

枝头的第一朵花苞

我们教室的窗户正对着校园的花坛。花坛拐角处有一棵桃树，个子不高，比我矮一点，树干有点歪，歪向我们教室这一边。春分以前，它一直光秃秃的，灰褐色的一棵树，谁也没注意它。

第一个花苞是我在星期四发现的。那天课间我在窗边往外看，一根细枝的尖上有一个紫红色的小点点。我以为是虫子，伸手想去弹掉，手伸到一半发现它不动。它是花苞，只有米粒那么大，闭得紧紧的，颜色是深紫红，外面还有一层细细的绒毛。

从那天起，我每个课间都去看它。第二天，花苞大了一点，顶端透出一点粉，像谁用笔尖蘸了粉颜色点了一下。第四天，花苞的缝上裂开一个小口，能看见里面是浅粉色的。我把脸凑近闻了闻，有一股淡淡的青草味。第六天，花瓣探出一个小角，还卷着，不敢张开。

那几天我一直在数日子，手指头在手心里划。同桌问我数什么，我说还有十二天，它就要开了。她说我吹牛，可是下一个课间，她也跟着我一起来看。

第十二天早上，我到学校往窗外一瞥，愣住了——花开了，就开了一夜。五个花瓣，粉里带白，中间是一小簇黄色的花蕊，蕊上还有更小的黄点点。它开的那根枝最低，离玻璃最近，我一低头就能看清楚。

第二节课间，同桌把同学们叫来了一群。大家围着花坛站一圈，都弯下腰看。有人说这花是四个瓣，有人说是五个，我们吵了几句。班长数了数，说是五个，旁边的花苞张开以后也都是五个。有个低年级的男生伸手想摸，我喊了一声别摸，他把手收回去，挠了挠头。花没有动，我们围着它叽叽喳喳，呼出的气把花瓣吹得轻轻晃。

到了下午，树上又有三个花苞松动了。我在自然课的课本上画了一棵桃树，把开的那朵涂成粉色，把没开的画成小圆点。老师走过来看见，问我画的是哪棵树，我说是窗外那棵。她看了一眼窗外，说那棵树明年会开得更多。

放学的时候我又去看了一次。第一朵还是那朵，没有掉，花瓣在傍晚的风里轻轻点着头。可是我心里还是觉得第一朵最好看。这朵花让我学会了一件事：天天看一样东西，就能看见它长大的那一天。第二天要是没人喊我，我自己也会跑去花坛边。

The First Flower Bud on the Branch

Our classroom window faces the campus flower bed. In the corner of the bed stands a peach tree, shorter than me, its trunk leaning a little toward our side. Before the Spring Equinox, it was just a bare grayish-brown tree that nobody paid attention to.

I first noticed the bud on a Thursday. During the morning break I was gazing out of the window when I saw a small purple-red dot at the tip of a thin branch. I thought it was a bug and reached out to flick it away, but halfway my hand stopped: it did not move. It was a flower bud, about the size of a grain of rice, tightly closed, deep purple-red, with a thin layer of fine fuzz on it.

From then on I went to look at it during every break. On the second day the bud had grown slightly bigger, and its tip showed a little pink, as if someone had touched it with a brush dipped in pink paint. On the fourth day a tiny crack appeared at the seam, and I could see pale pink inside. I leaned close and sniffed, and there was a faint grassy smell. On the sixth day the petals poked out a small corner, still curled up, not yet daring to open.

During those days I kept counting, tracing numbers on my palm. My deskmate asked what I was counting. I said, twelve more days and it will bloom. She said I was bragging, but the next break she came to look with me.

On the morning of the twelfth day, I got to school, glanced out of the window, and froze: the flower had opened, opened in a single night. Five petals, pink touched with white, and a small cluster of yellow stamens in the center with even tinier yellow grains on them. The branch it grew on was the lowest one, right next to the glass, and I could see it clearly just by lowering my head.

During the second break, my deskmate called over a group of classmates. Everyone stood in a circle around the flower bed, bending down to look. Some said the flower had four petals, others said five, and we argued for a while. The class monitor counted and said it was five, and the buds next to it would open with five too. A boy from a lower grade reached out to touch it, and I shouted, do not pick it. He pulled his hand back and scratched his head. The flower did not move, but we stood around it chatting, and our breath made the petals tremble lightly.

By that afternoon, three more buds on the tree had loosened. But in my heart the first one was still the most beautiful. That flower taught me one thing: if you watch something every day, you can see the very day it grows up.