



**Fabrication Booklet  
Poetry Park, Erie, PA  
January – September 2012**

## **Project Goals**

The *Hold Fast to Dreams Poetry Park*, located between Ash and Reed on East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street in Erie, PA, was designed to bring beauty to the inner city, to provide a beautiful and safe gathering space for creative programs, and to provide a model that can be replicated throughout Erie's inner city. Inherent in this view is the belief that beauty and art can change our thought processes, elevate our perceptions, and nurture the natural beauty of our souls. These ideas captured my attention, in large part because they mirror many of the goals for the Art & Environment Initiative and align beautifully with the work I have undertaken over the past 15 years.

Originally, the flower sculptures were envisioned as sign art flowers (see original proposal at end of booklet), but as the project progressed it became clear that to integrate the poems in the most beautiful way, it would be wise not to have competing text from signage. Additionally, we encountered numerous challenges in securing the signs, or using those that we have in Meadville, and in the end we decided to proceed with use of new materials even though this changed some of the initial vision for the park.

Work for this project occurred in two stages, beginning with the pathway painting during the summer of 2011 (done with the help of four Allegheny College interns). From January – August design of the flowers provided the focus of my sabbatical. What an amazing experience it has been to take an idea from our work in Meadville (Signs & Flowers) and translate that into a new direction through this project.

The materials that follow outline important aspects of my design planning process for the floral sculptures. I had many wonderful partners for this project, each of whom played a vital role in helping to realize the vision for the *Hold Fast to Dreams Poetry Park*. I am most grateful to everyone who provided assistance.

Amara Geffen

## Project Partners

### *Project Funder*

Trinity Square Foundation, Erie, PA

Sister Mary Miller, Erie, PA

Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, Erie, PA

### *Landscape Design*

Dahlkemper Landscape Architects & Contractors, Erie, PA

### *Fabrication Assistance*

Gene Davis Fabrication, Erie, PA

Craig Newell Welding, Cambridge Springs, PA

Transit Forge, Cambridge Springs, PA

### *Computer Tech & Design Support*

Jeremy Hoople, Meadville, PA

### *Finish Sealing*

Howick Motors, Meadville, PA

### *Allegheny College Community Arts Interns (pathway painting)*

Emma Cook '12, Teresa Bense '12, Paula Frisch '11, Adrienne Nelson '13

## **Multi-layered Flowers**

### *Design Planning*

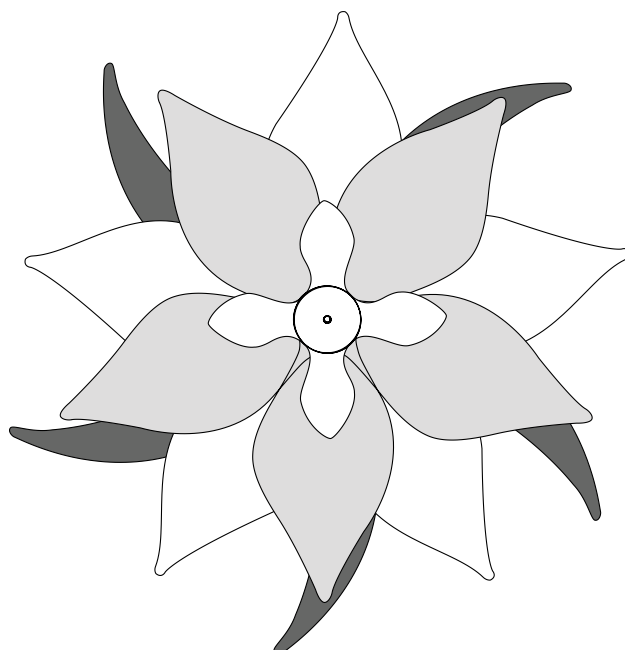


**Four flowers were produced: one at 3' diameter; one at 4.5' diameter; and two at 5' in diameter**

## Paper Models

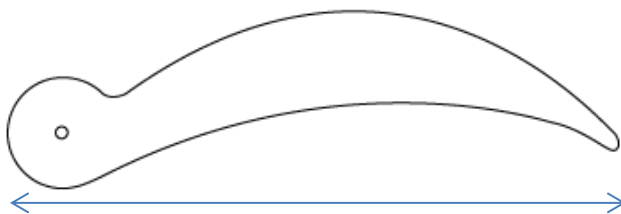
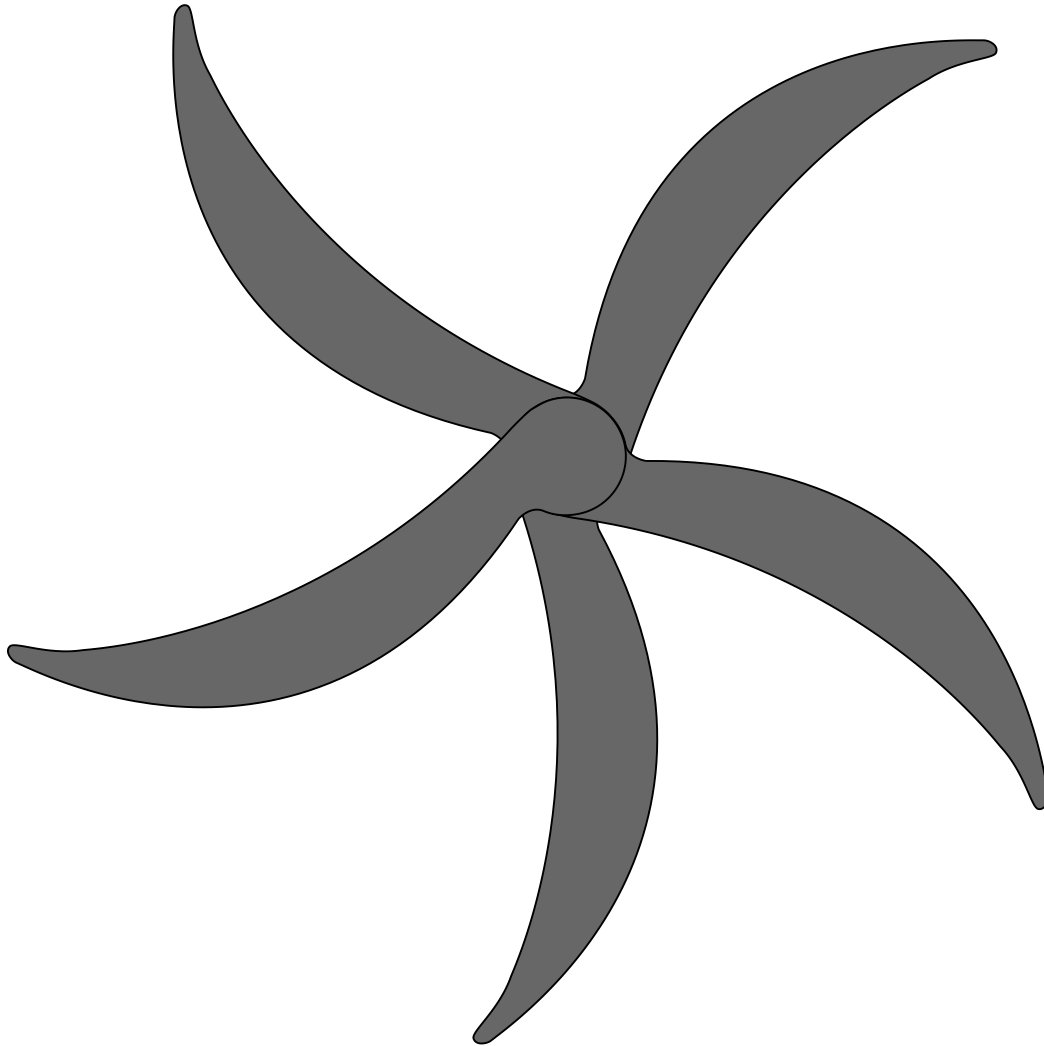


## DXF computer illustration



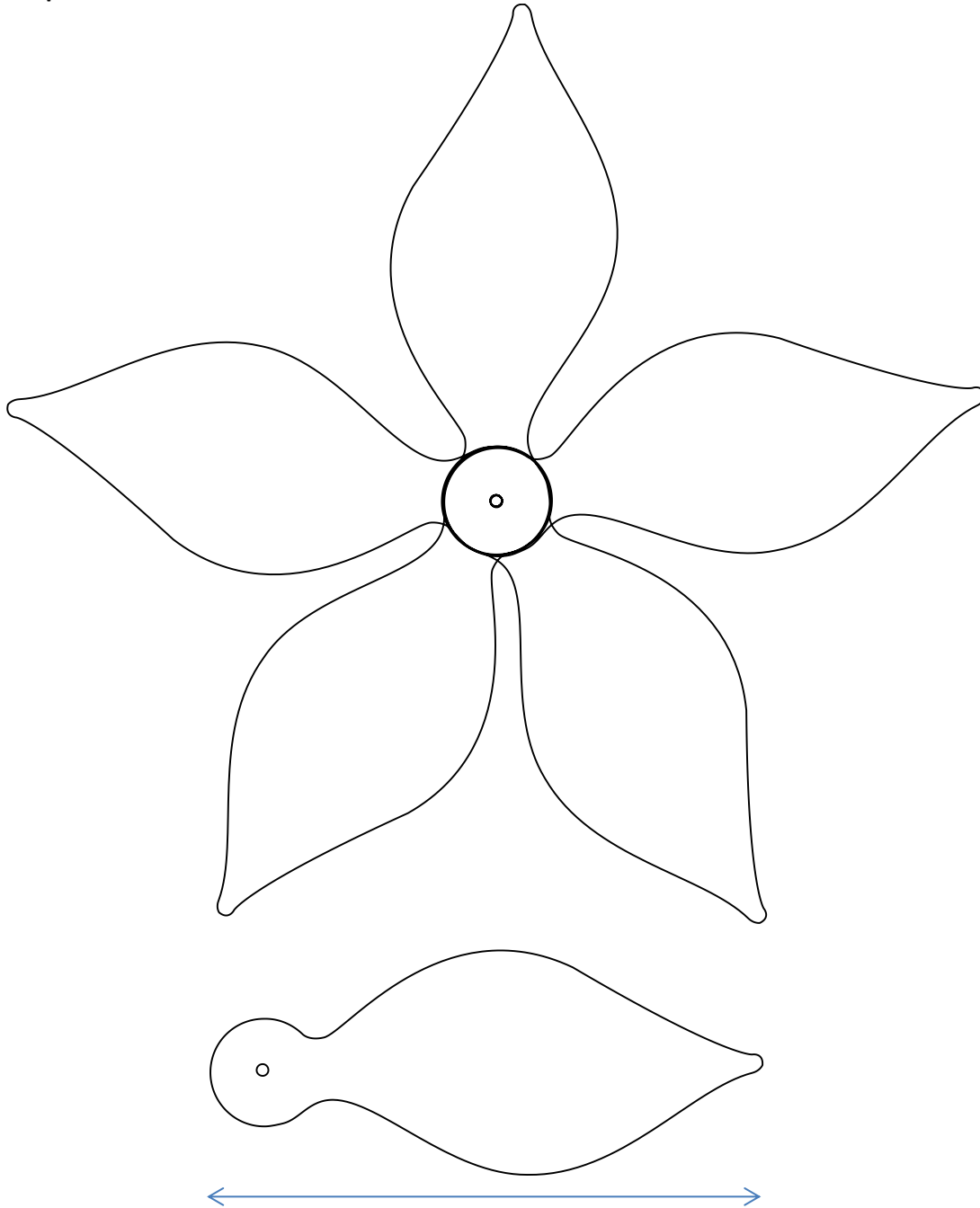


Multi-layered flowers  
First layer – DXF file  
shape 1A



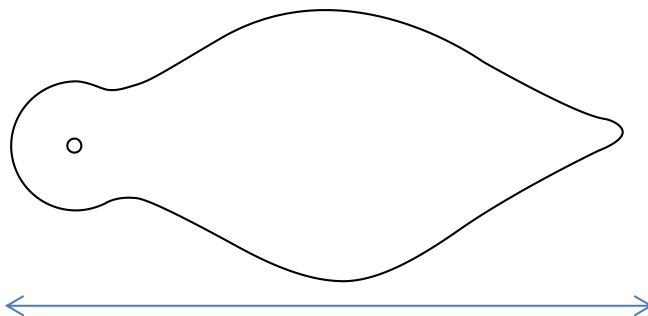
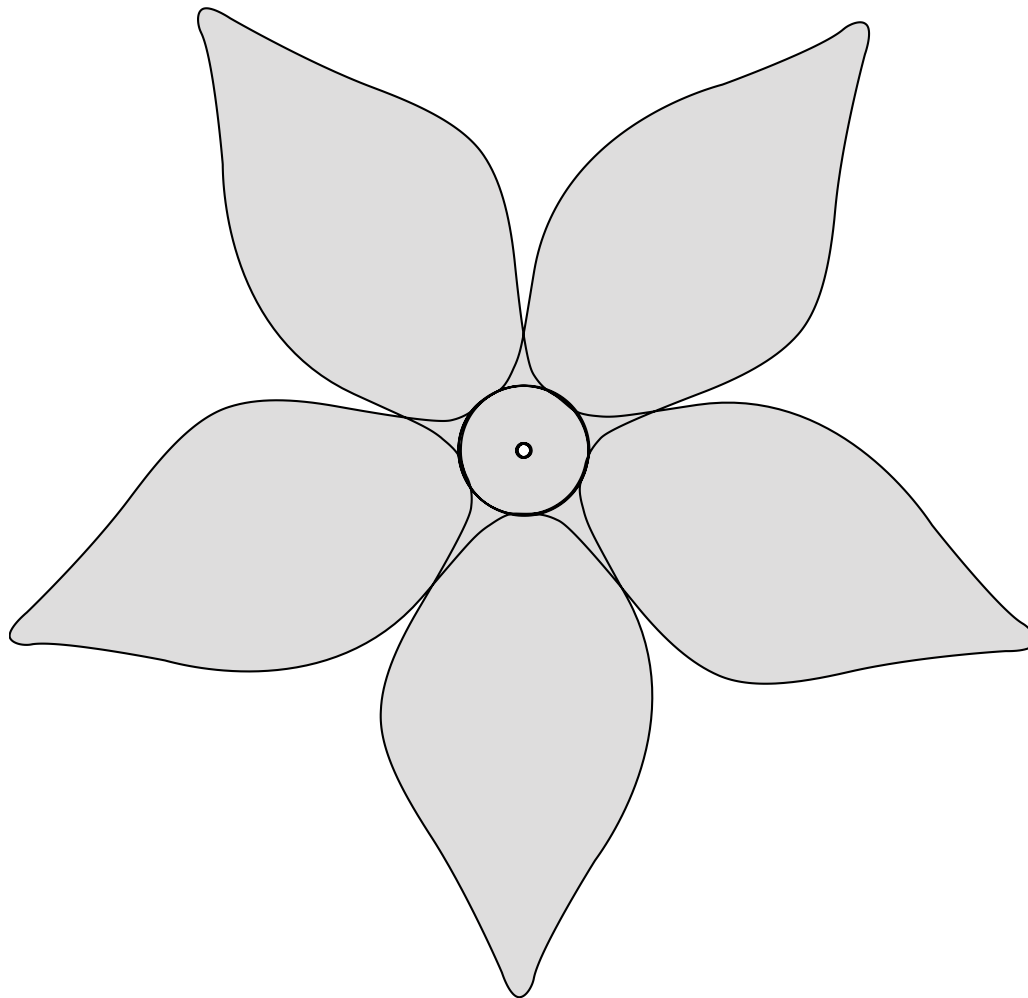
16 pieces each 40" long with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole  
5 pieces at 24" long with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole  
5 pieces at 28" long with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole

**Multi-layered flowers**  
**Second layer – DXF file**  
**Shape 1B**



10 pieces each 36" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole cut  
5 pieces at 21.6" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole  
5 pieces at 28" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole

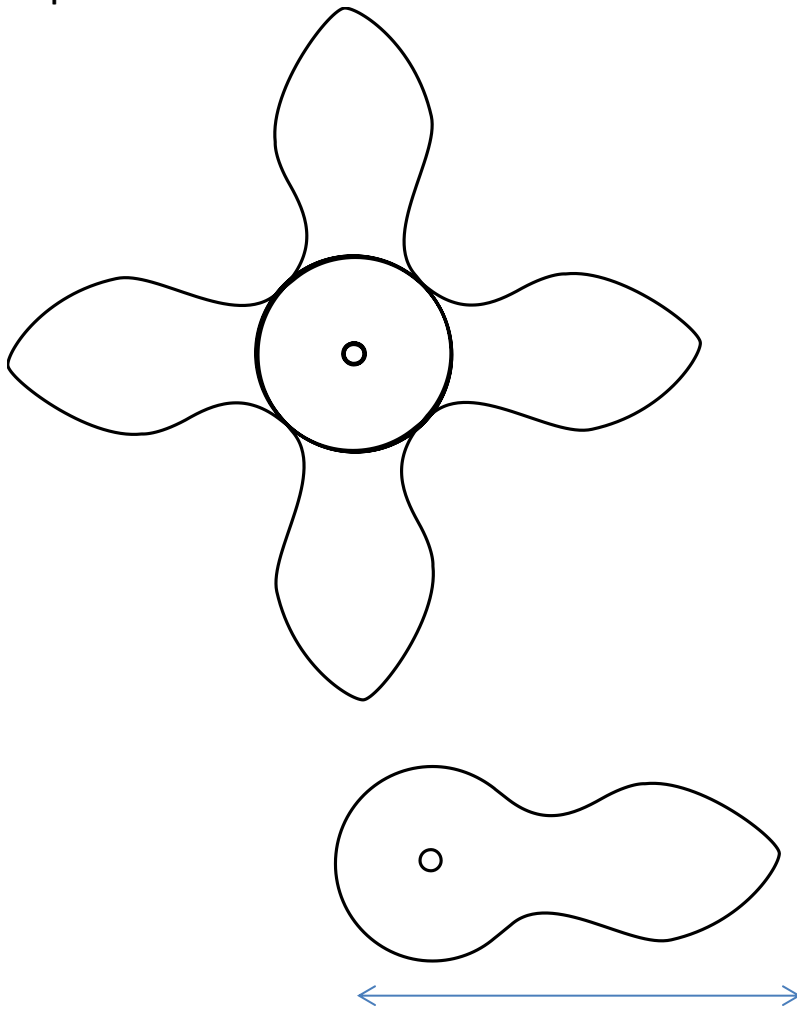
**Multi-layered flowers**  
**Third layer – DXF file**  
**Shape 1C**



10 pieces each 32" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole  
5 pieces at 19.2" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole  
5 pieces at 22.4" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " hole; cut from 1/8" aluminum



**Multi-layered flowers**  
**Fourth layer – DXF file**  
**Shape 1E**



8 pieces each 16" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " hole; cut from  $\frac{1}{8}$ " aluminum  
4 pieces at 9.6" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " hole; cut from  $\frac{1}{8}$ " aluminum  
4 pieces at 11.2 long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " hole; cut from  $\frac{1}{8}$ " aluminum

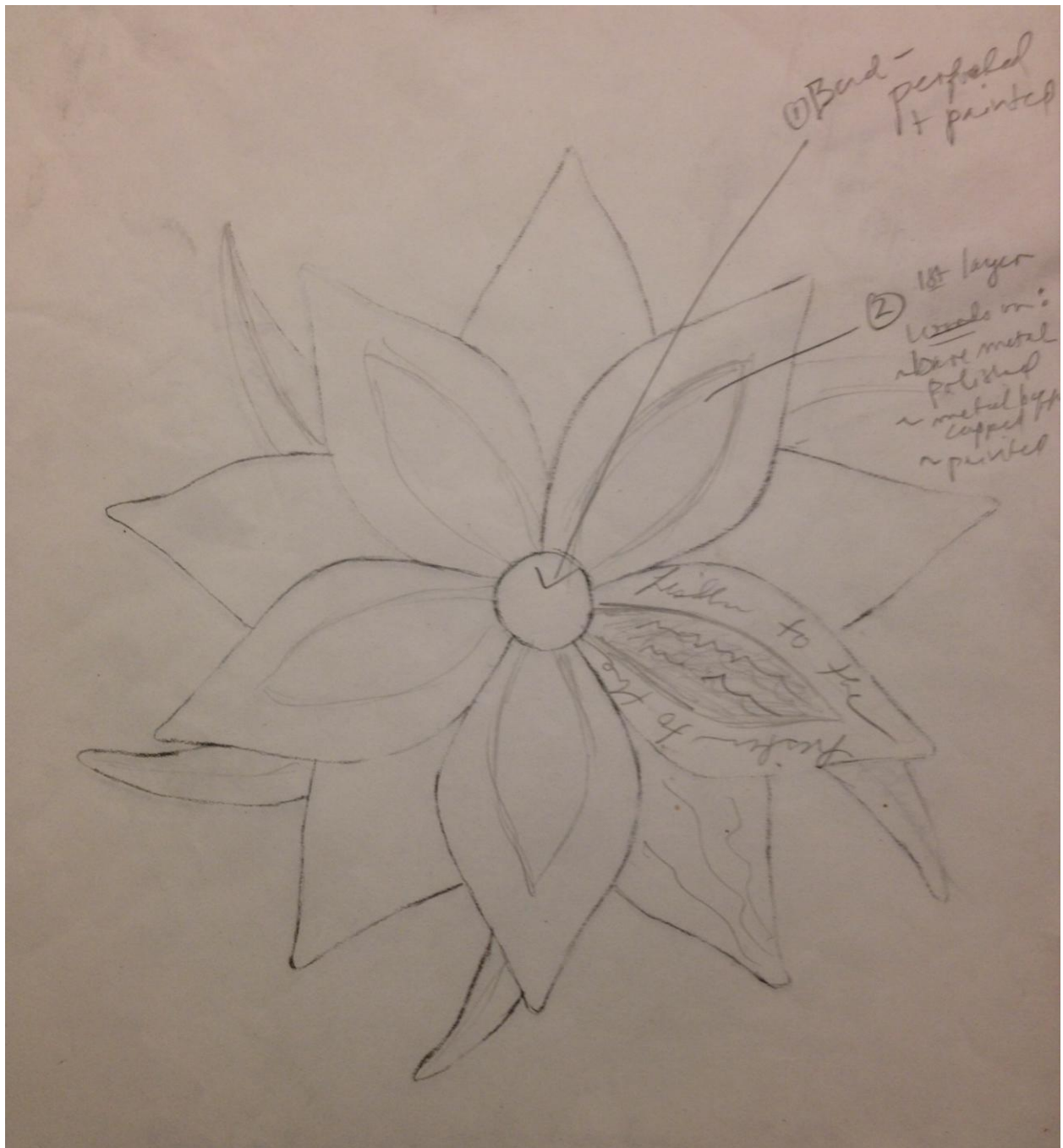
Five foot multi-layered flowers:

1) One stanza of Langston Hughes' poem, for which the garden is named, is ground/etched into the aluminum. "Hold Fast to Dreams For if dreams die Life is a broken-winged bird That cannot fly."

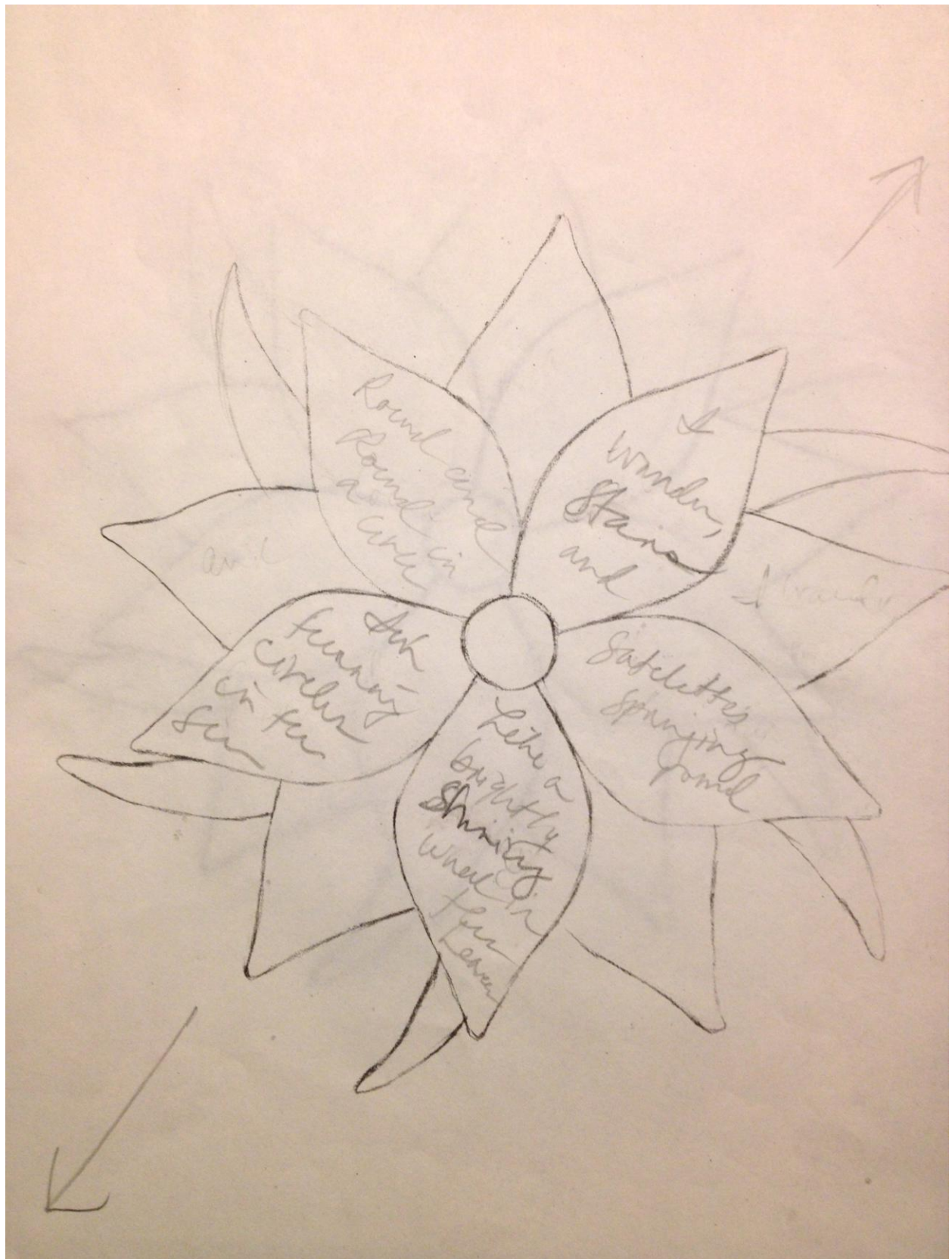
2) William Blake, "To see the world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour". *Auguries of Innocence*

*Sealer:* Dupont G24700S Clear Coat (sprayed at Hovis Motors, Meadville, PA). Paint is rapid drying auto paint.

## Poem Design Planning

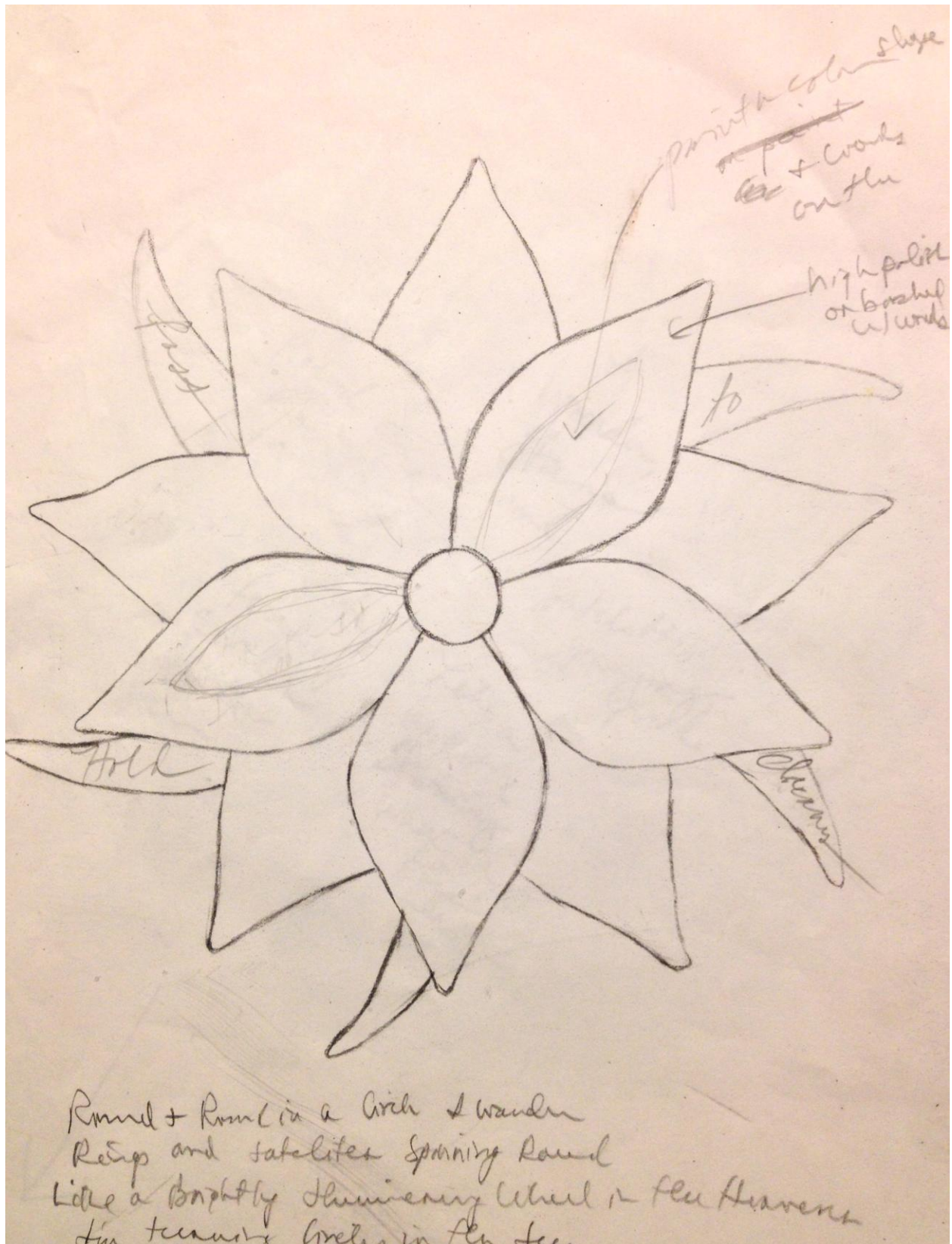


## Poem Design Planning





# Poem Design Planning



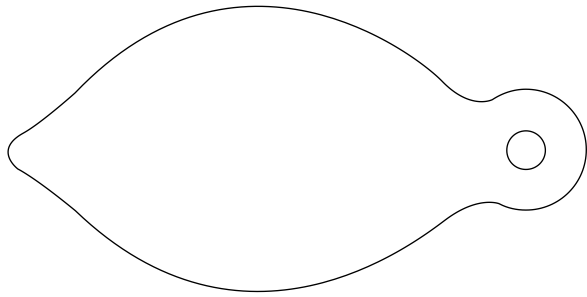
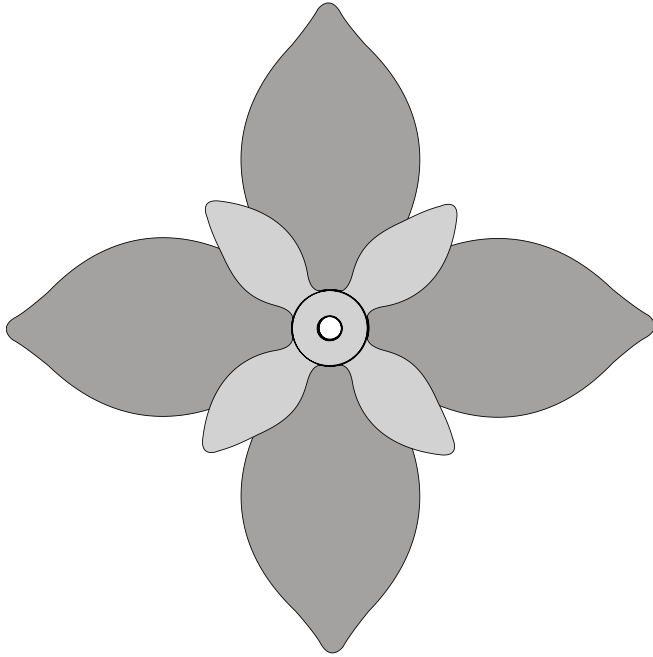
### Small Flowers at Back of Garden



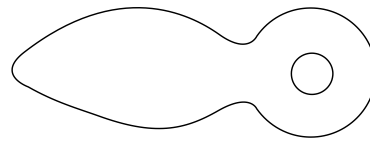
An anonymous poem, adapted by students at the 2012 Creating Landscapes Summer program at Allegheny College, is painted in the center of these flowers. "Round and Round / in a circle / I wander / Stars and satellites / spinning round / Like a whirling ball / in the heavens / I'm turning circles / 'round the sun."



Five flowers (from .060 aluminum)

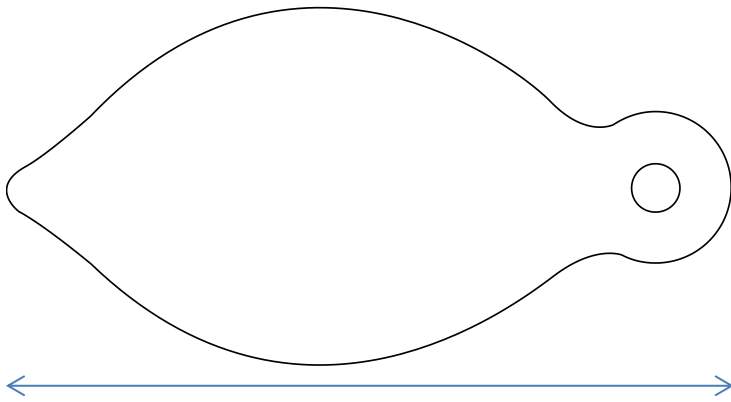
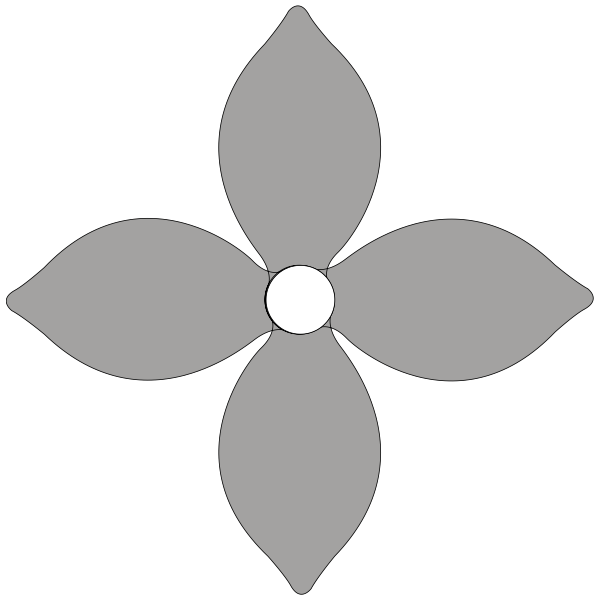


Shape 2A - 20 pieces each 8" long ;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole

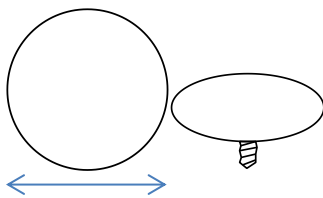


Shape 2B - 20 pieces each 4" long;  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole

Ten flowers (from .060 aluminum)



Shape 3A  
40 pieces each at 6"  $\frac{3}{4}$ " center hole



Shape 3B – 10 of these at 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter cut from .060 Stainless Steel. Threaded rod ( $\frac{3}{8}$ <sup>th</sup>) bolts into flower and the stem.



**Bromeliad Flower**



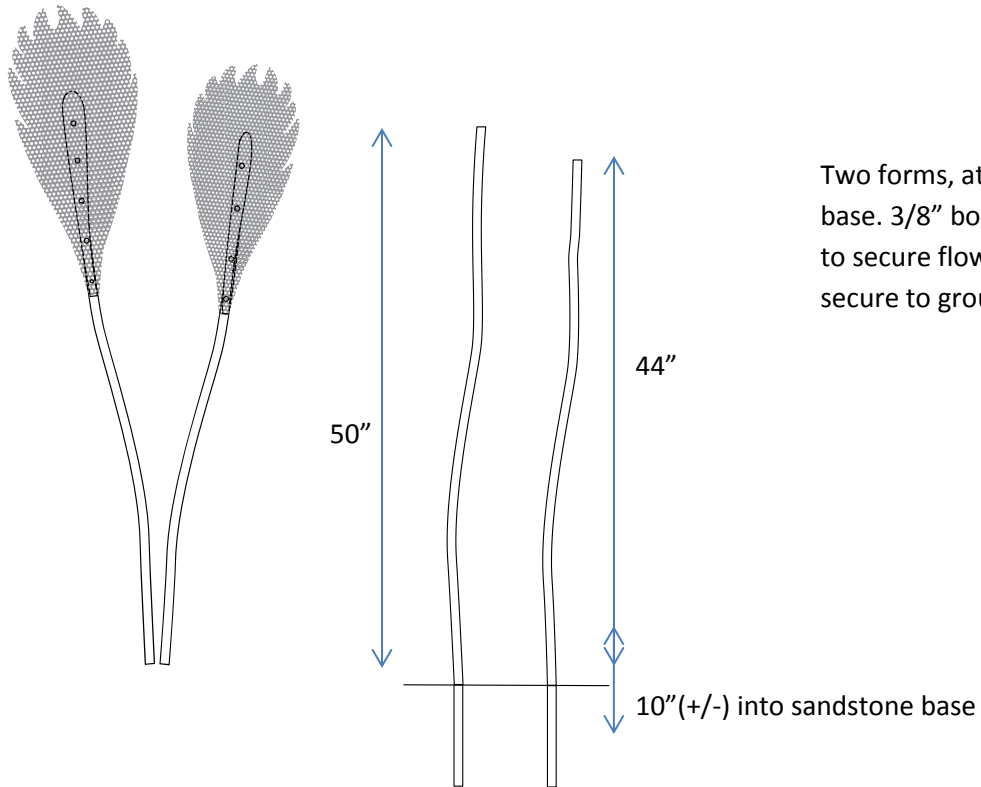


**Bromeliad Plant**  
**Inspiration for Bromeliad Sculpture**

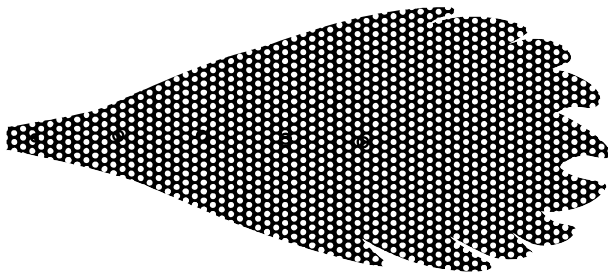


## Design Planning

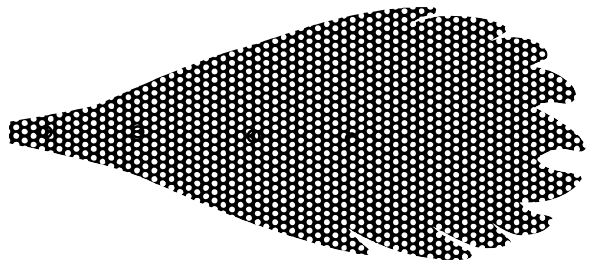
2 flower buds – 1/8" thick perforated aluminum



Two forms, attached at a common base. 3/8" bolts needed at top of pipe to secure flowers. Also at base to secure to ground sleeve.



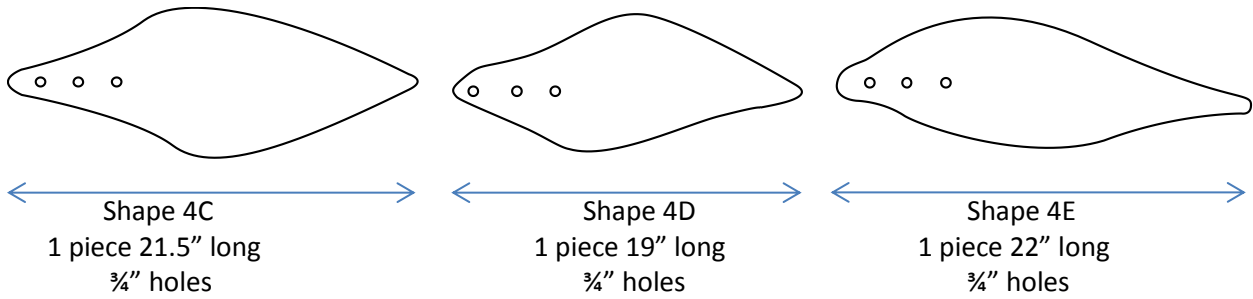
Shape 4A - 2 pieces each 2' long; 3/4" holes"  
1/8" perforated aluminum



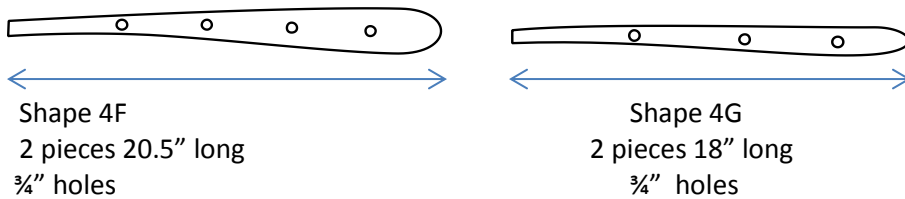
Shape 4B - 2 pieces each 20" long; 3/4" holes"  
1/8" perforated aluminum

### Bromeliad leaves and stamens

1/8" thick aluminum



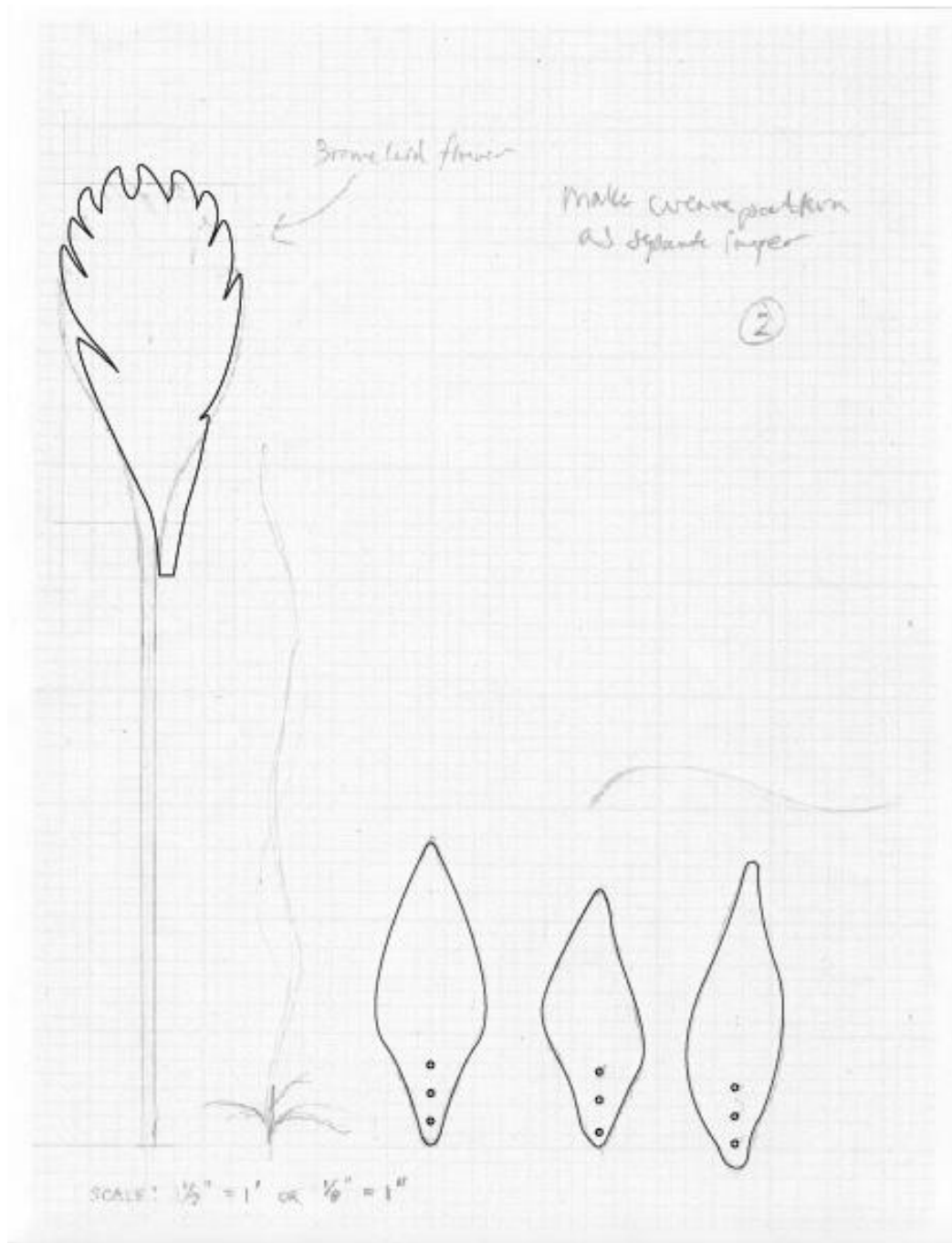
On the three leaves at the base of the flower is a poem by Astrid Alauda, "Plants cry their gratitude for the sun in green joy." This is painted (Nova Acrylics) on bead blasted aluminum. Sealer is Everbright, Perfect Coat.

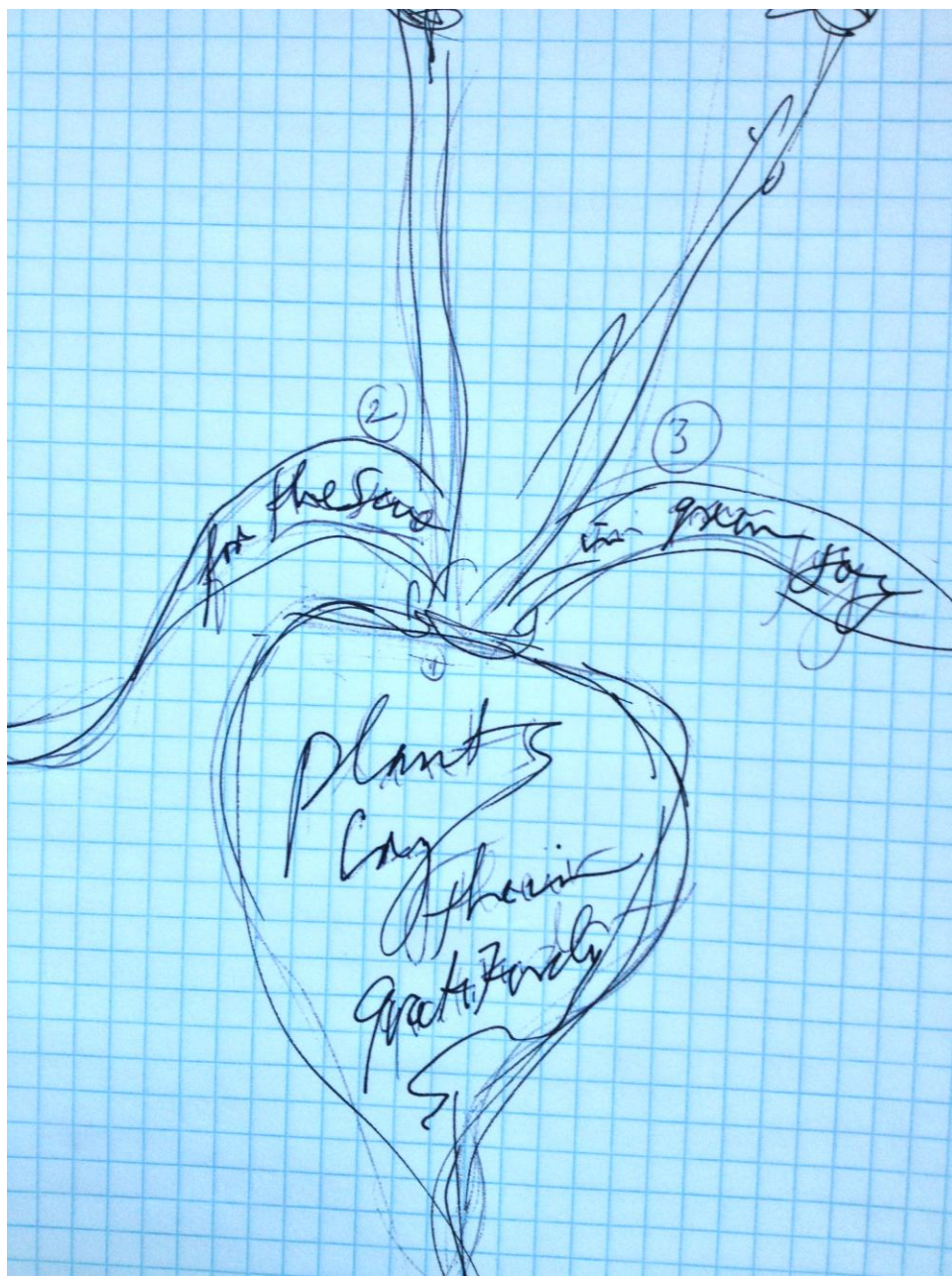


These are sanded and coated with Everbright's, Perfect Coat.

# Poem on base of Bromeliad Leaves

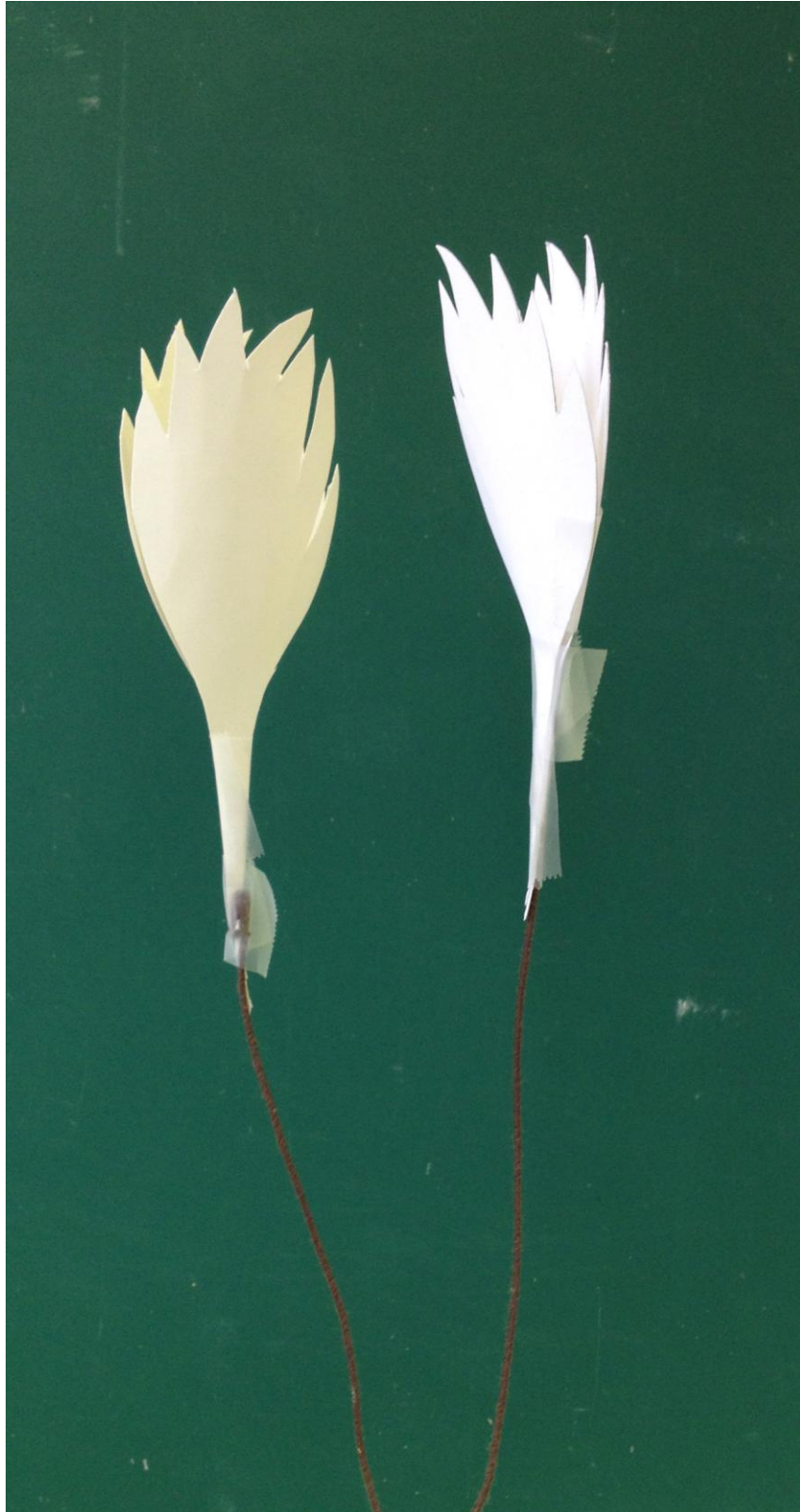
"Plants cry their gratitude for the sun in green joy." Astrid Alauda







**Bromeliad**  
*Paper Model*





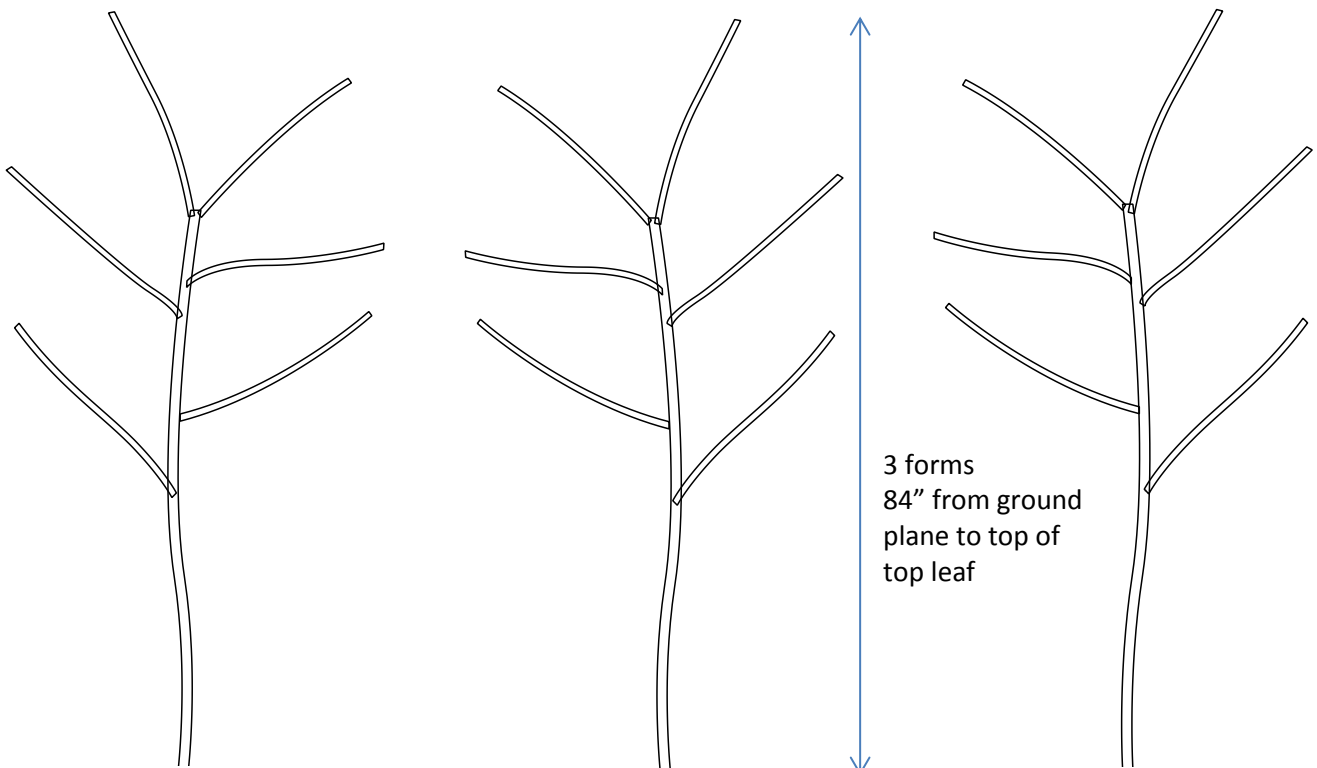
## Proscenium Arch



**Found Leaf**  
*Inspiration for Proscenium Arch*



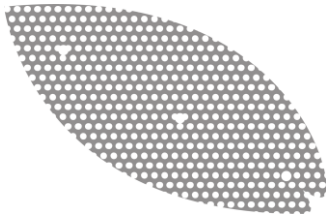
**Proscenium Arch**  
**Planning and DXF files**





## Proscenium Arch

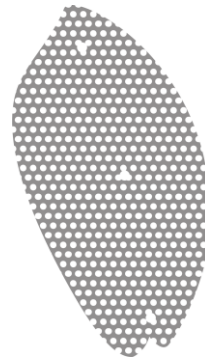
**Leaf Shapes** – cut from 1/8" thick perforated aluminum



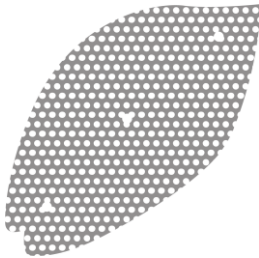
3 pieces at 22.5"



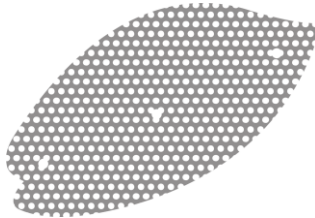
3 pieces at 23.25"



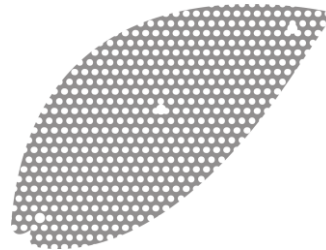
3 pieces at 24.75"



3 pieces at 23.25"

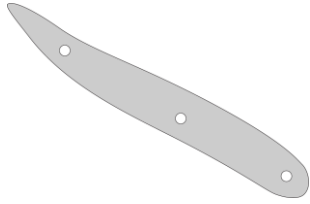


3 pieces at pieces at 25.5"

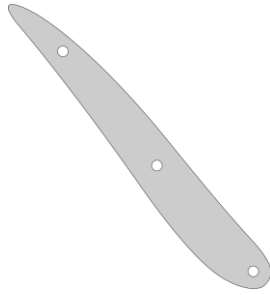


3 pieces at pieces at 24"

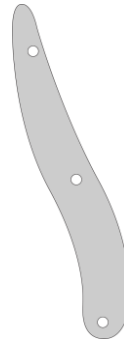
**Leaf Forms: center shapes for poem – 1/8<sup>TH</sup> " STAINLESS STEEL**



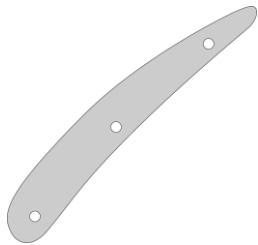
3 pieces at 22.5"



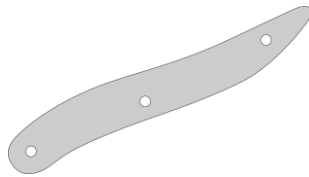
3 pieces at 23.25"



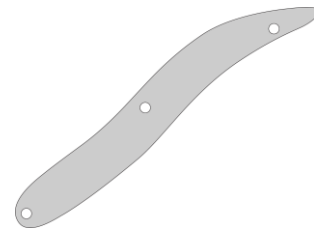
3 pieces at 24.75"



3 pieces at 23.25"

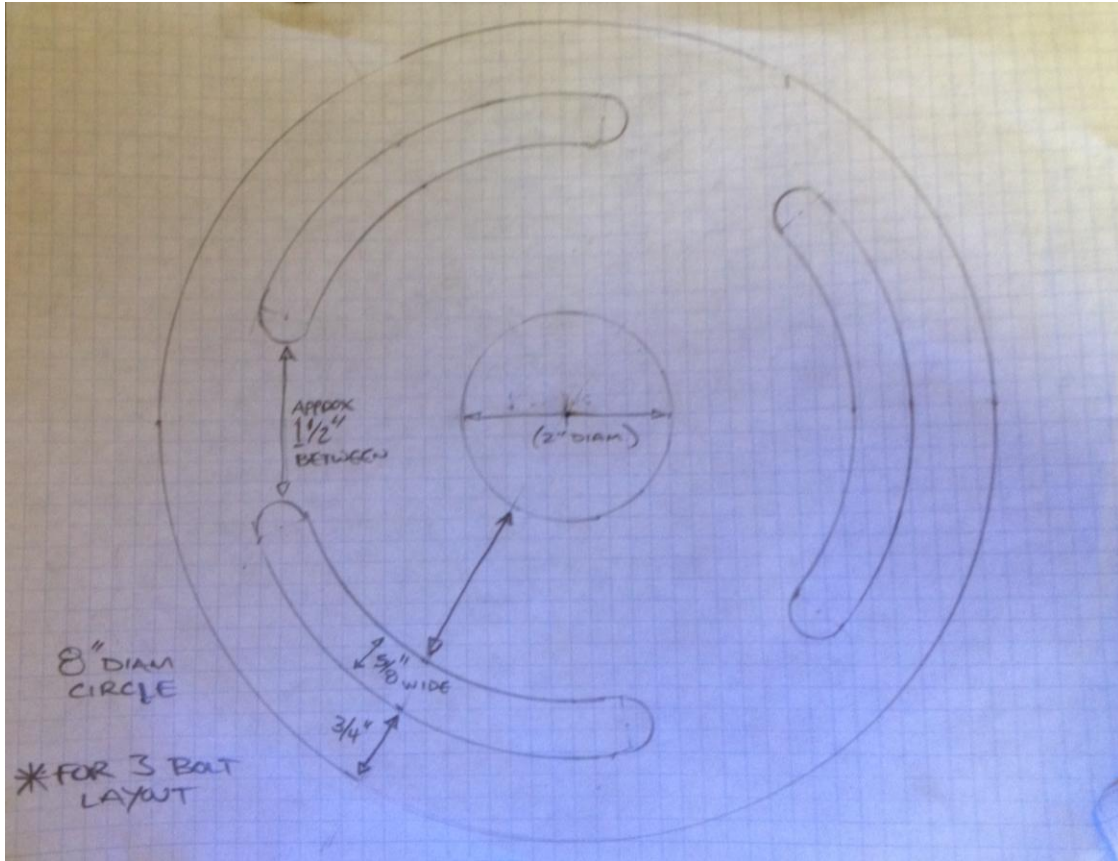


3 pieces at 25.5"

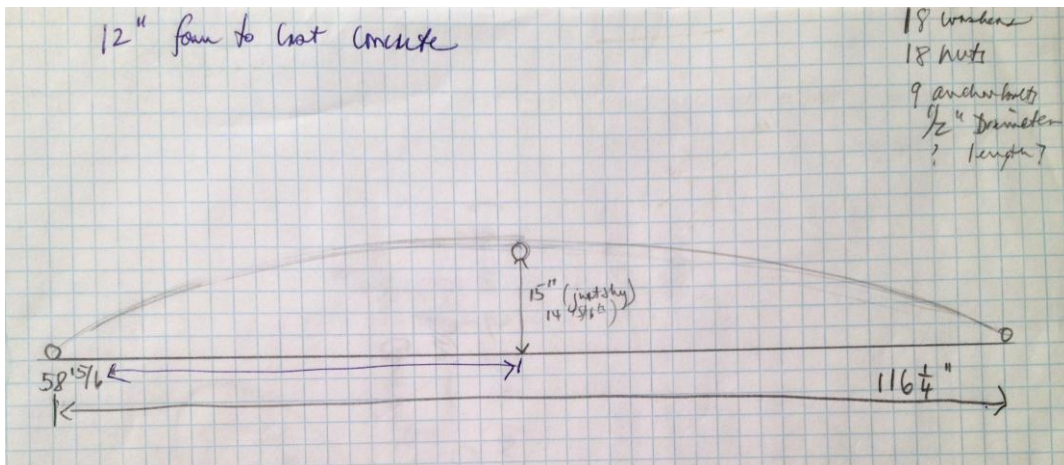


3 pieces at 24"

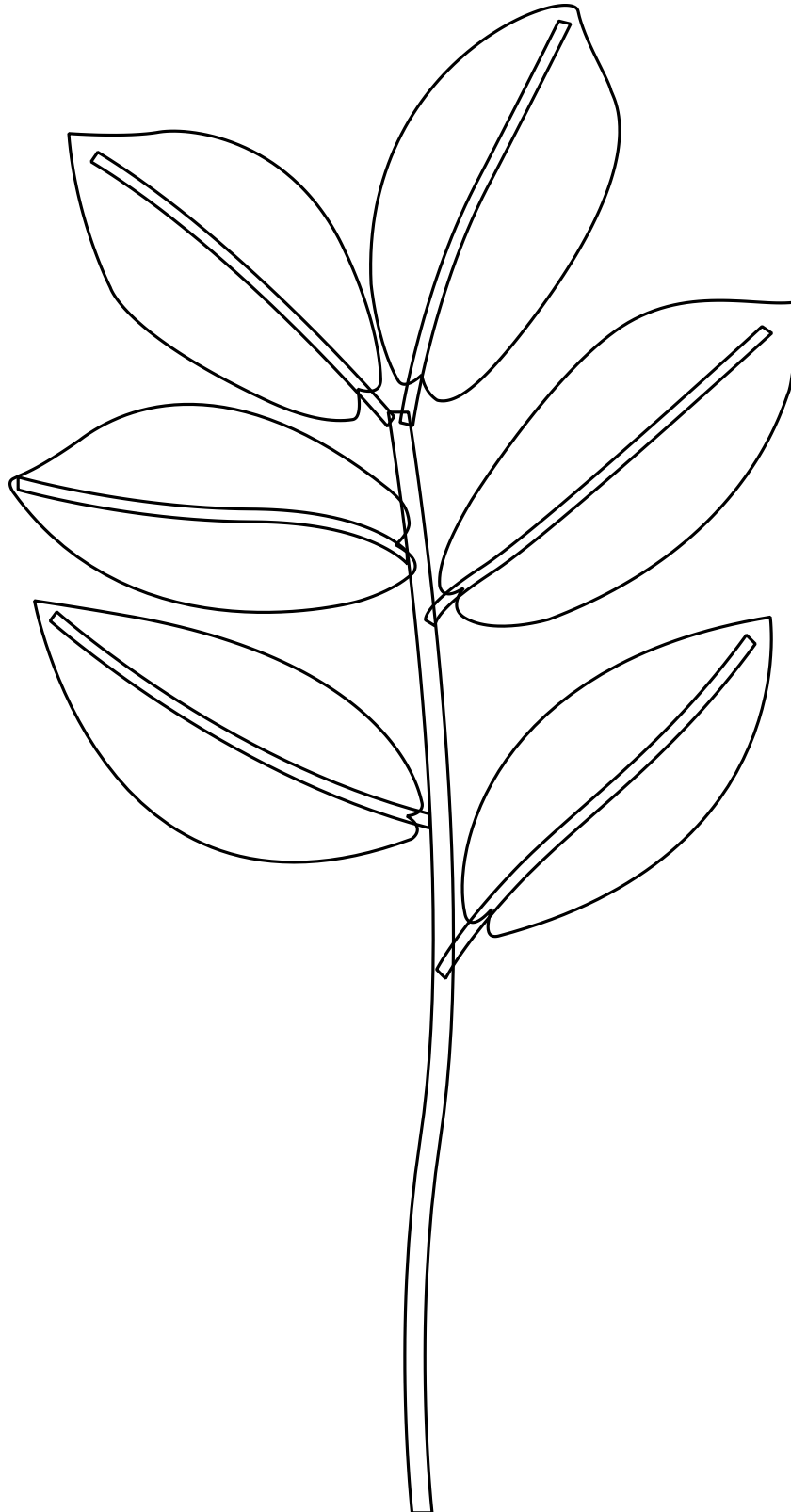
# Proscenium Arch Base Diagram



## Site diagrams for placement on stage

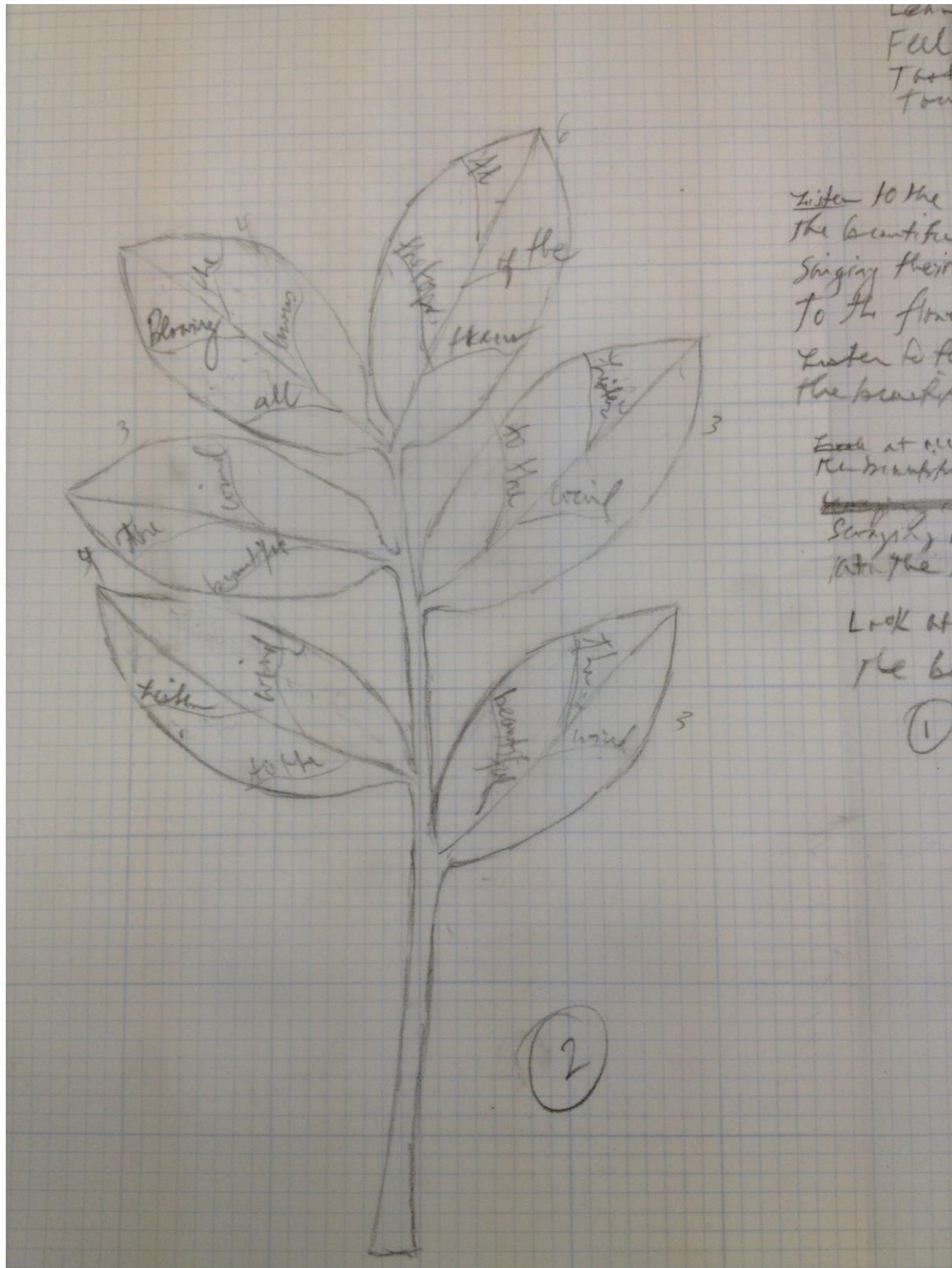


**DXF Drawing**  
**Proscenium Arch**

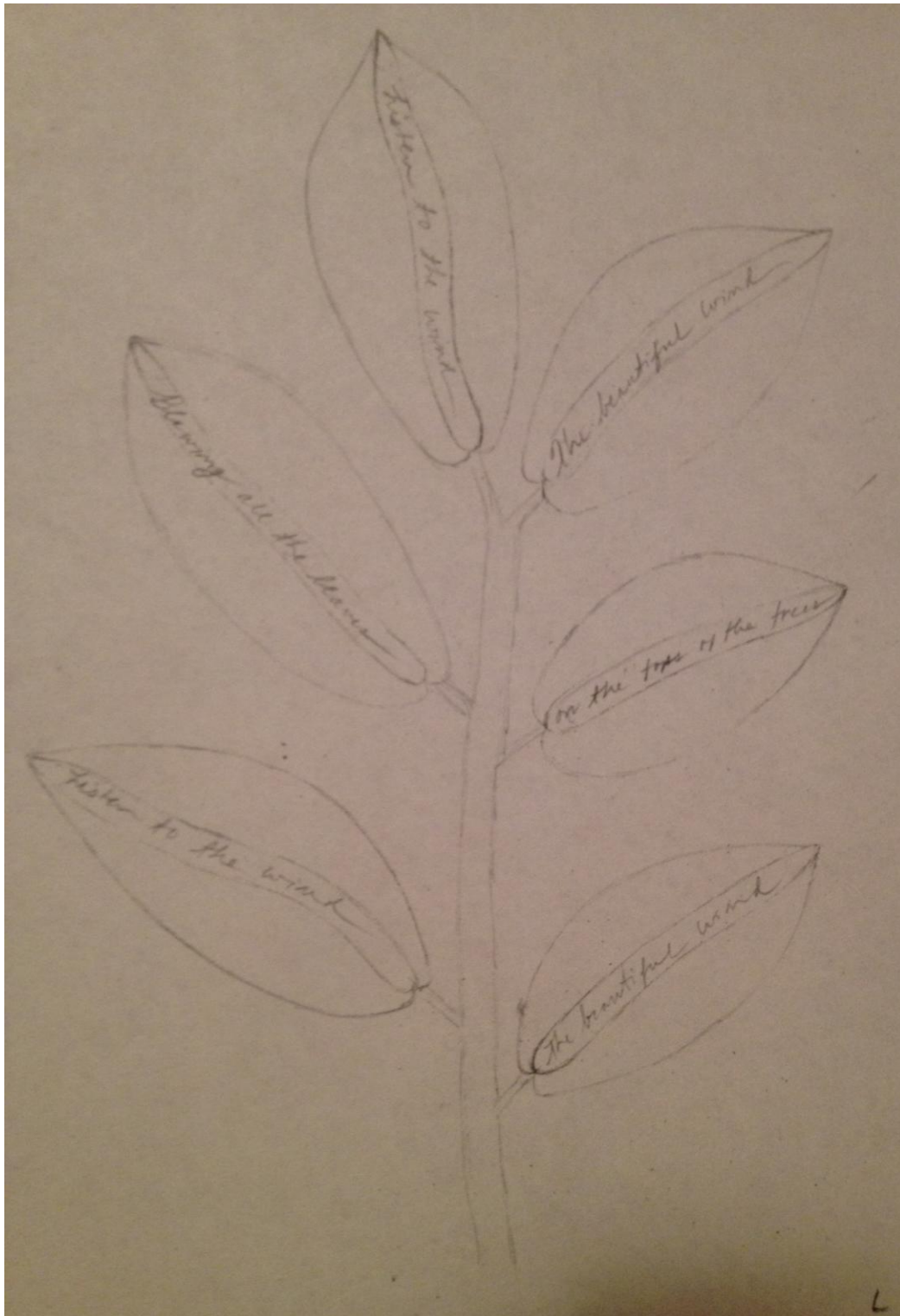




Proscenium Arch  
Studies for Poems



Proscenium Arch  
Studies for Poems



**Proscenium Arch**

Poem by Amara Geffen

*Satchi's Song*

Listen to the wind  
The beautiful wind  
Blowing all the leaves  
At the tops of the trees  
Listen to the wind  
The beautiful wind.

Listen to the leaves  
The beautiful leaves  
Breathing with the wind  
At the tops of the trees  
Listen to the leaves  
The beautiful leaves.

Listen to your heart  
The heart of everyone  
Pulsing with the wind  
Breathing with the leaves  
Listen to your heart  
Your beautiful heart.

Poem painted using Nova acrylic paints.

Sealer on stainless steel centers with the poem is Everbright, Perfect Coat.

Sealer on the leaf stems and perforated leaves is PremiumDecor Clear Gloss; a GPM product.

**Original Proposal for Park**  
*Trinity Square Foundation*

## PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

1. Organizational History: The Trinity Square Foundation, Inc. is a group of neighbors, businesses, religious leaders, and committed citizens working to reclaim and renew a neglected, deteriorating central-city neighborhood—specifically a square four-block area E. 22<sup>nd</sup> and East 23<sup>rd</sup>, from Reed to Ash. We were incorporated in 2006 and since then have purchased nine properties in the neighborhood. Six (6) homes were renovated and are now occupied and three (3) others were demolished because they were beyond repair. One of the demolished properties now serves as a neighborhood community garden. The other two vacant lots that are adjacent to each other are the subject of this grant proposal.

2. Proposal Description: We are requesting funds to build a unique, inspiring, beautiful as well as useable inner-city neighborhood park—an INNER-CITY POETRY PARK-- that would utilize recycled materials and be the first of its kind in this area, perhaps even in the nation. Dahlkemper Landscaping is designing and implementing the park. We are contracting with the Arts Council of Erie for artistic skills. GE Volunteers and Grace Fellowship Church are neighbors are providing labor. (See narrative for detailed description) In addition we are requesting funds for three (3) off-street parking spots, two to the east and one to the west of the proposed park.

3. Evaluation: Goals, objectives, outcomes

4. Budget Narrative: We are requesting \$25,000 from the Erie Community Foundation for this project. This amount will be matched by a donation of \$10,000, savings incurred from using recycled materials, volunteer labor, and a matching grant from the Erie Arts Council. The park will be maintained by volunteer labor (Grace Fellowship, GE Volunteers and neighbors. An anonymous donor is pledging and annual gift of \$5,000 for upkeep.)

## **PROPOSAL NARRATIVE INNER-CITY POETRY PARK**

The Trinity Square Foundation was formed to purchase and renovate homes and provide affordable housing as well as a community center for children and neighbors in a beautiful, safe, family-centered and diversified inner-city neighborhood.

In the past four years we have made a significant impact in the area (See Annual Report) regarding affordable housing, a safer environment, a sustainable garden, education and recreational programs for families (See #4) as well as beautification of the neighborhood.

One of our favorite stories involves a neighborhood girl, Sierra, who was going door to door to sell items for a school fundraiser that would subsidize a class trip. When she knocked on the door where Sister Anne McCarthy lives she said, "This is the first time my mother has let me go door to door. She always said it was too dangerous. Now she feels we live in a safe place."

The purpose of this proposal is to focus on three aspects of our mission:

**a. *To bring beauty to the inner city.*** Because beauty lifts the spirit, softens the soul and makes it receptive to more beauty, it is important to the development of children to surround them with the beautiful—in environment, language and value. Beautiful literature and language can change the thought process, elevate perceptions and encourage kneading the natural beauty of the soul. What you put into the inner city is what you will reap. We want to sow beauty and harvest beautiful children and beautiful futures.

**b. *To provide a beautiful and safe gathering space for creative programs*** in poetry, music, neighborhood celebrations, as well as a place where neighbors can rest and play.

**c. *To provide a model that can be replicated throughout Erie's inner city.***

With this in mind, we are requesting \$25,000 for the Erie Community Foundation to build a unique, inspiring, beautiful as well as useable inner-city neighborhood park—a Poetry Park-- that would utilize recycled materials and be the first of its kind in this area, perhaps even in the nation. ***Poems used in the park would feature African American authors as well as be representative of the immigrants moving into the area—Iraqi, Burmese, Guatemalan, Puerto Rican, etc.*** (See attachment # for possible poems)

The INNER CITY POETRY PARK will include:

Poetry Flower Garden: A flower garden spot in the park would feature large flowers made of recycled materials that will have lines from poems painted on the petals. At least one of the flowers would be large enough to provide a shade area for mothers and children to sit under to rest. The flower garden spot would also feature birds, butterflies, etc. that would also have a line of poetry inscribed on them. (Sample B: this is the recycled garden on RT 322 in Meadville. Now imagine lines of poetry on the flowers and fence instead of "road sign" words and symbols.)

Poetry Fence: A fence that would provide a boundary on the south and north part of the park would also be made from recycled material and contain an entire poem and illustrations. *(Note: here we ended up planting wisteria along the back of the fence to maintain an open feel to the park)*

Poetry Path: A poetry path would be found in sections of the park. Short poems or stanzas from poems, along with an illustration would form the path. *(here we ended up developing the poetry pathway painting)*

Poetry Resting Spots: Large stones will be utilized to provide seating for mothers with children as well as offer outdoor seating for classes being offered in the neighborhood (Earth Force, poetry, knitting, etc.)

Lighting: basic lighting would be installed in the park for safety as well as for aesthetic reasons.

OFF STREET PARKING: One of the major drawbacks to inner city living is the lack of off-street parking. In one month four cars on our block were hit by passing cars, one was totaled in a hit and run accident. Residents are forced to move their cars from one side of the street to the other to comply with city parking regulations and are often ticketed when they forget. Elderly residents are forced to shovel out cars to move from one side of the street to the other. Also, parking on the street makes car vandalism more likely. We have already provided two off-street parking spots for neighbors and plan to put an additional THREE OFF-STREET PARKING SPOTS in the neighborhood. (See attachment D for photo of off-street parking.)

#### ANNUAL REPORT – Trinity Square Foundation

We organized ourselves in 2006 in order to purchase and renovate homes and provide affordable housing as well as a neighborhood center for children and neighbors in a beautiful, safe, family-centered and diversified neighborhood. In the past four years we have accomplished the following in the E. 22<sup>nd</sup> street block:

1. A nuisance bar in the block (two murders) was purchased by Slomski Funeral Home (21<sup>st</sup> & Ash) and demolished
2. With the assistance of the police a major Detroit drug house was closed
3. Nine abandoned homes in the block have been purchased by individual board members or by the Erie Redevelopment Authority and sold to Trinity Square Foundation for \$1 on condition that we renovate or demolish. It costs approximately \$40,000 to renovate and \$5,000 to demolish.
  - 5 homes were renovated and are currently occupied, with housing provided for six families
  - 1 home is currently being renovated
  - 3 of the properties were demolished because they were beyond repair



- One of the lots was landscaped and converted to a community garden, managed by a neighborhood Earth Force group. GE volunteers erected a new fence to separate the space from adjoining homes, built raised beds and a storage shed for garden tools. Two off street paved parking spaces were added.
- Two of the lots (adjacent to each other) are marked for an Inner-City Poetry Park

4. A neighborhood gathering space, the Sisters' House, was opened on the first floor flat of one of the homes on the block. Sister Mary Ellen Plumb, a teacher at Villa Maria Academy, lives upstairs and the high school Rotary club (Interact) that she monitors has adopted the gathering space and is assisting with programs.

5. Fifteen trees and a variety of shrubs were donated by Johnston Nursery and planted in the neighborhood.

6. Partnerships have been formed with: Erie Redevelopment Authority, GE Volunteers (helped renovate 2 homes and build a community garden), Grace Fellowship Church, Habitat for Humanity, Erie Arts Council, Marquette Savings, Earth Force, Central City East Neighborhood Watch, Slomski Funeral Home, Villa Maria Academy Interact (Rotary Club), Erie Rotary Club, St. Martin's Center, International Institute, Mary the Apostle Catholic Worker House, the Catholic House at Gannon University.

To assist in our work we have received two grants from GE Volunteers Foundation totaling \$25,00 plus countless hours of volunteer GE labor. Other individuals have donated over \$100,000 over the past four years. Grace Fellowship has sent volunteers to help with landscaping, home renovation, and neighborhood cleanup and remain committed to the area. Two steering committee members have purchased and renovated homes out of their own resources.

IN PROCESS: We are working with Habitat for Humanity and the Erie Redevelopment on two remaining abandoned homes, the last in the block. We expect both of these properties to be addressed by the end of 2010. When we began in the winter of 2006, there were eleven abandoned homes in the block. By the end of 2010 all homes will be occupied and/or properties utilized for the benefit of the neighborhood.

Thank you so much for considering this request. If you would like a tour of the block, we would be glad to provide one and serve as your official tour guides.

STEERING COMMITTEE:

Deacon Marty Eisert, (former administrator Holy Trinity Catholic Church/business and civic leader for 30 years)

Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, (founder Inner City Neighborhood Art House/Benedictine Sisters of Erie)

Sister Mary Miller, (Executive Director, Emmaus Ministries/Benedictine Sisters of Erie)

David Slomski, (Vice-President, Marquette Savings Bank)

Philip Slomski (owner, Slomski Funeral Home)

Sue Trochowski (owner, Merchants Preferred Insurance)

Jon Grucza, (former co-owner, Odyssey Builders)

Dale McBrier, (co-president of Little Caesar's Lyndal Entpr.)

Joe Hilbert (owner, Pulakos Candies)

Sister Anne McCarthy, OSB, Jessie and Matthew Ochalek (neighborhood residents, Catholic Worker House).

