

种植角的那朵牵牛花

我们教室后面有一个种植角，窗台上摆了一排盆。三月初每人种一盆，我种的是牵牛花，老师发的种子黑黑的、硬硬的，像小石子。我把它按进土里，浇了水，心想明天就该发芽了吧。

明天没有发芽，后天也没有。第五天，土里拱出两片嫩叶，薄得能透光，我蹲在窗台边看了半节自习课。它的藤蔓一天一个样，顺着老师拉的绳子往上爬，卷须一圈一圈地缠，像小孩攥拳头，攥得紧紧的。我每天早上给它浇水，水从盆底的孔里滴出来，我把托盘里的积水倒掉，这是自然课老师教的。

四月底，刘一诺盆里的风仙花开了，粉色的，引来一只白粉蝶。全班的花盆陆陆续续都开了颜色，只有我的牵牛花还是满满一架子绿叶。有同学说，你这盆光长叶子啦。我心里发急，晚上特意多浇了半杯水，第二天又后悔，怕浇坏了。

五月初，藤蔓顶端终于结出花苞。花苞是拧着的，像一支支小喇叭倒挂着，外面裹着青绿的萼片，萼尖透出一点紫。我盯着那些花苞看了三天，它们一声不响。第五天早晨我进教室，靠窗那三朵开了。紫色的，花瓣薄得像湿的纸，上面的纹路一条一条，像叶脉，又像河的分叉。花芯是白的，一直白到喇叭口。花瓣上有一滴露水，滚了一下，没有掉。

那三朵花到中午就蔫了，下午彻底合上。我有点难过，刘一诺说，牵牛花就开一早上，明天还会有新的。第二天，果然又开了两朵，比头一天的还大。

后来我算过，从播种到第一朵花开，一共六十一天。这六十一天里它没有一天在闲着，只是把力气用在我看不见的地方——根往土里扎，藤往绳上缠。它不开花，不是忘了开，是在等它自己的时候。种植角那排花盆现在还在眼前，我的那盆最绿，也开得最慢，但开得最久。

The Morning Glory in Our Planting Corner

At the back of our classroom there is a planting corner, a row of pots on the windowsill. In early March everyone planted a pot. Mine was morning glories. The seeds the teacher handed out were black and hard, like little pebbles. I pressed them into the soil, watered them, and thought they would sprout by tomorrow.

Tomorrow they did not sprout, nor the day after. On the fifth day two tender leaves pushed out of the soil, thin enough for light to pass through, and I squatted by the windowsill and watched them through half a study period. Its vine changed every day, climbing up along the string the teacher had tied, its tendrils winding round and round like a child clenching a fist, clenched tight. I watered it every morning, let the water drip out of the hole in the bottom of the pot, and poured off the standing water in the tray, just as our science teacher taught.

By the end of April, the balsam in Liu Yinuo's pot had bloomed, pink, and attracted a white butterfly. Pot after pot in the class showed color, and only my morning glory was still a whole shelf of green leaves. A classmate said, yours just

grows leaves. I got anxious and deliberately gave it half a cup of extra water that evening, then regretted it the next day, afraid of ruining it.

In early May, buds finally formed at the tips of the vines. The buds were twisted, like little trumpets hanging upside down, wrapped in green sepals with a hint of purple showing at their points. I stared at those buds for three days; they kept silent. On the fifth morning I walked into the classroom and the three flowers by the window had opened. Purple, with petals thin like wet paper, their veins running line by line like leaf veins, or like a river dividing. The throat of the flower was white, white all the way to the rim of the trumpet. A drop of dew sat on a petal, rolled once, and did not fall.

Those three flowers wilted by noon and closed completely in the afternoon. I felt a little sad, and Liu Yinuo said, morning glories only bloom in the morning; there will be new ones tomorrow. The next day, sure enough, two more opened, even bigger than the day before.

Later I counted: from sowing to the first flower, sixty-one days. In those sixty-one days it was not idle for a single day; it was just spending its strength where I could not see, roots driving down into the soil, vines winding up the string. It did not refuse to bloom; it was waiting for its own time. That row of pots in the planting corner is still before my eyes. Mine is the greenest and the slowest to bloom, but it blooms the longest.