

Salt Still Grows Green

By Arielle Pineda

6th grade | Blue Ridge Elementary School | Arizona

Second place K-11 contest winner, Climate and Environment category

With lines from "[As the Planet Warms, a Humble Sea Bean Is Proving To Be a Promising Superfood](#)" by Rachel Parsons, a Pulitzer Center-supported story

They said the land was tired,
too much salt in its wounds,
too much sun in its breath,
too much history buried in dry soil.

They said nothing good grows here.

But across an ocean,
in the marshes of Spain,
a man bends low,
hands steady,
cutting green from salt.
A plant with no leaves, no beauty,
only stubborn life:
Salicornia.

Sea bean.
Glasswort.
Pickleweed.

Names like stories
carried by wind and water.

I think of my mother's voice,
crossing borders the way seeds do—
quiet, persistent,
rooting where it wasn't invited.

I think of my father's hands,
cracked like desert earth
on the Apache reservation,
where we learned
how to listen to the land
even when it says nothing back.