

花田里的那节语文课

那天第二节课，语文老师没拿课本，夹着一摞小本子站在讲台上：走，去花田。队伍拉出校门，沿着河堤走了十分钟，油菜花田就在堤下铺开，黄得没有边。老师把本子一人一个发下来，说：今天不上课，你们蹲下去看，看到什么记什么，颜色、形状、声音、气味，都行。

我蹲在田埂边，一开始不知道记什么。花就是黄的，茎就是绿的，这有什么好记的。可蹲久了，眼睛就细了。我发现油菜花不是一律的黄：朝阳的那片黄得发白，背阴那片黄里带绿，谢了的花瓣搁在叶子上，变成一种旧旧的土黄。我发现一朵花有四个花瓣，十字形排开，花心里有细小的粉，蜜蜂一脚踩进去，粉就沾在它的腿上。我还发现风过的时候，花浪是从远处先动的，一层一层推过来，到跟前才觉得脸上痒。

我那个本子记了满满三页，中间画了个歪歪扭扭的十字花瓣，旁边标着四瓣、六毫米。回学校的路上，谁都不说话了，都在低头看自己的本子，好像怕把刚才看见的东西弄丢。

第二天的作文题是自己定。我写那三页记录，写十字形的花瓣，写蜜蜂腿上的粉，写花浪怎么从远处推过来。写的时候奇怪极了，以前憋半天的开头，那天落笔就有：我是在田埂上蹲着的时候，才发现油菜花不是一种黄的。交上去第三天，老师把我的本子在全班念了，念完说了一句：这才叫看见。

后来我常想起那个蹲在花田边的上午。以前我总以为，好词好句在书里，得去背。那天才知道，它们先在花里长着，在风里走着，在蜜蜂腿上沾着，人蹲下去，它们才跟着进本子，进作文。花田是一间没有墙的教室，谁蹲得下来，谁就上了那节课。

The Chinese Lesson in the Flower Field

During the second period that day, the Chinese teacher walked in without a textbook, holding a stack of small notebooks: Come, let us go to the flower field. The line of students left the school gate and walked ten minutes along the river embankment, where the rapeseed field spread out below, yellow without edges. The teacher handed out a notebook to each of us and said: no lesson today. Crouch down and look. Write down whatever you see: colors, shapes, sounds, smells, anything.

I crouched at the edge of the field ridge, not knowing what to record at first. Flowers are yellow, stems are green, what is there to note? But crouching long enough, the eyes grow fine-grained. I found that rapeseed yellow is not one yellow: the sunlit patch is yellow almost to whiteness, the shaded patch yellow tinged with green, and spent petals lying on leaves have turned a worn, earthy yellow. I found that one flower has four petals arranged in a cross, with fine powder in its heart; when a bee steps in, the powder sticks to its legs. I also found that when wind passes, the waves of flowers move far away first, pushing layer upon layer toward you, and only when they arrive do you feel your face tickle.

My notebook filled three full pages. In the middle I drew a crooked cross-shaped petal, marked beside it: four petals, six millimeters. On the walk back to school nobody talked; everyone kept their head down over their own notebook, as if afraid of losing what they had just seen.

The next day's composition topic was self-chosen. I wrote from those three pages of notes: the cross-shaped petals, the powder on the bee's legs, how the waves of flowers push in from far away. Writing was strange. The opening that used to take half a day of straining came out under my pen that day: it was while crouching on the field ridge that I discovered rapeseed is not one kind of yellow. Three days after handing it in, the teacher read my notebook aloud to the whole class, then said one line: now that is seeing.

I often think of that morning crouching at the edge of the flower field. I used to think good words and sentences lived in books and had to be memorized. That day I learned they grow first in the flowers, walk first in the wind, stick first to the bee's legs; only when a person crouches down do they follow into the notebook, and into the composition. A flower field is a classroom without walls; whoever can crouch down has taken that lesson.