tell me, "Don't do that! That's a weed, and you're going to make them grow all over the yard!" I couldn't see how such a beautiful and fun flower that you could wish upon could be a weed, and I absolutely loved the idea of spreading the flowers all over the place. So, of course I continued spreading the seeds everywhere.

As I got older, I still loved picking dandelions, making wishes, and blowing off the seeds. So did my little brothers! My parents eventually gave up on telling us not to. I love the spring and autumn when I sometimes see fields and fields of the puffy white seeds. Whenever I see a yellow dandelion, I make sure to watch that spot for when the seeds appear on the flower.

Picking a dandelion always brings back wonderful memories and makes me think of my family. I still don't see how the flower is a weed, especially because I learned that dandelion leaves, or dandelion greens, are edible and good for you. Making a wish on a dandelion has always been fun, and now it has turned into something that always brings me pure joy and happiness.



# Our Maze

The wonder of the maze  
A patch of love next to the church  
Our maze  
It wasn't really our maze, yet it was  
You could see it from Grandma and Papa's porch  
"Papa, can we go down to the maze?"  
And we would go  
Papa, my older sister, my younger sister and I  
Grasping each others hands as we cross the busy road and make our way down the paved  
pathway  
Flowers surround the path  
Our path  
It wasn't really our path, yet it was  
Dandelions, yellow buttercups, daisies, clovers, and fragile purple wildflowers  
We'd pick brightly colored flowers and make charming bouquets  
And Queen Anne's Lace  
But we wouldn't dare pick those  
For my older sister Mara was highly allergic  
We later learned her allergy was a myth to gain attention  
Chatting happily of school lessons and best friends  
And then we'd pass through the empty church parking lot and into the maze  
Sometimes we'd play games in the parking lot  
We'd play catch, and hopscotch, and teach Papa foursquare  
Our parking lot  
It wasn't really our parking lot, yet it was  
And then we'd enter the maze  
Soft grass, blue skies, and puffy clouds  
Old stone benches with messages and trinkets left behind for somebody to find  
Letters of joy and hope, jewelry, marbles and stones, rosaries and important prayers  
stored away in the maze's heart  
The maze will keep your secrets and love stored away deep inside, no matter how  
powerful or meak  
We'd leave glass stones  
Putting them some place that felt right  
Where someone else could enjoy them  
Our maze was just a patch of plant life and the stories of other visitors

But somehow it was everything  
The special place we'd visit with every stay at Grandma and Papa's quaint little home  
And of course, the small wooden bridge that would take us to the swampy edge where cat  
tails would stand tall, beckoning Papa to come cut his finger  
And he would  
Time after time, he'd grab them wrong, and beads of crimson blood would drip from his  
hand  
But he didn't mind  
Not really  
Because he was picking them for us  
Our cat tails  
They weren't really our cat tails, yet they were  
And then we'd make our way back home, trees gently waving goodbye in the wind, and  
birds singing as they swoosh by above  
And again, we'd grip each other tightly by the hand as we crossed the road  
Until our next visit  
We would present the cat tails to Grandma happily  
And she'd smile and kiss us, and put them in her massive vase next to the old grandfather  
clock  
But as we got older, and the early times of our childhood slowly crept away, allowing  
maturity to enlighten us, our maze's beauty also crept away  
It became buried in overgrowth, no longer cared for  
And it buried away memories of bright days filled with cat tails and blue skies and  
wildflowers  
But those memories weren't really gone  
They were just being safely tucked underneath the love of the plants  
Memories  
But this time, the memories really did belong to us  
They were for us and for the maze to share

Eva Roedersheimer  
Avonworth Middle School





Caeley Simon

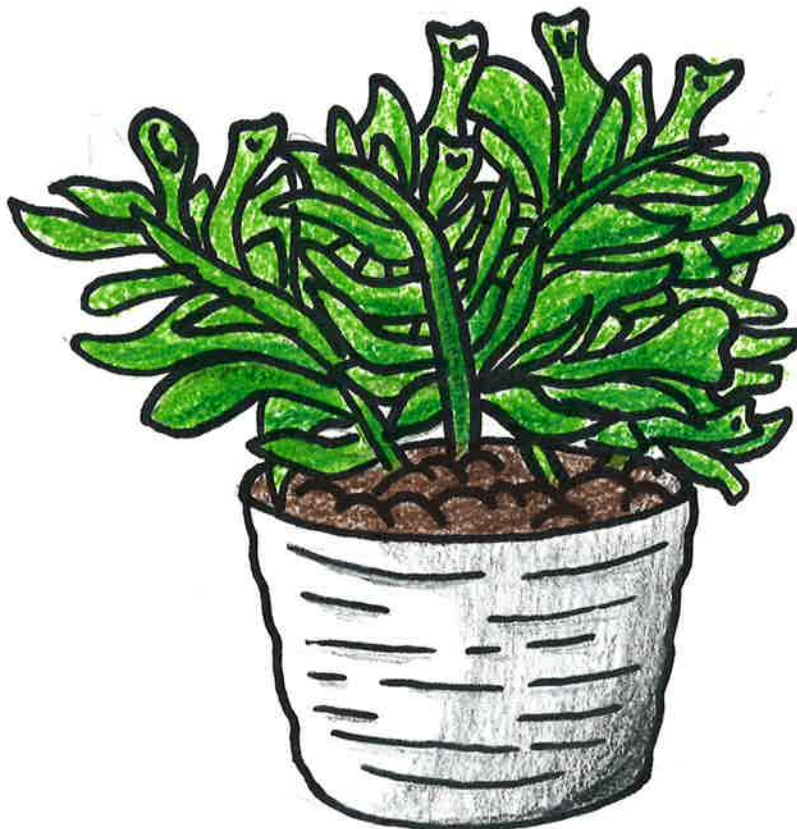
Penn Middle School

Juan's smooth green stems flourish,  
bending towards the light.  
The cactus's arms stretching like a starfish,  
my eyes are alight.

My grandmother gently tugs on the base,  
pulling Juan from his refuge.  
I pour soil into Juan's new space,  
She notes "His new pot is huge!"

As my grandmother restores Juan's home,  
she guides me through the process.  
We press down on the new loam,  
laughing at the dirt on her new dress.

I think about this every time I see her,  
the memory of Juan's transfer.



It was a hot summer day. The sun shined through the windows, filling the house with bright light. Outside, the loud traffic could be heard even from inside. I had grown so used to it that the silence of the US would awe me. India was filled with people, with not a lot of space, so heavy traffic was common. The noise was constant, but I hardly ever found it annoying. The sun was setting and I could hear the call to prayer. Even though I didn't understand what it meant, it was a soothing sound. I walked out to the balcony and looked out through the metal wiring. I could see the jamacai chettu in the distance. It wasn't too far from the house, so I could see its bright green leaves and the branches laden with fruit. I wondered how the fruit would taste. Fruits and vegetables in India looked and tasted a bit different than those in the US. Some vegetables in India we couldn't find at home, so it was always a delight to try them whenever we visited. One time, we searched for a certain type of mango for ages, though they were out of season. Miraculously, we managed to find one, but it wasn't nearly as good as I imagined. I remembered this fondly, though I still wonder how the mango would taste when it is in season. A sound from inside startled me. Mani aunty was calling my name. I hurried back inside to see her placing a bowl of cut fruit on the table.

"Jampandu a?" I ask her, wondering if that was guava.

"Yes. The neighbor picked some guavas and gave some to us." she responded in Telugu.

"Ooh! Can I try?" I exclaimed. She handed me a piece and I devoured it, savoring the sweet taste. My mother walked in and took a piece and soon the whole household was sitting in the living room eating jampandu. Well, everyone except my brother. He hated the fruit. Still, it was a happy experience, one that I'll always remember.



Adithri Pingali

Sydney Maegle  
Grade 7  
Keystone Oaks Middle School

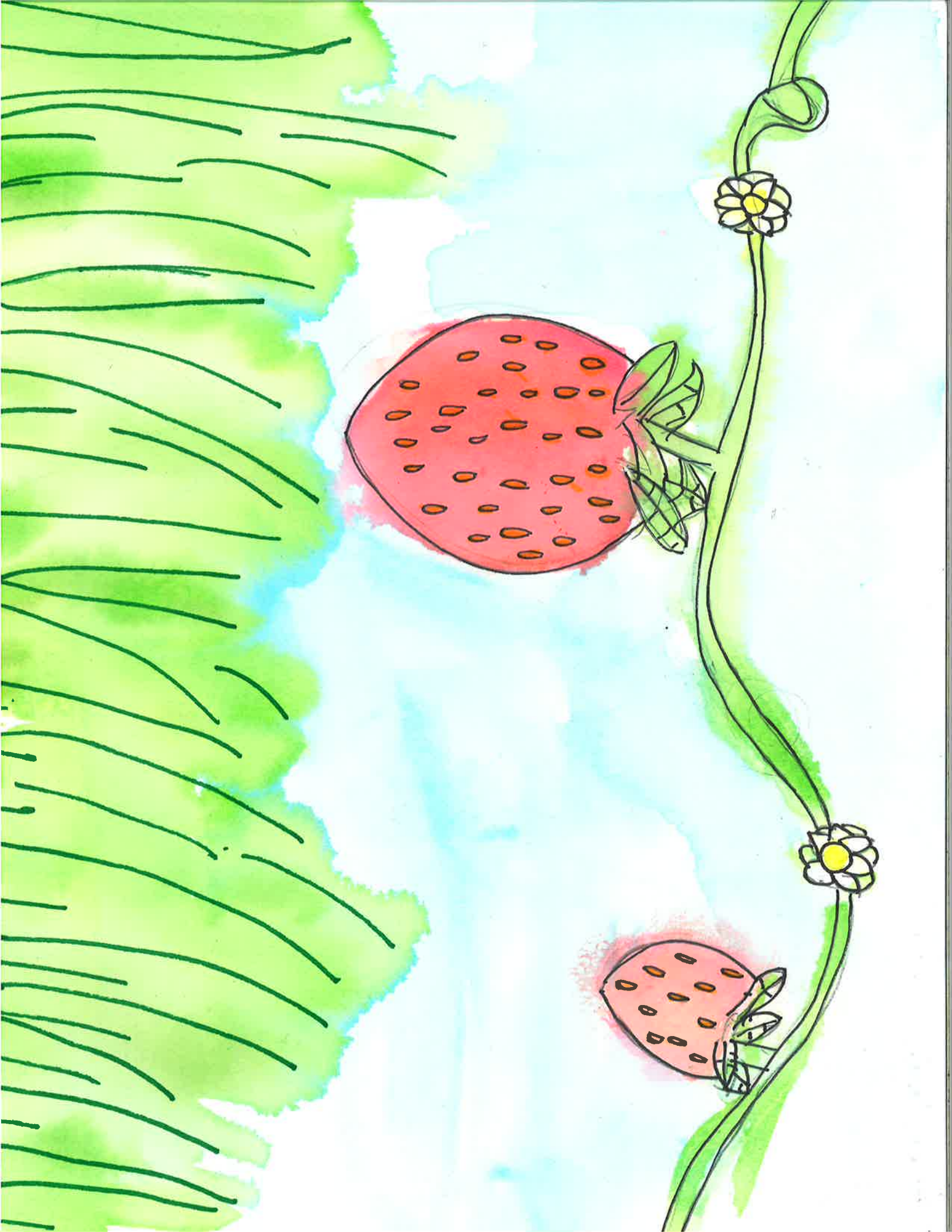
### My Plant Love Story - The Strawberry Plant

Hidden underneath the leaves  
Juicy, red strawberries gleam  
Families walk by looking for berries  
Forgetting about all of their worries  
The sun shines above the scene  
Giving the beautiful berries sheen

Once we arrived home, we found inspiration  
So we started the preparation  
We gathered some dirt and seeds to grow  
We dug a hole and placed the seeds in the ground below  
After a while the flower buds appeared  
And the moment of berries neared

Then one day we saw the delicious, red fruit  
So we picked them and ran to the sink in pursuit  
Once they were clean we tried a bite  
And they tasted just right!  
We were overjoyed that they turned out  
Even though we had a lot of doubt

After that it became a tradition  
Each year we had a mission-  
To grow the beautiful fruit on the strawberry plant



Sophya Bhandari - Grade 7  
Keystone Oaks Middle School

### My Plant Love Story - The Marigold

Marigolds take me back to Nepal. When I was in Nepal, I had a garden with Marigolds in them. Their smell was pleasant and they were beautiful to see each day. The yellow color always calmed me down, and put a smile on my face. I spent a lot of my time in Nepal, and that garden meant a lot to me. Whenever I played with my sister or even took a walk around the house, I always saw and smelled the flowers. When I went outside just to relax, I sat by the bench next to the flower. I loved the soft texture, it felt like a very silky pillow.

My family and I have a lot of fun memories that surround the Marigold. When I moved to America, I was devastated to not see the flower anymore, but my mom planted some Marigolds in our house. I am so happy to have that flower in my home because it brings back sweet memories for me. Although my Marigold flowers aren't as big and as plentiful as in Nepal, they still mean a lot to me and I wouldn't want to lose them. I always love to smell them and feel the texture of them. It might seem like something that is too little for someone else to care about, but it is one of my favorite things in the world.

My mom loves to plant flowers and she is hoping to plant some more of this beautiful flower. My dad also loves to see them in our house. We love having a little memory that lets us remember Nepal. My entire family is so touched by it. Many people say that the Marigold is a good flower to have in your home because it represents positive emotions and energy. They are like the warmth of the sun. They represent happiness, positivity, and good luck. The Marigold is a symbol of joy.



## *My Friend, Holly*

Once upon a childhood  
I had a secret place  
Where I would go with my brother, talking face to face  
In the bush of hardwood  
Where we never stood  
In our secret hideout, there was plenty of space  
We could be ourselves, we didn't keep a straight face  
Life was all good

Holly grew into the house  
So we had to cut her down  
Remnants of all life were gone, even the life of a mouse  
Growing out of childhood was a real put-down  
Devoid of all life like a dollhouse  
Until grass sprouted up and made a new, mini town





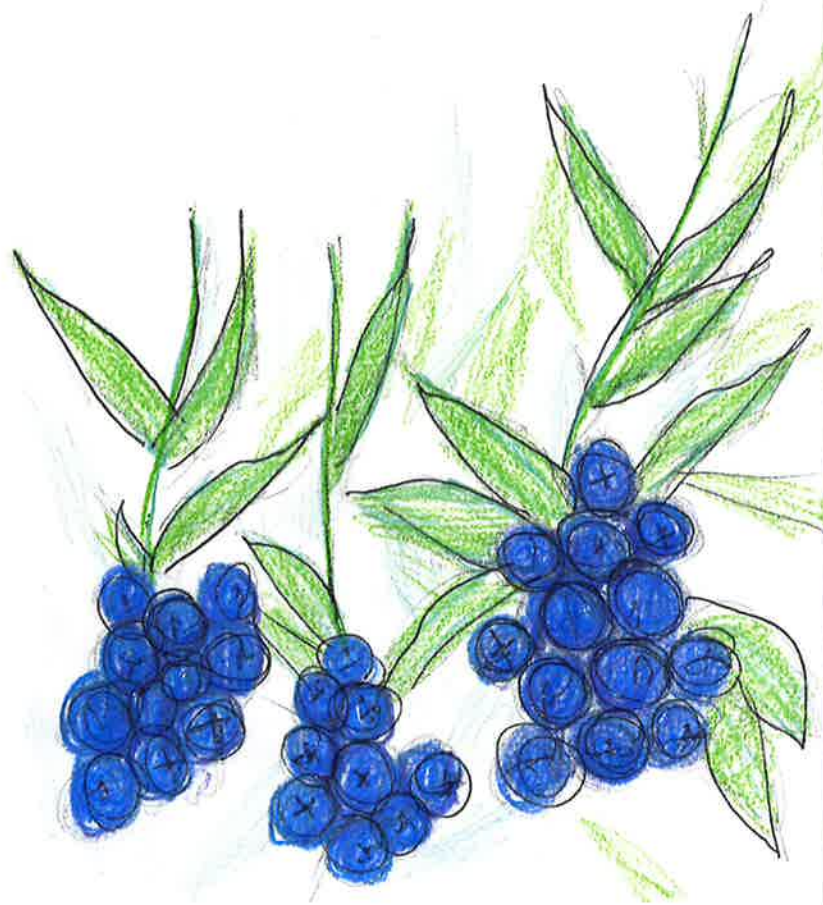
Julianna Eshman  
Trafford Middle School

I skipped out the door,  
The sun beaming light  
Welcoming new day  
But the birds, as it seems,  
Will not go away.

I wish and I wish,  
Please just one time,  
Will I have some blueberries,  
That are only mine.

Of course I love birds,  
And animals of all kinds,  
But I love my plant more,  
Birds won't change my mind.

So I walk towards the bushes,  
My face shining bright,  
As I realize the birds,  
Have gone for a flight.



Adelaide Mclaughlin

When I was a little kid, still living in my old house, we had multiple holly bushes in our front yard. To my knowledge, they still stand. Me and my sister were always outside, especially in October when my dad put up the halloween decorations. While he took the inflatables out of the attic, we would hide behind the holly bushes. My dad made a homemade creepy jack-in-the-box decoration that was built around a holly bush. We would set up chairs behind it and eat snacks. For years, my parents found old scraps and trash behind the bush because of our meetings.



Delamou Race