

**Where the Wildflowers remember
by Alisha Aslam (Junior)**

Inside the care home, there was no sound. No laughter, no talking, nothing. The residents either stared out the window or down at the floor. Eliza spotted Grandpa James gazing through a window.

“Eliza” he called out to her as the young girl walked up to him, “come and sit with me”. Eliza was relieved, as if a massive burden were just thrown off her chest. He remembered her!

“Do you want to come outside? We can do what we used to, spot and name birds, grow wildflowers, the whole lot!” Eliza raved on, excited as ever. She had forgotten that this place was a barren void.

“Not much grows here” Grandpa James murmured.

Just hearing this broke Eliza’s heart into pieces.

Eliza sat in the courtyard outside the home, remembering the times where Grandpa James and her used to spend all day outside planting wildflowers. When she was little, Grandpa James always carried wildflower seeds in his pocket. “Plant something beautiful whenever life feels grey” He used to say, Eliza decided to do exactly that.

Seed by seed, plant by plant, Eliza slowly transformed the courtyard into a magical garden, wildflowers, pots of daisies, lavenders to calm you down and sunflowers for warmth.

One day, Eliza brought Grandpa James out for some fresh air.

“Is that ... cornflower?” his voice trembled, pointing at a tiny sprout. Eliza’s heart jumps, for the first time in weeks, he spends hours outside with her.

As the garden grew, something else grew too. Eliza and Grandpa James’ bond. Grandpa James began telling Eliza things again. He told her that the lavender reminded him of her grandma’s

perfume, that the daisies reminded him of those summers at the lake. Nature became a doorway.

Just as Eliza felt as if everything couldn’t get any better, Grandpa had a bad day.

Eliza came to visit him and Grandpa replies to her with, “Are you one of the nurses?”

Eliza felt the world tilt. All the flowers, all the effort, for what? She ran outside and sat in the garden alone. Nature doesn’t fix loss. But it holds you through it.

Eliza bought her grandpa outside that evening while the garden was glowing with a late summer colour. She placed a small packet of seeds in his hand.

He turned it over slowly, then quietly, he said, “you planted these”. Eliza nodded, tears in her eyes.

“I did it because you always taught me happiness lives here, amongst nature” she had hope in her eyes, secretly begging Grandpa James to remember.

They planted one final seed together. Generations meeting in the earth. That moment was real.

Eliza began to understand that dementia was not just forgetting words or faces, it was like watching someone slowly lose the map of their own life. Some days, her grandpa’s memories drifted out of each like a mist over a morning field. But nature seemed to hold on to pieces of him when his mind could not. In the garden, he was not a patient or a fading man, he was simply himself again, even if only for moments. Eliza realised that while dementia could steal names, it could not steal the feeling of standing beneath an open sky, or the quiet happiness of something still growing.



**ROTARY CLUB YOUNG WRITER COMPETITION
WINNING ENTRIES**

We are delighted to report that all three of our candidates won the District Competition and now go forward to the National one. We wish them good luck and thank them for representing the Club so successfully.

**On The Soils Quiet Breath of Fulfillment
by Zahra Aziz (Senior)**

At first, the garden composes itself. The geraniums made it through the Night. Blooming. You could not tell which Was snow, And the air breathe feels just right.

I tell myself this is the healing part the romanticising the living part.

Hands that clenched at soil, clenching endless dead roots where a different pair had done before.

Clean dirt kissing nail. Worms beneath rocks wiggling The way our hands do, when we take off our battered gloves.

Unleashing them to the torture of Gaia’s cold.

It cannot be trusted.

Weightier does the ground feel, as you kneel to labour It does not open to reveal its treasures - It resists.

My hands carrying its clues learn the old melody Make contact push in twist and pull As if the land remembers who entered.

I think of withered hands – here before Stronger for becoming weaker Loyal for they did not abandon it.

For the flowers that bloomed for purity, Now For inheritance No for Progression.

Roots that snap without applause, Peonies that shrivel die and regrow And useless bulbs that recoil from the light - As if accused.

There is no grand revelation to adore Only the hard work, that to everyone else feels like a chore.

Happiness in Nature by Simran Kaur (Intermediate)

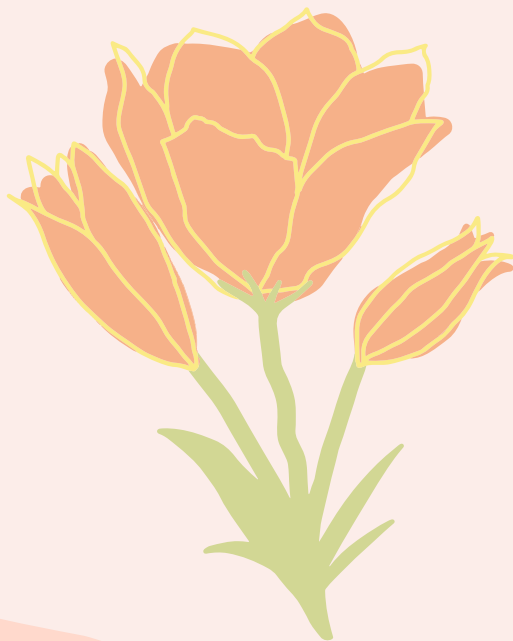
We can lie - Believe that the flowers thank us after each pour
Rejoice that they remember the one before

Or realise we are the ones that feel.
Feel. Feel as we take our watering cans and pour pour and pour,
into
Evergreens we neglect, into hedges content to absorb, overgrown
as they are.

You are maintaining not restoring.

By evening it is perceived as unchanged.
As though no person took up the shovel and gave their day.

I wash the earth off my hands. Content - For they did not spot me.
So I scrape at the dirt obscuring the cracks and keep the feeling
instead -
Not contentment, Nor pride, Not even peace or hope -
Just the weight of placing my foot within it.
Remaining just long enough
To close my eyes.



As I walk across the voice of the valley in the mountains, the birds
are singing as I search for a place to rest the ache throughout my
body. I stumble my way to the secluded part of the forest, and I
finally find an ethereal, exhilarating world - a world where I can
experience true bliss. The branches arch above me, their curves
blocking the burdens of reality, carving a sanctuary as sunlight
dapples the forest floor, painting it in amber and jade. Below me, a
kaleidoscope of wildflowers scatters like nature's confetti; every
bloom feels like a soul blossoming, reflecting the reckless joy in my
gray eyes. I take a few small steps, each one igniting rapture
within me. When I finally settle onto nature's bed, I realise I have
company: a girl whose waist-length hair frames her sharp,
stunning features; her eyes hold the hues of sunrise, and her smile
is like a sunny day in winter - brief, pretty, and rare.

A soft voice pulls me from my thoughts. "Hey, my name is Kysa,
what is yours?"

I try to steady my voice before answering. "I am Soren".

She drifts closer, as if I am a flame, and she is my shadow, my
inevitable. I froze. My searching expression triggers her laughter -
a sound so pure it feels like harmony woven into the air. "Well,"
she says lightly, "Since we've never met, I have a random question.
What is your favorite color?"

Nothing felt worthy, so I had never chosen a favorite.

Then a pair of ocean-blue eyes appeared, and I discovered that
drifting with the tide could feel like belonging.

Then a pair of sun-bright blue eyes appeared, and I realised that
standing in warm light was simply nature teaching joy.

Then a pair of twilight-soft eyes appeared, and I understood that
even the silence between day and night can be filled with wonder.

And so, I realised my favourite colour was ..."Blue," I answered.

The silence echoed across the vast expanse below us, settling
over the valley like a soft veil. Around us, the forest breathed in
slow, steady rhythms, leaves trembling with the faintest breeze,
the earth warm beneath our feet. It felt as the world has paused

just long enough for us to exist inside its heartbeat.

Kysa leaned back on her hands, her gaze drifting towards
the canopy above. Light filtered through the leaves in
shifting patterns, and for a moment, it seemed as if the
forest were speaking in colors only nature could create. A
quiet contentment unravelled in my chest, gentle and
unexpected, as if the land itself had reached out to steady
me.

A bird swooped low, its wings brushing the air with
effortless grace, and the simple beauty of it struck me.
Happiness, I realised, wasn't always a burst of emotion.
Sometimes it was soft recognition that the world was still
capable of wonder.

Sitting beside her, I understood that happiness was not a
destination, it was a moment, fleeting, delicate, and
profoundly alive. And in that hidden corner of the
mountains, wrapped in sunlight and stillness, I allowed
myself to feel it fully.

Eternity is peaceful

