

水洼里的天气预报

我写观察日记，起因是一场赌。同桌巍巍说，你作文最差，观察日记你撑不过三天。我不服，给那个学期的雨天排了号，雨一、雨二，一直排到雨十，每个雨天写一页，一页也不许糊弄。

雨一，我看窗外的雨丝。雨丝没法数，我就把带刻度的橡皮尺按在玻璃上，看雨滴往下滑。大滴滑得快，一条直线冲到底；小滴磨磨蹭蹭，滑到一半撞在一起，合成一个大滴，再一起冲下去。我在日记里写：玻璃上的雨滴是一场赛跑，大滴总是赢。写完自己觉得好笑，可是老师批了四个字：观察很准。

从雨三开始，我把眼睛挪到校门口的水洼上，给它画变化图。雨三，水洼只有硬币大；雨五，它有镜子大了，能照出红绿灯，红灯绿灯在水里晃，比在天上还好看；雨七，一个一年级小孩一脚踩进去，波纹一圈圈散开，撞到路沿又弹回来。我在每页日记角上画一个小水洼，从硬币画到镜子。巍巍翻到我的本子，说你这哪是日记，是天气预报。

雨八，我给行人画像。送外卖的叔叔穿一件蓝雨衣，雨衣后摆被风掀起一角，像一面旗，他的前轮压过水洼，水甩到腰那么高；一个打黑伞的叔叔手插在兜里走，伞尖一直点着脚前的地，像怕踩到谁的影子；还有一个穿斗篷式雨衣的老爷爷，走得极慢，脚跟先落地再落脚尖，落一步，抖一下袖口的水。我把他们一个一个写进日记，写完那一页，我觉得自己认识了一群新朋友，虽然我叫不出他们的名字。

雨十正好撞上月考，作文题就是下雨天。别人咬着笔杆，我脑子里全是存货：雨滴赛跑、水洼镜子、雨衣旗子、抖袖口的老爷爷，写都写不完，还得忍痛删掉一个。卷子发下来，作文分旁边批了一句：细节准得像天气预报。我把这句话念给巍巍听，他认赌服输，还问我借本子。

这十页日记教会我的事，后来我想了很久才说明白。坚持不是每天硬写一页，是每次多盯一分钟。素材像存钱，先存才有得花，空着本子去考场，取不出任何东西。现在我一下雨还是忍不住去看窗上的雨滴、门口的水洼、路上的人，这个毛病已经改不掉，我也不打算改。

The Weather Forecast in a Puddle

I started keeping an observation journal because of a bet. My deskmate Weiwei said, Your compositions are the worst in class, an observation journal will not last three days with you. I refused to accept that. I numbered the rainy days of that term, Rain One, Rain Two, all the way to Rain Ten, and on every rainy day I wrote one page, and not one page was allowed to be sloppy.

On Rain One I watched the threads of rain outside the window. Rain threads cannot be counted, so I pressed a rubber ruler with markings against the glass and watched the drops slide down. Big drops raced, shooting straight to the bottom; small ones dawdled, collided halfway, merged into one big drop, and plunged together. I wrote in my journal: raindrops on glass are a footrace, and the big ones always win. I thought it was funny when I wrote it, but the teacher marked four characters: observation is

accurate.

From Rain Three on, I moved my eyes to the puddle at the school gate and drew its change chart. On Rain Three the puddle was the size of a coin; on Rain Five it grew to the size of a mirror, reflecting the traffic light, the red and green wobbling in the water, prettier than in the sky; on Rain Seven a first grader stomped in, and rings spread out, hit the curb, and bounced back. In the corner of every journal page I drew a little puddle, from coin size to mirror size. Weiwei flipped through my notebook and said, This is not a journal, this is a weather forecast.

On Rain Eight I drew portraits of pedestrians. The delivery man wore a blue raincoat, and the wind lifted one corner of its back hem like a flag; his front wheel crossed a puddle and water flew up to his waist. A man with a black umbrella walked with hands in pockets, the tip of the umbrella always pointing at the ground before his feet, as if afraid of stepping on someone's shadow. Another old man in a cape raincoat walked very slowly, heel first, then toe, and with each step he shook the water off his cuff. I wrote them into my journal one by one, and when that page was done I felt I had made a crowd of new friends, even though I did not know their names.

Rain Ten landed exactly on the monthly exam, and the composition topic was a rainy day. Others gnawed their pencils while my head was full of savings: the raindrop race, the puddle mirror, the raincoat flag, the grandpa shaking his cuff. I could not write it all down and had to cut one detail out in pain. When the paper came back, beside the composition score was a line: details as accurate as a weather forecast. I read it to Weiwei. He admitted he lost the bet and asked to borrow my notebook.

It took me a long time to put into words what those ten pages taught me. Persistence is not forcing out a page a day; it is watching one minute longer every time. Material is like saving money: deposit first, then spend. Walk into an exam with an empty notebook and there is nothing to withdraw. Now, whenever it rains, I still cannot help watching the drops on the window, the puddle at the gate, the people on the road. I have this habit for good, and I do not plan to cure it.