爷爷站在菜园正中央

我家楼下有一个菜园，菜园是爷爷的。菜园里有黄瓜，有豆角，还有爷爷，站在正中央。

黄瓜开花，一朵一朵小黄喇叭，嘀嘀，嘀嘀，吹给谁听呢？吹给豆角听。豆角正在搭梯子，一根一根往上爬，爬得比我的个子还高。

爷爷的草帽，是菜园里第二轮太阳。早上它东边晃，中午它头顶挂，傍晚它西边落。整个菜园，都绕着那顶草帽转。

爷爷浇水，水管弯弯，像一条慢吞吞的河。河水流到黄瓜跟前，黄瓜咕咚咕咚喝；流到豆角跟前，豆角哗啦哗啦摇。爷爷也喝水，他仰头，喉结一动一动，我猜他一定没有黄瓜喝得多。

爷爷捉虫，手指头一捏，一提，虫子就不见了。他不说疼，也不说脏，只说，叶子后面藏坏蛋，爷爷的眼睛是手电筒，一照一个准。

中午歇凉，爷爷坐在豆角架底下。影子小小的，铺在他脚边。他闭着眼睛，我以为他睡着了，可豆角一响，他的眼皮就动一下。原来他睡着了，还在值班。

黄瓜熟了，爷爷举起来，对着太阳看，像举一条绿色的光。豆角长了，爷爷捋直了，一捆一捆，像捋顺了一排绿色的句子。

爷爷的手上有泥，指甲缝里也有泥。可他不脏，菜园里长出来的东西，身上都带一点土，黄瓜带，豆角带，爷爷也带。那是菜园盖的印章，盖谁身上，谁就是菜园的人。

下雨天，菜园不出声。雨点替爷爷念诗，嗒嗒嗒，一行落在黄瓜叶上，一行落在豆角叶上，最后一行，落在爷爷的草帽上，帽檐滴水，像诗念出了标点。

我站在菜园边上想，爷爷是菜园种出来的吧？种下一顶草帽，长出一个爷爷；种下一个爷爷，长出一整个菜园。

我在心里悄悄许一个愿望：等我长大，我要做一棵会走路的菜，春天帮爷爷松土，夏天给爷爷打扇，秋天坐在菜园门口，等爷爷收工，把毛巾递上去。

风来了，黄瓜点头，豆角拍手，爷爷的草帽抬一抬。整片菜园都在说同一句话：好孩子，来，站到菜园正中央。

Grandpa Stands in the Middle of the Garden

Below our building there is a garden, and the garden belongs to my grandpa. Inside it there are cucumbers, there are green beans, and there is grandpa, standing right in the middle.

The cucumbers bloom, little yellow trumpets one by one, toot, toot, who are they playing for? They play for the beans. The beans are building ladders, climbing up stick by stick, higher than I am tall.

The straw hat of my grandpa is a second sun inside the garden. In the morning it swings in the east, at noon it hangs overhead, in the evening it sets in the west. The whole garden turns around that hat.

Grandpa waters the plants, the hose bending like a slow, dawdling river. The river flows to the cucumbers, and they gulp, gulp; it flows to the beans, and they rustle, rustle. Grandpa drinks too. He tilts his head up, his throat moving, and I bet he never drinks as much as a cucumber.

Grandpa catches bugs with a pinch of two fingers, a lift, and the bug is gone. He never says it hurts, never says it is dirty. He only says there are villains hiding under the leaves, and the eyes of grandpa are a flashlight, catching every one they shine on.

At noon he rests under the bean trellis. His shadow lies small at his feet. His eyes are closed, and I think he is asleep, yet at the slightest sound of the beans his eyelid twitches. So even asleep, he is still on duty.

When a cucumber ripens, grandpa lifts it against the sun, like holding a bar of green light. When the beans grow long, he straightens them into bundles, like smoothing out a row of green sentences.

There is mud on the hands of grandpa, mud in the seams of his nails as well. Yet he is not dirty. Everything grown in a garden wears a little soil: the cucumber wears it, the beans wear it, and grandpa wears it too. That is the stamp of the garden, and whoever it stamps belongs to the garden.

On rainy days the garden keeps silent. The raindrops recite the poem for grandpa, tap, tap, tap, one line on the cucumber leaves, one line on the bean leaves, and the last line falls on the straw hat of grandpa, water dripping from its brim, as if the poem had recited out its punctuation.

Standing at the edge of the garden I wonder, was grandpa grown by the garden? Plant a straw hat, and a grandpa grows up; plant a grandpa, and a whole garden grows up.

I make a quiet wish inside my heart: when I grow up, I want to be a vegetable that can walk. In spring I will loosen the soil for grandpa, in summer I will fan him, in autumn I will sit at the garden gate, waiting for grandpa to finish work, holding out a towel.

The wind comes. The cucumbers nod, the beans clap, and the straw hat of grandpa tips up. The whole garden is saying one and the same sentence: good child, come, stand in the middle of the garden.