

作文本里的两篇公园

昨天收拾书包，我把作文本翻了一遍。翻到中间我停住了，因为里面有两篇都写公园的花，一篇在三月初，一篇在四月底，老师给的等级却差着一大截：前面那篇是合格，后面那篇是优秀，优秀旁边还画了一个笑脸。

三月初那篇是怎么写出来的，我记得清清楚楚。老师布置写公园的春天，我坐在书桌前想了二十分钟，把平时背的好词好句全搬了上去：春暖花开、百花齐放、姹紫嫣红。写花的样子，我写的是红的像火，粉的像霞，白的像雪，一句话都没改，因为三篇范文里都有这句。妈妈进来检查，问我公园的什么花先开的，我答不上来。那篇交上去，老师只批了两个字：用过。

四月底那篇不一样，是妈妈先带我去公园走了一趟再写的。那天我们在公园待了一个多小时。妈妈让我一样一样地感受：眼睛看，海棠的花苞是红的，开出来却淡，一棵树上有两种颜色；鼻子闻，海棠没什么香味，倒是脚边的草地有一股被踩过的清苦味；耳朵听，花丛上有蜜蜂，声音闷闷的，像小马达；手摸，海棠叶子像打蜡的纸，光光的；舌头那样最难为情，我舔了一瓣落花，苦丝丝的。

回家我趁热写，写海棠的两种颜色，写草地的苦味，写闷闷的小马达。第二天发下来，等级是优秀，评语写着：这是你自己公园里的花。老师还在班里表扬，说这篇作文里的花，别的学生写不出来，因为那是只有作者自己去过的那个公园。

现在两篇挨在一起，我一篇一篇读，像读两个人的作文。前一个我坐在屋里编，后一个我在公园里看。妈妈说我进步了，我自己觉得，进步不在笔上，进步在那一个多小时里。从那以后我给自己定了个规矩：没去看过的东西，不动笔写。这个规矩是我这个学期学到的最实在的一课。

Two Versions of the Park in My Exercise Book

Yesterday while tidying my schoolbag, I flipped through my composition book. Halfway through I stopped, because inside it there are two essays both about flowers in the park, one written in early March and one in late April, and the grades the teacher gave are far apart: the first one passed, the second one is excellent, and beside the word excellent someone drew a smiley face.

I remember exactly how the March one was written. The teacher assigned an essay about spring in the park, and I sat at my desk thinking for twenty minutes, then carried over every good phrase I had memorized: spring warms and flowers open, a hundred blossoms in full bloom, red and purple and lovely. For the look of the flowers I wrote: red like fire, pink like sunset clouds, white like snow, without changing a word, because that same sentence appeared in three model essays. My mother came in to check and asked me which flowers in the park opened first. I could not answer. When that essay came back, the teacher commented with only two words: overused.

The April one was different. My mother took me on a trip to the park first, and then I wrote. We stayed in the park for more than an hour that day. My mother had me take it in one sense at a time. With my eyes: the buds of the crabapple tree are red, but the open flowers are pale, so one tree holds two colors. With my nose: the crabapple has almost no scent, but the grass at my feet gives off the clean bitter smell of being stepped on. With my ears: bees work over the flowers, their sound muffled, like tiny motors. With my hands: the crabapple leaves feel like waxed paper, smooth. The tongue was the most embarrassing part. I licked a fallen petal, and it tasted faintly bitter.

I wrote right away when we got home, while everything was still fresh. I wrote about the two colors of the crabapple, the bitter smell of the grass, the muffled little motors. The next day it came back marked excellent, with the comment: these are the flowers of the park you yourself visited. The teacher praised it in class too, saying that the flowers in this essay could not be written by any other student, because they belong to the one park only its author had been to.

Now the two essays sit next to each other, and as I read them one after another, it is like reading the work of two different people. The first me sat inside a room and made things up; the second me stood in the park and looked. My mother says I have improved. I feel the improvement did not happen in the pen. It happened in that hour and more in the park. Since then I have set a rule for myself: never write about something I have not gone to see. That rule is the most down-to-earth lesson I learned this term.