

爷爷说种子有自己的闹钟

我家小院子里有一小块菜地，每年春天爷爷都在那儿育苗。去年三月，我陪爷爷播种，第一次认真看花和菜是怎么醒过来的。爷爷把凤仙、太阳花和几样青菜的种子分格埋进育苗盘，浇透水，盖上薄膜。我蹲在旁边问，明天能出吗？爷爷说，种子有自己的闹钟，到点自己会起。

接下来的两周，我几乎天天蹲在育苗盘前。凤仙先拱出土，接着青菜也冒了芽，唯独太阳花的格子一片安静。我忍不住用牙签去拨土，想看看种子是不是烂了。爷爷把我手打开，说他种了五十年花，最忌讳的就是天天挖开看——种子刚要顶土，被你拨一下，前功尽弃。晚了一周的太阳花后来出芽，出完疯长，秋天开得满院都是。

那阵子我的英语正处在被催的阴影里。妈妈每天晚饭后都要抽查我背书，今天问单元一的课文会背了吗，明天问单词听写对几个。我越被催越背不进去，站在客厅里脑子一片空白，然后挨一顿着急的数落。我也开始怀疑自己，认定自己没有语言天分，别人读两遍就能背，我读十遍还磕巴。

看爷爷育苗的过程把我从这种怀疑里拽了出来。太阳花不是不出，是在自己的时间里出；我被天天抽查，等于被人天天挖开看，刚长出来的记忆又被晃散了。后来我跟妈妈商量，改成每天自己安静读十五分钟，周末再背给她听。头两个周末我背得依然慢，但第三个周末，我完整背下了整篇课文。期末考试英语我考出了上初中以来最好的分数。

现在我常想，着急是一种很隐蔽的破坏。它表面上是关心，实际上是不信任，不信任种子会自己醒，不信任自己每天都在长。花开有先后不是缺陷，是自然的秩序；把别人的日历硬套在自己头上，才是真正误花期的原因。

往后的日子我给自己定了三条。一，不再每天审问自己怎么还不行，改成每晚睡前记一行今天做了什么。二，英语坚持每天读十五分钟，把功夫摊平，不攒到考前突击。三，忍不住想跟别人比的时候，就想想那盘晚出芽的太阳花。爷爷的话我抄在了书桌前：种子有自己的闹钟，我要做的只是埋好、浇水，等它到点。

Grandpa Says Seeds Have Their Own Alarm Clock

At home our small yard has a patch of vegetable land, and every spring my grandpa raises seedlings there. Last March I sowed with him and for the first time watched closely how flowers and vegetables wake up. He buried seeds of balsam, sunflower, and a few greens in separate cells of a seedling tray, watered them through, and covered the tray with film. I squatted beside him and asked whether they would come up tomorrow. He said seeds have their own alarm clock; when the time comes they get up by themselves.

For the next two weeks I squatted by that tray almost every day. The balsam broke the soil first, the greens followed, and only the sunflower cells stayed silent. I could not help poking the soil with a toothpick to see whether the seeds had rotted.

Grandpa pushed my hand away. He has grown flowers for fifty years, he said, and the worst habit is digging them up to check every day: a seed just about to push through is ruined by one poke. The sunflowers, a week late, sprouted at last, then grew like mad and filled the whole yard with bloom in autumn.

Those days my English lived under constant urging. After dinner my mother quizzed me every night: have you recited the text of Unit One, how many dictation words did you get right. The more I was rushed, the less I could remember. Standing in the living room my mind went blank, and then came another round of anxious scolding. I began to believe I had no gift for language, that others could recite after two readings while I still stumbled after ten.

Watching Grandpa raise seedlings pulled me out of that doubt. The sunflowers were not refusing to rise; they were rising on their own time. Being quizzed every day was like being dug up every day, shaking apart memory that had just begun to sprout. I talked it over with my mother, and we changed the plan: I would read quietly for fifteen minutes each day and recite to her on weekends only. The first two weekends I was still slow. On the third weekend I recited a whole text without a gap. In the final exam English gave me my best score since junior high began.

Now I often think that anxiety is a hidden kind of destruction. On the surface it looks like care, but underneath it is distrust: distrust that seeds will wake themselves, distrust that you are growing every day. Flowers opening in turn is not a flaw but the order of nature; forcing someone else calendar onto your own head is what truly makes you miss your season.

I have set three rules for the days ahead. One, stop interrogating myself every night about why I am still not good enough, and instead write one line before sleep about what I did today. Two, keep reading English fifteen minutes daily, spreading the effort thin instead of piling it up before exams. Three, whenever I cannot help comparing, think of that tray of late sunflowers. I copied Grandpa words above my desk: seeds have their own alarm clock, and my job is only to sow, water, and wait for the time to come.