It’s Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, and Nina, Kavita, and Jay are all going to work with Mom, a landscape architect, and learn how to start a garden. Naturally that’s not enough for Nina, who quickly develops big plans for a business selling the vegetables she plans to grow. But her plans don’t include managing the problems that inevitably arise, including rabbits, slugs, mosquitoes, and more.
My luck had finally arrived!

I opened my bedroom window a crack and sniffed. Yes, it was here. I could tell just by the scent of air. It had a warm, rich, earthy smell to it. The sun was shining, the forget-me-not-flower sky was clear and not a speck of snow was anywhere. Every year in Wisconsin, Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day is cold, snowy, rainy, windy, or a combination of them. That meant I usually ended up with Dad doing his computer work or helping Mom order seeds or plan a garden for someone. Maybe software engineering is fun but not after you have seen it a couple of times.
Ordering seeds is as exciting as watching my sister Kavita sing. And it is no fun to plan a garden and not plant it.

But this year was going to be different.

Mom had promised Kavita and I that we could have our own vegetable patch. Kavita is in first grade, so she was more into playing than planting. I am in fourth grade so this was going to be my responsibility.

**Responsibility** means something rests on your shoulders and you must take care of it.

“Mom, are you ready to go out?” I asked.

She looked out the window but did not move. “It’s a perfect day.”

“Let’s start right after breakfast,” I said.

Mom nodded. “Sure, Nina.”

I had a bowl of oatmeal and Kavita had Cheerios. We topped them with banana slices and blueberries. They were easy to prepare, eat, and clean up (rinse out the bowls) afterward. Both were super-fast breakfast choices.
Kavita sang as she took her empty bowl to the sink, “Garden, garden, dig and plant. Garden, garden, water and weed. Garden, garden, harvest and feast.”

She repeated her song again and again. OK, I was also excited about it. But I was not ready to listen to Kavita singing it a thousand times over.

I loaded the bowls into the dishwasher. “Why don’t you save your energy for digging and planting?”

“Only people with little energy worry about saving it.” She spread her arms wide. “I have a lot of energy so I can use it as much as I want.”

“Still, shouldn’t you be careful? It’s like saving money, right? You don’t want to spend it just because you have it.”

Kavita was quiet, which was good. That meant she was thinking. She likes to sing and forever I have tried to discourage her. Especially in public. But it hasn’t worked. Kavita has her own mind. I kind of like that she is her own person. Most of the time, I mean. I also have my own mind, but it’s not a singing mind. It’s a list-making mind.
Here is the in-my-head list of my list-making mind

* It keeps me organized.
* It keeps me focused.
* It keeps me kind of interesting (it’s not that I am boring but sometimes I think Kavita’s singing is slightly bit more interesting).

Interesting or not, it was time to get going on Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day. “We’re ready, Mom,” I said.

“But I’m not. I need my chai first.”

In my excitement I had forgotten that Mom and Dad need their tea before they start their morning. Until their chai, they are as slow as slugs.

Only after they chug their chai, which is really tea with ginger, spices, and milk, do they become non-sluggish. Then they start darting like rabbits from here to there.

Kavita took out paper and crayons from her box. She
spread them on the dining table. As she colored she sang again. “Garden, garden, dig and plant.”

I shook my head.

She stopped doing everything. “Do you know why I sing, Nina?”

“Why?”

“Because I don’t want to burst.”

“You can’t burst.” I went closer to her. “Have you seen anyone burst?”

“A balloon.”

“You’re not filled with air.”

She smoothed out the paper with her hands. “When I sleep I gather a lot of energy and when I am awake I use it, right?”

“Sounds right to me.” I was looking at her diagram of a garden. All squares filled with plants of different heights and colors. Impressive!

**Im-pres-sive** means something that makes you go, “Wow!”