

坐在后排的写花日记的人

三月十九日，星期三，阴。我在日记里写：同桌今天又在本子上写花了。林小棠坐在教室后排靠窗的位置，每天早读前都要写几行，字很小，写在一个深蓝色的本子上。我以为她记的是单词，直到昨天她借我半块橡皮，我看见了本子的另一页，上面写着：三月十四日，跑道边花坛，开了四朵，落了两个花苞。

今天课间我向她借那个本子。前面几页记得稀稀拉拉，三月初只有几行，写着土里冒出了芽，芽是紫红色的。往后翻，字忽然密起来。三月十四日那天写了大半页，字比平时大，末尾还画了一个感叹号。她念给我听：今天开了四朵，黄色的，比我以为的早了四天。她说那天她站在花坛边愣了很久，上课铃响了都没动。她给花坛里开过的花一朵一朵起了名字，最大的那朵叫大王，歪着长的那朵叫拐。早读的时候她念给同桌听，两个人蹲在花坛边对着花一本正经地核对，被值周生看了一眼，以为我们在打架。

她翻到去年三月的一页给我看，那里写着：花开了，比今年早。她说花不记得谁看过它，可是它年年都记得时间，是我们不记得。她指着去年那行字说，你看，去年这个时候也有一群人站在这个花坛边，可是今年站在这里的换了一批，谁也不知道去年是谁在这儿看过花。她说这话的时候语气很平，像在说一件早就想明白的事。我听了心里动了一下，赶紧回到座位，在日记本上写下她这句话。

其实我自己也记日记，记的都是作业、考试、谁跟谁吵架。花的事一行也没有。原来同一个春天，在她那里是一天一天数出来的，在我那里是一晃就过去了。本子翻到最后一页，今天的日期下面还空着。她说等放学再去看看，数一数今天开了几朵，回来补上。

放学的时候她在本子上写下新的日期，我站在旁边看。她抬头问我，明年还想不想看花。我说想。她说那这个本子要传下去，传给谁，她还没想好。我在自己的日记里写：她替花记着日子，我替她记着这件事。窗外花坛边的灯柱上，最后一点天光暗下去，本子上那行新写的字还没干。

The Girl in the Back Row Who Keeps a Flower Diary

Wednesday, March 19, cloudy. I wrote in my diary today: my deskmate wrote about flowers in her notebook again. Lin Xiaotang sits in the back row by the window. Before morning reading she writes a few lines in tiny characters in a dark blue notebook. I thought she was memorizing words, until yesterday she lent me half an eraser and I saw the other page. It said: March 14, flower bed by the track, four opened, two buds fell.

At the break today I borrowed the notebook. The first pages were sparse. Early March had only a few lines, noting that sprouts came out of the soil, purple-red sprouts. Turning further, the writing suddenly grew dense. On March 14 she filled most of a page, the characters bigger than usual, with an exclamation mark at the end. She read it to me: four opened today, yellow ones, four days earlier than I expected. She said she stood by the flower bed in a daze for a long time that day and

did not move even when the bell rang. She had named every flower that had ever opened there. The biggest one was called the King, the crooked one was called Bend. During morning reading she recited the names to her partner, and the two of them crouched by the flower bed solemnly checking the flowers against the notebook, earning a stare from the duty student who thought they were fighting.

She turned to a page from last March and showed me one line: flowers opened, earlier than this year. She said the flowers do not remember who watched them, but they remember the time every year. It is we who do not remember. Pointing at last year's line she said, look, at this time last year a group of people also stood by this flower bed, and this year a different group stands here, and nobody knows who saw the flowers here last year. She said it in a flat voice, like something she had figured out long ago. Something moved inside me, and I hurried back to my seat and wrote her sentence down in my diary.

I keep a diary too, full of homework, exams, and who argued with whom. Not one line about flowers. So the same spring was counted day by day in her notebook, and in mine it flashed by and was gone. On the last page, under today's date, the lines were still empty. She said she would go look after school, count how many opened today, and add it when she came back.

At dismissal she wrote the new date in her notebook while I stood beside her. She looked up and asked if I would still want to see the flowers next year. I said yes. She said the notebook would be passed on, and she had not decided to whom. I wrote in my diary: she keeps the days for the flowers, and I will keep this about her. Outside, the last daylight faded on the lamp post by the flower bed, and the fresh line in her notebook had not dried yet.