

我把作文课搬到了花田边

教了十几年作文，我最怕批到这样的句子：花儿绽开了笑脸，小草探出了脑袋。句子没错，可写它的人显然没见过花。他们写春天，全凭春天这个词在脑子里的样子。这个春天，我决定把他们拎出去看看。我联系了学校后河堤外那片油菜花田，跟班主任磨了两个星期，把两节连堂的作文课搬了出去。

出发前我提了一个要求：带一支笔，写你亲眼看见的东西，不许用一句背来的好词。到了田边，我把他们散开到田埂上，每人发一张硬纸当垫板。四十来个孩子蹲进春天里，教室里那种坐不住的样子全没了。有个平时最厌写的男生蹲在花跟前，鼻子几乎碰到花瓣，我远远看着，没出声。

我让他们记录：这儿的黄有几种？一朵花几片花瓣，怎么排的？叶子是什么边？风来的时候花怎么动？蜜蜂落在哪一朵上，待了几秒？孩子们趴在地上写，硬纸上沙沙一片。我巡过去，看见他们写的句子笨拙极了，也结实极了：黄分三种，亮黄、淡黄、快谢了的黄。花瓣四片，像个十字。叶子边上全是牙口。蜜蜂一头扎进去，屁股朝天，待了七八秒。

回教室写长文，四十分钟，没有一个人咬笔杆。我批那批作文，手都在抖。那个最厌写的男生写了半页蜜蜂，写蜜蜂腿上沾了粉、飞的时候后腿一蹬一蹬的，结尾一句：我以前写的蜜蜂都是编的，这只不是。我把这句用红笔圈出来，第二天在班上念，念完跟孩子们说：这就是作文的样子。

后来常有同事问我，把课搬出去是不是作秀。我说不清。我只知道那个春天过后，班里的作文里，笑脸和脑袋少了，十字形的花瓣、带牙口的叶子多了。花还是那些花，年年开在河堤外。它们不收费，也不挑学生，只要把孩子的眼睛借出去一个上午，就还他们一整篇真的作文。

I Moved the Composition Class to the Edge of the Flower Field

I have taught composition for over a decade, and nothing frightens me in grading like these sentences: the flowers broke into smiles, the grass poked out its head. The sentences are not wrong, but whoever wrote them plainly never saw a flower. They write spring entirely from the shape the word spring has in their heads. This spring, I decided to drag them out to look. I contacted the rapeseed field beyond the river embankment behind the school, spent two weeks persuading the head teacher, and moved two consecutive composition periods out there.

Before we left I made one demand: bring a pen, write what your own eyes see, not a single memorized fine phrase. At the edge of the field I spread them along the ridge, handing each a sheet of stiff cardboard as a writing board. Some forty children crouched down into spring, and all the restlessness of the classroom was gone. The boy who hated writing most crouched so close to a flower that his nose

nearly touched the petals. I watched from afar and said nothing.

I asked them to record: how many kinds of yellow are here? How many petals on one flower, and how are they arranged? What kind of edge do the leaves have? How do the flowers move when wind comes? Which blossom does the bee land on, and for how many seconds? The children wrote lying on the ground, stiff boards rustling. I walked the rows and read their sentences — clumsy, and solid: yellow comes in three kinds, bright yellow, pale yellow, and the yellow of flowers about to fade. Four petals, like a cross. The leaf edges are full of teeth. The bee dives in headfirst, bottom in the air, stays seven or eight seconds.

Back in the classroom they wrote the long piece in forty minutes, and not one person chewed a pencil. My hands shook as I graded. The boy who hated writing most filled half a page about bees: powder on the bee's legs, its hind legs kicking as it flew. His last line read: the bees I used to write were made up; this one is not. I circled that line in red and read it to the class the next day, then told them: this is what a composition looks like.

Colleagues often ask whether moving the class out was a show. I cannot say clearly. I only know that after that spring, smiles and poked-out heads grew fewer in our compositions, while cross-shaped petals and toothed leaves grew more. The flowers are still those flowers, blooming beyond the embankment every year. They charge nothing and choose no students. Lend a child's eyes for one morning, and they return a whole composition of truth.