

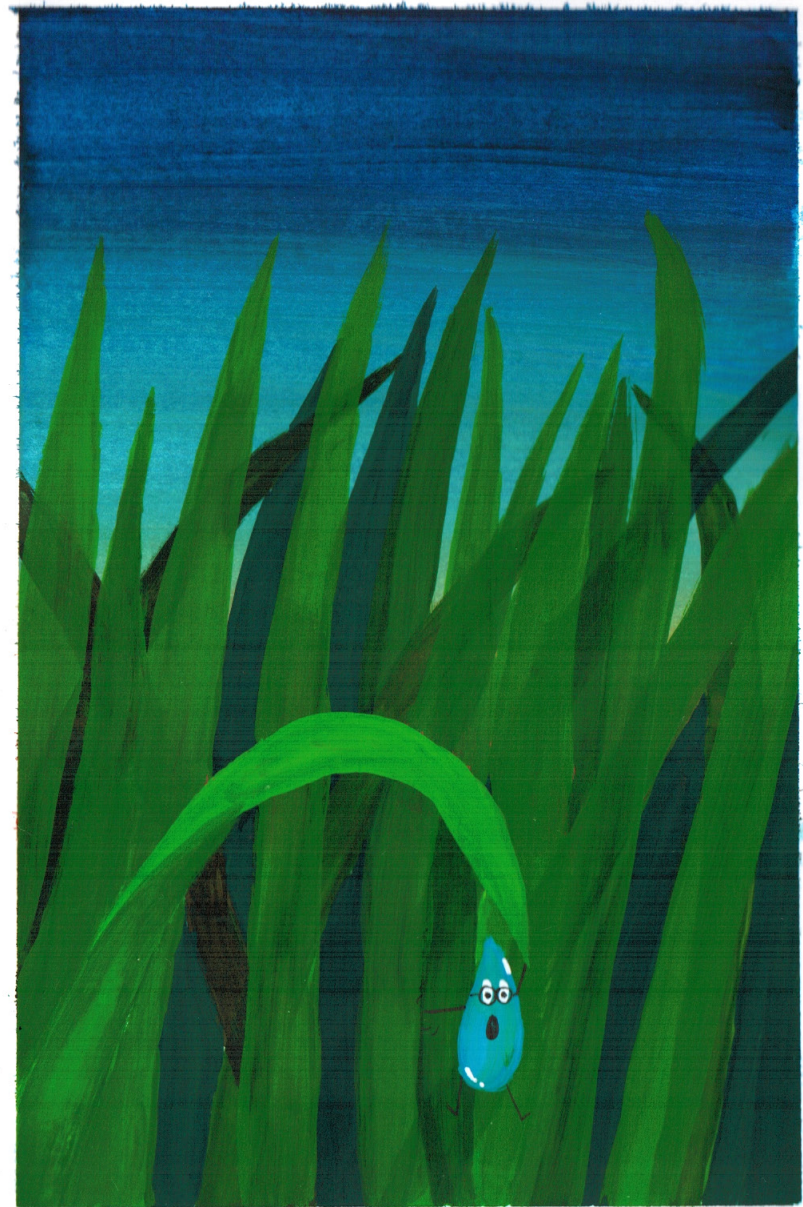
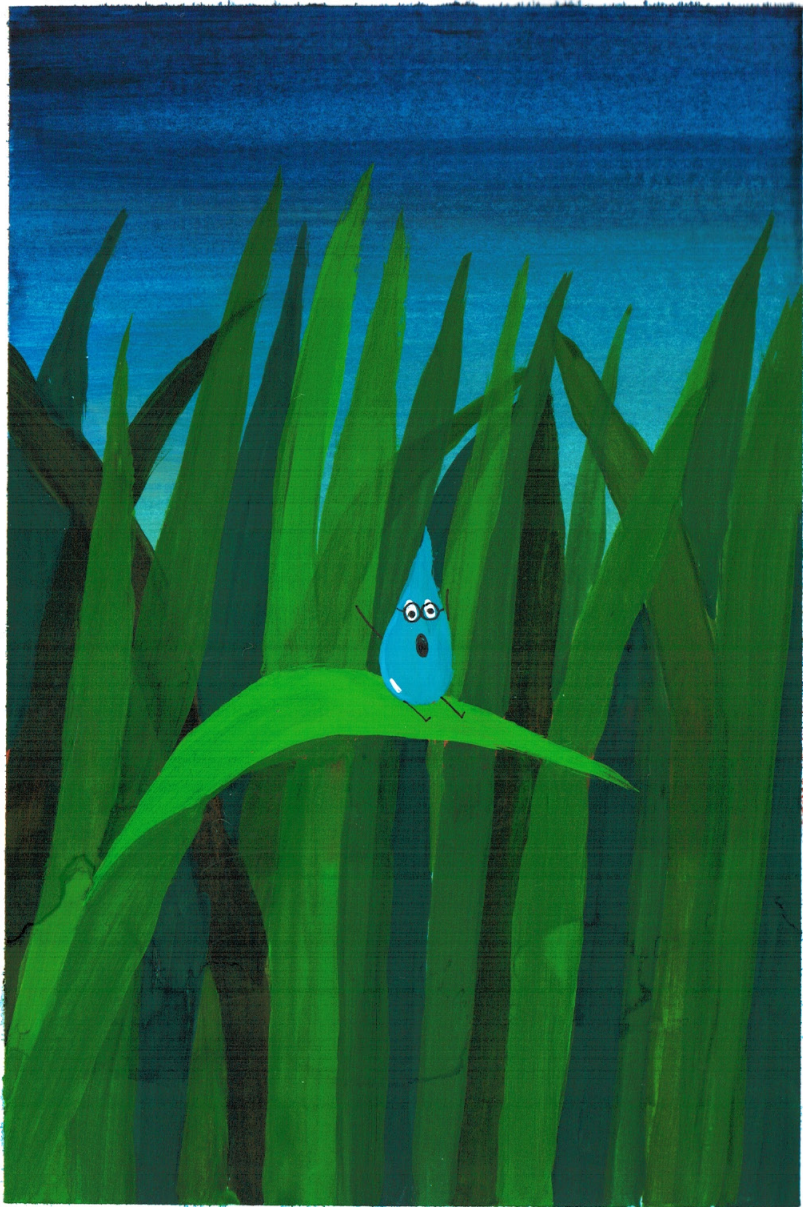
Augario's Adventure in Evaporating

By Allison Choi

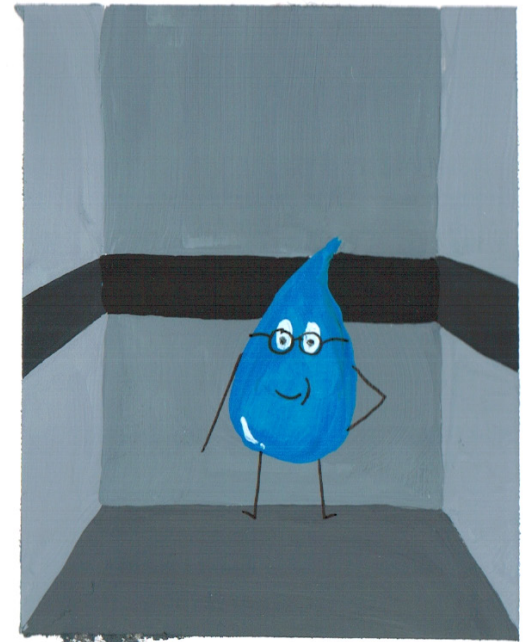
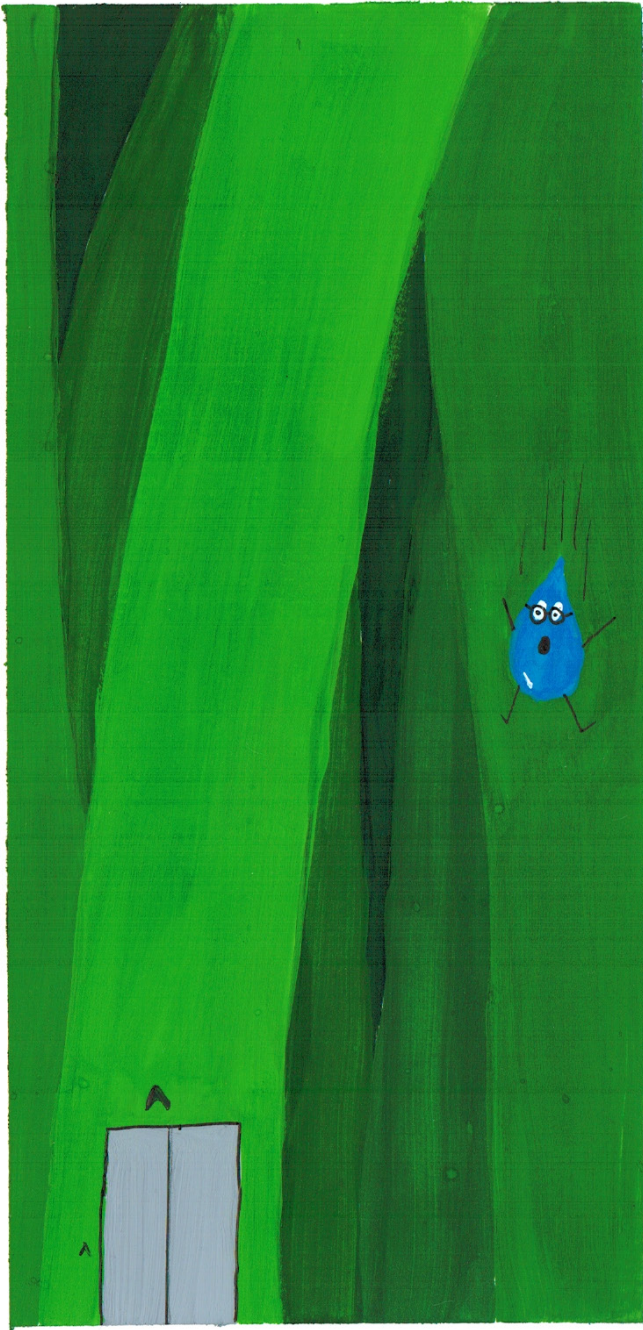
Illustrations by Kirsten Malsam



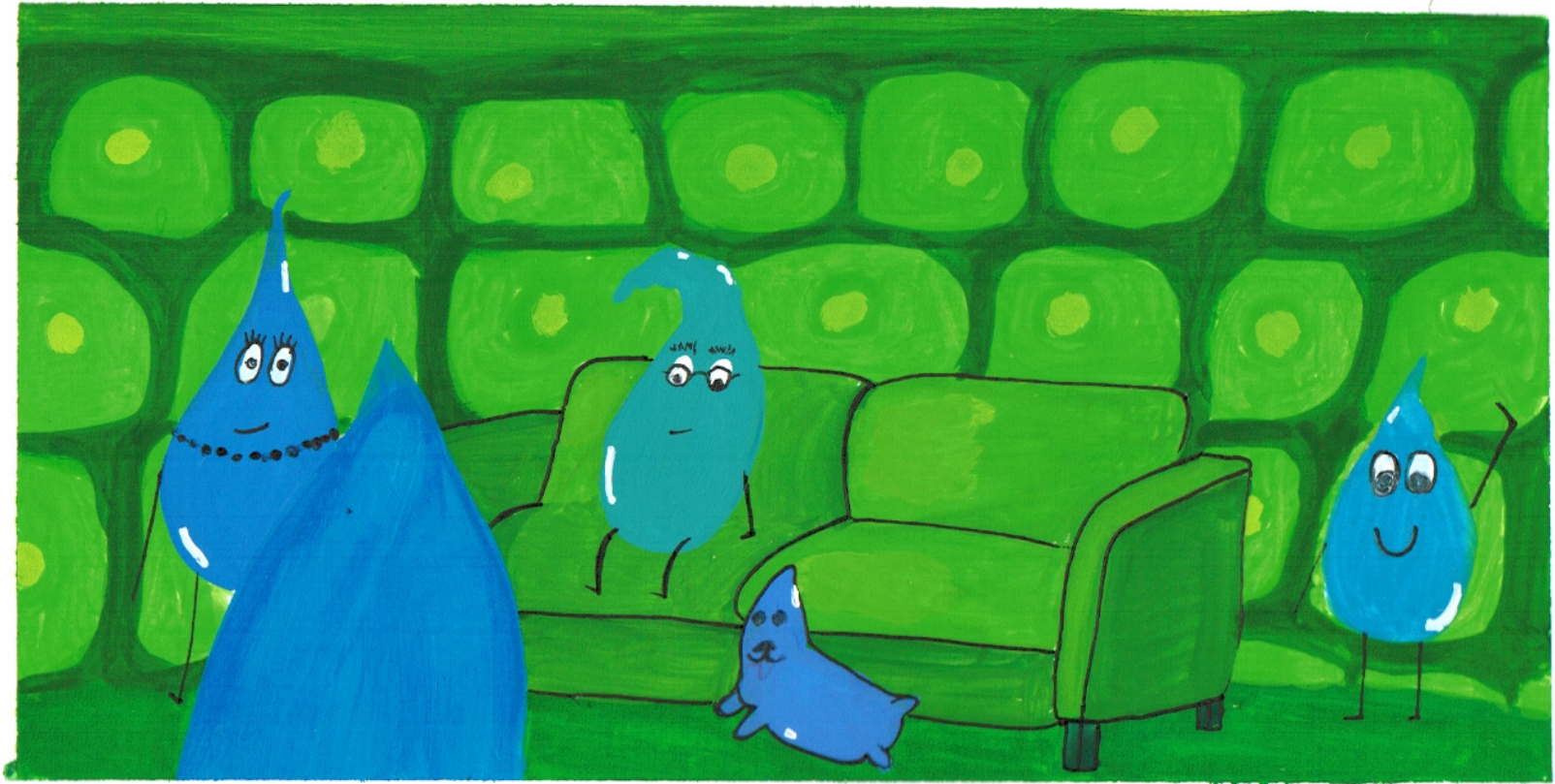
Early one morning, the water droplet Augario rested on a blade of grass in the cool night air, watching the sun come up.



As he rested, the blade of grass began to bend, so much so that Augario fell off the blade of grass and hurtled down to the ground.



After falling to the ground, Augario spotted an entrance to a dark tunnel at the bottom of a plant. He entered the tunnel and found himself being sucked up to the top of the plant. At the top, he entered a green room in one of the plant's leaves and saw other water droplets in the room.



“What is this place?” asked Augario, and one of the droplets answered, “My name is Wataline; welcome to our plant.”

“Our plant?” repeated Augario. “You mean to tell me that I’m inside a plant?!”

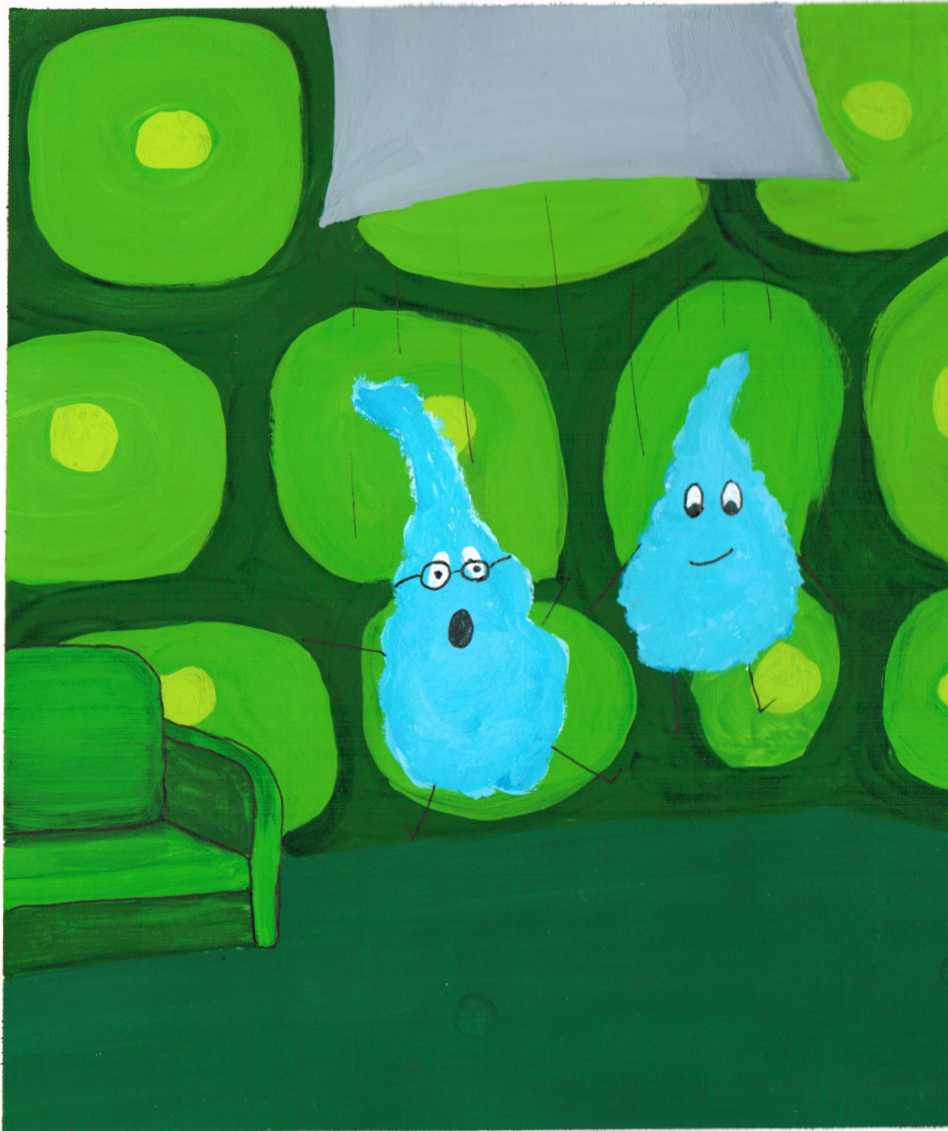
“Why, yes! You are here to help the plant stay cool,” replied Wataline.

“What do you mean?” asked Augario.

“You’ll soon find out!” Wataline said with a smile.

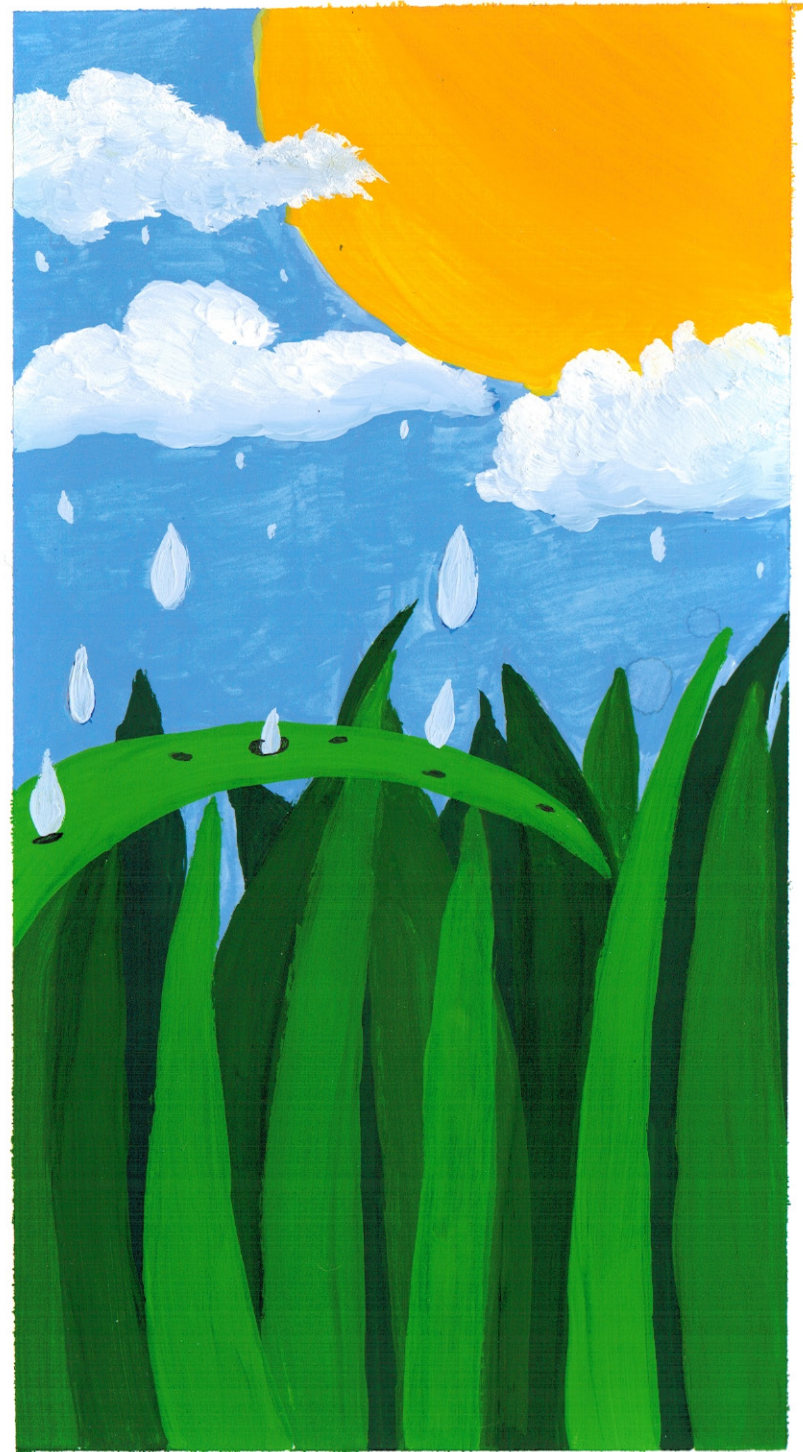


Sure enough, outside the sun had risen, and as it rose, Augario could feel himself grow warmer and warmer – but also lighter. And as all the water droplets grew warmer and lighter, Wataline explained, “As long as the sun shines on our plant, the plant will get warmer, and if we water droplets don’t help out, the plant will get too warm and die.”



“Oh my!” exclaimed Augario. “I don’t want this plant to die. How do we help?” “When the plant gets too warm, we water droplets will act like sponges and soak up the heat! We are great at soaking up heat. Then, when we leave the plant, we’ll take the heat with us.” “We are going to leave the plant?” asked Augario. “But I only just got here! How are we going to get out?”

Before Wataline could answer, he, Augario, and the rest of the water droplets began floating toward the plant's ceiling. "Oh no!" shouted Augario, as they neared the ceiling. "We're going to hit the ceiling!" But right before they hit the ceiling, a little door, called a leaf stoma, opened and let them escape into the open sky. "Phew, we made it!" Augario smiled as he floated upward to a cloud in the sky. When Augario reached the cloud, he looked around and was frightened when he didn't see Wataline. All he saw was a little cloud beside him.



“Augario, you made it!” said the little cloud.

“What?” said Augario. “How do you know my name?!”

“Why, don’t you recognize me? It’s me, Wataline!” said the little cloud.

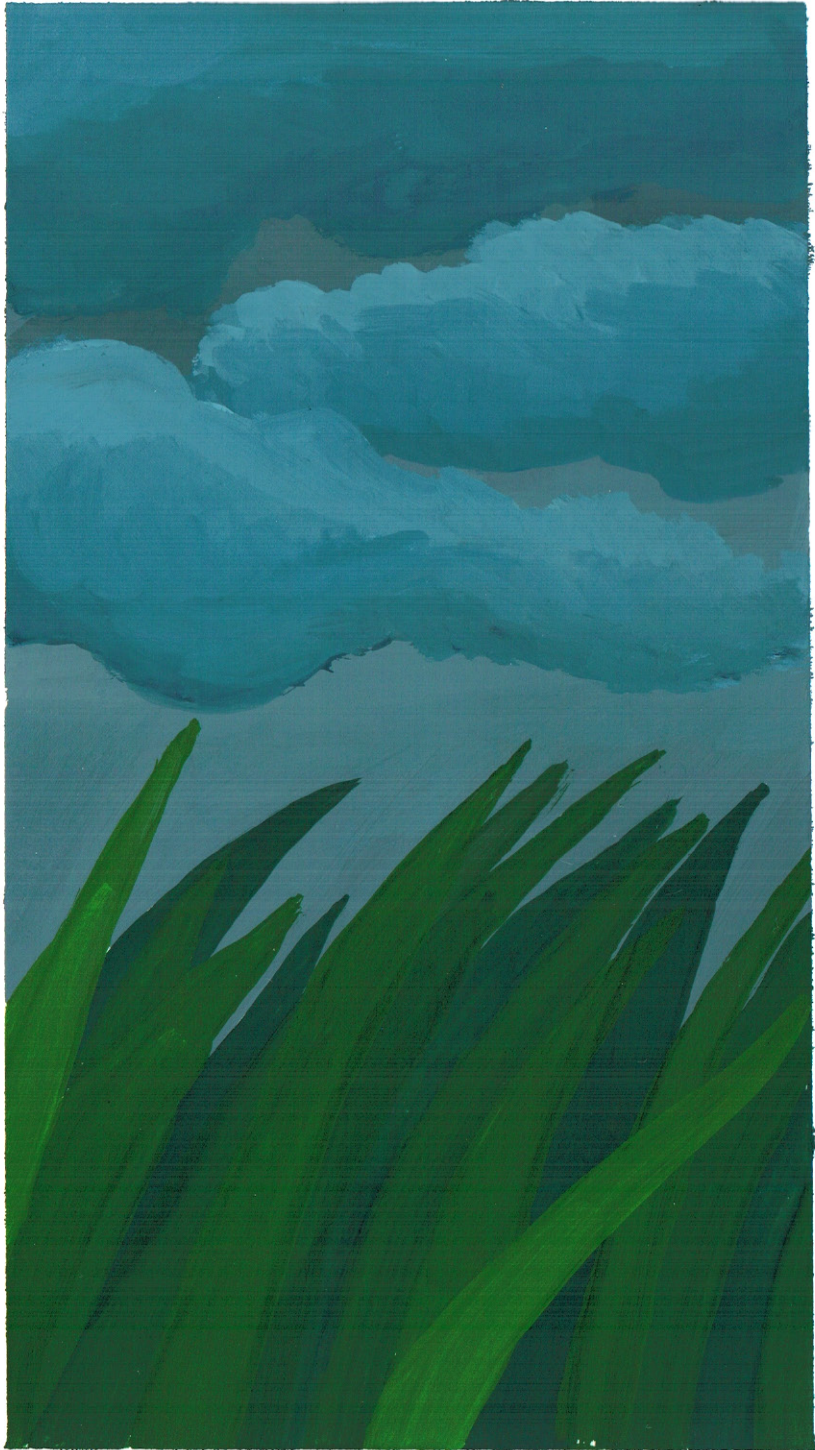
“Wataline! You look different!” said Augario, as he looked at the little cloud that had replaced his droplet friend.

“You should look at yourself,” laughed Wataline.

Augario glanced down at himself and saw that he too had become a fluffy, white, little cloud! “Woah, how did we turn into clouds?” asked Augario. Wataline laughed again and answered, “It was the heat from the sun that made us super light so we could float up and away. What we did is called evaporating.

We took the heat from the plant with us when we evaporated and saved the plant from dying. You’ll be evaporating over and over again for the rest of your life!”



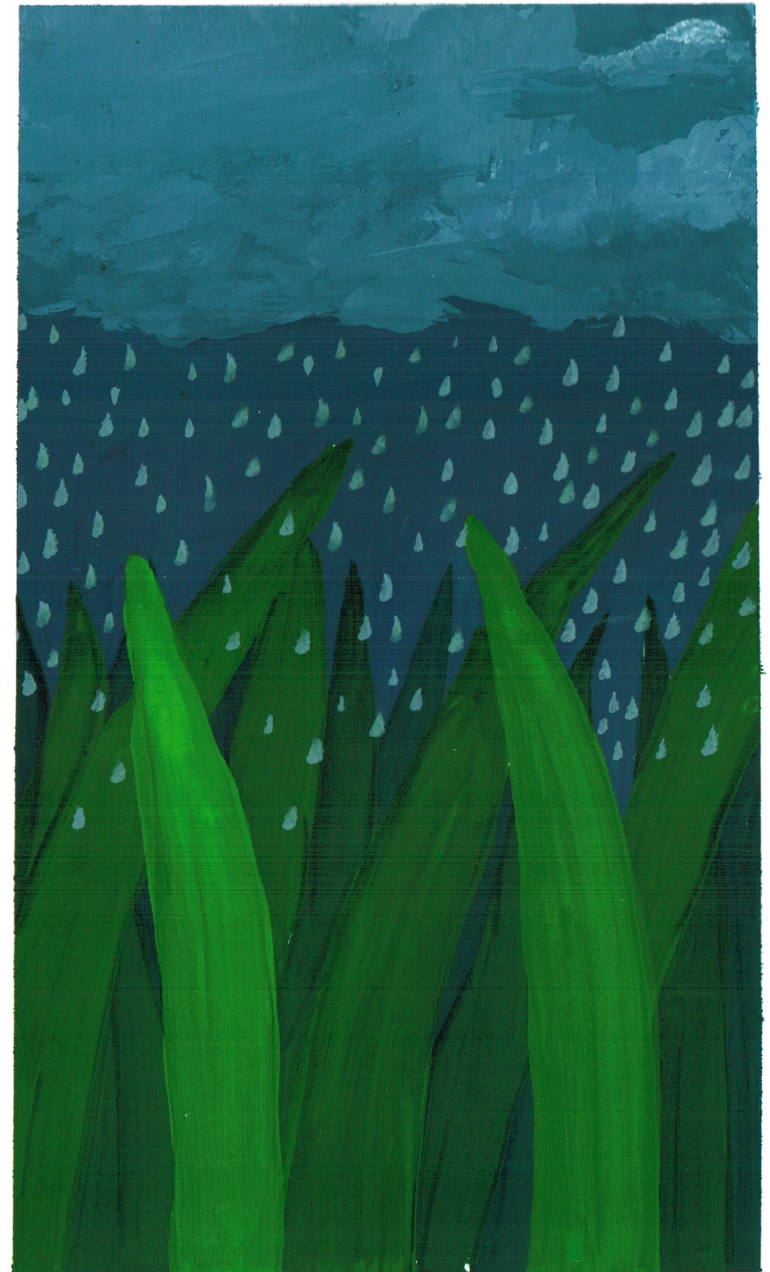


“I will?” asked Augario. “But how does that happen? How do I go from being a little cloud back to being a water droplet heating up inside a plant and evaporating?”

As if to answer Augario’s question, just then a cool breeze blew on them and thunder rumbled in the distance. Then the sky became very dark and cold.



“A storm is coming!” cried Wataline. “Get ready to become a water droplet again!” Wataline and Augurio shivered in the cold wind, and with that shivering, Augurio felt himself getting heavier and heavier until he was no longer a little cloud. He was a water droplet once again! “Now it’s time to go back to earth to keep the plants cool.” said Wataline.



And down they went – as drops of rain!

Soon Augario landed on a blade of grass and slept there in the cool night air. When he awoke, the sun was just beginning to come up, and he remembered yesterday's adventures.



He would go back in that green room and heat up to cool the plant, taking that heat with him as he evaporated! Knowing how important he was, Augario was proud to be a water droplet.