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Cielo Wind power  
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The Earth Steward:

*September 2010:*

*I stared on in amazement, the wonder glistening in my eyes. Waves of color washed down the landscape like vibrant ribbons, delighting every gaze that chanced to fall upon its flowing tresses. A slight breeze tickled the blades of grass and the satiny petals of each lovely flower, intensifying the sweet, earthy smell sent to caress one's nostrils.*

*"I did this?" The words trembled on my lips, sounding alien and incredible. Anne simply grinned with pride and pure joy. "I did this," again the phrase took shape with my voice, this time sounding plain and utterly void of their true meaning. Had I honestly created, or more accurately assisted in the creation of, such an astonishing paradise – such an Eden?*

The things I felt that day were seeded within me a few months prior to that moment. January 2010, we moved into a house across the street from a woman named Anne. In May, I was approached by this neighbor; she offered me a peculiar proposition: "To give life back to the Earth in thanks for all it provides for us." Intrigue caught fire in my veins, and I began our adventure that summer. Far from tranquil, the garden, in plain terms, needed help. Severe help. Everything sat sadly in varying shades of yellows, browns, and *almost* greens. Any striking color came from the rampant weeds that had laid siege to the area. With such a project to entertain my attention, summer flew by, ending with the first falling autumnal leaves. That is the day I stood in awe, marveling at what I had accomplished.

I felt a strange new awareness, a new responsibility, weighing on my shoulders. A door was opened, and I could now see the world beyond myself. Oh what we could do for the world if

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every person made some small positive contribution! Our garden and work became more to me than just plants, dirt, and the correct regiment of water. It was my friend, there to lend a comforting presence when my emotions ran wild. Assuming the role of mentor, it taught me how precious and beautiful life truly is; what to do to preserve and protect that life. As my student, the xeric garden was there for me to shape, to influence. That part of the world, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant, was mine to protect – my responsibility.

The ensuing school year dominated a large majority of my time and energy. I felt as though I was betraying my beautiful garden, so I spent every possible moment working to maintain its prosperity. Winter stifled the garden's grace with its icy chill and snow. Spring could not have come soon enough because summer then would not be far behind.

That summer, however, I was forced to watch my charming yet tragically delicate creation struggle for life, ultimately withering in death once more. A heat wave had ravaged our town, affecting every living thing in the area. Water became scarce; people thought it best to conserve what little they had. To choose between what was best for the town and what was best for the plant life hit me hard. I used what little water I could to slow the inevitable. My mentor, friend, student had died – left me to watch, helpless. The days of summer counted to their last hours, but the heat still lingered, reminding me of what it took from me. Not even the meddlesome weeds greened that year.

Though my dreams for that xeric garden were crushed, I learned to embrace life as it came. The old cliché “life is short” came back to me. I understood then that life is fragile and easily quelled, so it is best to live every moment of it. The importance of natural resources, like water, also struck me. Though I may have let the tranquility of my sanctuary disappear, I still

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appreciate all that it was, and I knew then as I know now that conserving water for the health of the planet was the right thing to do.

Though I had learned to appreciate nature more, I had given up on my gardening endeavor, relinquished all responsibility, or so I had thought. My dear neighbor approached me once again, with the same proposition, "Let's rebuild this garden, reshape part of the world in beauty." At first I refused, still feeling defeated from the previous summer, but Anne spoke of being the strength that those plants needed, and I conceded. To this very day, I work for the restoration of the quality my dear plants once held. I enjoy seeing vibrant green life root itself within the once grieving soil. Not quite its former glory, the garden is on its way, and I will work every minute I can to help it to that state.

This revival in determination to work in and learn about this garden fuels my curiosity. Not only am I fascinated with plant life, but I am also intrigued by human life. I aspire to complete medical school and become a surgeon, in this way I could save lives through what I learn. That thought kindles the fire within me to dedicate all my time and energy to my chosen field of study.