

爷爷教我认节气

去年清明，爸妈把我送回乡下爷爷家住了半个月。去之前我烦得要命：村里没电视，作业还多。去之后我改主意了，因为爷爷这个人，本身就是一本季节的书。

爷爷不识字，可他嘴里有一整套节气。惊蛰那天早上，他拉我站到院子里，说别说话，听。我们站了十来分钟，雷在远处的山背后滚了一声，很闷，像谁在搬家具。爷爷说：响了，虫子醒啦，地也醒啦。我那天头一回知道，雷是有日子的。

清明前后，爷爷给我扎风筝。他不买，用竹篾和旧报纸，扎一个歪歪的三角。他说放风筝要趁有风的日子，风软的时候放，风硬的时候收，硬放会栽跟头。我在田埂上跑，风筝栽了三个跟头，第四个才站稳。爷爷在底下喊：线松一松，它自己会找风。

我住在爷爷家的那半个月，他干什么都看节气。谷雨前后点瓜，他递给我几粒瓜子，让我按他挖的坑一粒一粒放，说节气不到，埋了也不出。霜降那天他拔萝卜，拔一根在衣襟上蹭蹭泥，掰一截递给我，说霜打过的萝卜甜。我咬了一口，是甜的，那甜味我到现在都记得。

回城前一夜，爷爷坐在灶边，跟我说：娃，你们先生教认字，我教你认日子。啥叫日子？就是啥时候该看啥。你看懂了，写出来就不是空话。我那时不太懂，只觉得他火光里的脸很认真。

变化是在学期末尾发生的。最后一单元写《我最喜欢季节》，我写惊蛰的闷雷、写栽了三个跟头的风筝、写霜打过的萝卜的甜味，写了满满两页。老师念到萝卜那一段，有同学咽口水的声音，全班笑。作文本发回来，老师写：细节是真的，感情也是真的。

我把这句话剪下来，贴在文具盒里。后来每次写作文卡住，我就摸一摸那张纸条，然后想起爷爷站在院子里让我听雷的样子。我就知道，我缺的不是好词，是像爷爷那样，把眼睛放在日子上。

现在爷爷还在乡下，每个节气前后他会打电话，报一句：麦子黄了，或者该腌菜了。我每一句都记在周记本背面。别人问我为什么记，我说，我在攒素材，也在攒日子。

要问这半年我最大的心得，就是：爷爷不识字，却是我见过的最会写的人。他的文章不写在纸上，写在田里，一年一篇，从不交白卷。我要学的，就是把日子过成能写出来的样子。

Grandpa Taught Me to Read the Solar Terms

Last year around Clear and Bright, my parents sent me to stay half a month at the house of Grandpa in the village. Before going I was miserable: no television in the village, and plenty of homework. After going I changed my mind, because Grandpa himself is a book of the seasons.

Grandpa cannot read or write, yet his mouth holds a whole set of solar terms. On the morning of Awakening of Insects he pulled me out into the yard and said: do not speak, listen. We stood there ten minutes or so, and thunder rolled once behind the far mountain, muffled, like someone moving furniture. Grandpa said: it sounded, the

insects are awake, the earth is awake too. That day I learned for the first time that thunder has its dates.

Around Clear and Bright, Grandpa made me a kite. He would not buy one; he used bamboo strips and old newspaper to build a crooked triangle. He said kites must fly on windy days: launch when the wind is soft, reel in when it is hard, and a hard launch makes it crash. I ran along the field ridge; the kite crashed three times before the fourth one stood up in the sky. Grandpa shouted from below: slack the line a little, and it will find the wind by itself.

During those half a months, everything Grandpa did followed the solar terms. Melons were planted around Grain Rain; he handed me the seeds and made me drop them one by one into the holes he had dug, saying that before the term arrives, buried seeds will not sprout. On the day of Frost Descent he pulled radishes, wiped one on his jacket, broke off a piece and gave it to me, saying radishes touched by frost are sweet. I bit into it, and it was sweet, a sweetness I still remember today.

On the night before I left, Grandpa sat by the stove and told me: boy, your teachers teach you characters, and I teach you to read the days. What are days? They say what is worth looking at, and when. Understand that, and what you write will never be empty talk. I did not quite understand then; I only remember his face in the firelight, very serious.

The change came at the end of term. The last unit asked us to write My Favorite Season. I wrote about the muffled thunder of Awakening of Insects, about the kite that crashed three times, about the sweetness of a frost-touched radish, two full pages. When the teacher read the radish paragraph aloud, someone in the class could be heard swallowing, and the whole room laughed. The notebook came back with the comment: the details are real, and so is the feeling.

I cut that sentence out and stuck it inside my pencil case. Later, whenever I got stuck on an essay, I touched that slip of paper and remembered Grandpa standing in the yard making me listen for thunder. I knew then that what I lacked was not fine words, but the ability to keep my eyes on the days, the way Grandpa does.

Grandpa is still in the village. Around each solar term he calls and reports one line: the wheat has turned yellow, or it is time to pickle the vegetables. I write every line on the back of my journal. When people ask why, I say I am saving up material, and saving up days as well.

If you ask my biggest lesson from this half year, it is this: Grandpa cannot read, yet he is the best writer I have ever met. His essays are not written on paper but in the field, one a year, never a blank page. What I want to learn is to live my days into a shape worth writing down.