值日那天，全班围住了一堵墙

科学老师布置了一项观察作业，要求每人观察一种小动物，写一篇观察日记。我选了蚂蚁，因为蚂蚁就在学校里面，不用去别处找。

星期四是轮到我们班值日。扫地的刘小胖扫到教室后墙的墙角，忽然弯下腰，盯着地砖缝看，然后喊了一声。全班的人呼啦一下围了过去。

墙角的踢脚线那里有一道很细的裂缝，裂缝口堆着一点土。从裂缝里出来一条蚂蚁排成的队，沿着墙根走，经过拖把池，一直走到垃圾桶旁边。队伍细得像谁用铅笔在墙上画的一条线。

不知道是谁说的，刘小胖的座位里有一块没吃完的面包。刘小胖掰了一小块，放在队伍旁边的地上。那块面包屑比一只蚂蚁大出几十倍。一只蚂蚁先过来，围着面包屑转了一圈，触角碰上去，然后它转身往回走，沿着队伍的方向。

过了一会儿，队伍里分出一小股蚂蚁，直奔面包屑去。它们到了以后并不乱抢，而是各自找位置。有的爬到面包屑上面，有的钻到面包屑底下，有的排在面包屑和墙之间。然后面包屑动了，一点一点往墙根挪。

那几分钟，几十个同学围成一圈，没有一个人说话。平时最爱接话的赵天天也闭着嘴。我们全都蹲着，脑袋凑在一起，看那一小块面包在地上走。面包屑走到拖把池的台阶前上不去，蚂蚁们把它举起来一次，没成功，又落下来。第二次，好像多了几只蚂蚁，面包屑翻过了台阶。

后来老师从办公室过来，看见我们围成一圈，问怎么了。班长小声说，老师你快看，蚂蚁在搬面包。老师也蹲下来看。看了一会儿，老师没说话，掏出手机拍了一张照片。

面包屑最后一角钻进墙缝的时候，队伍里还有蚂蚁在往外面走。我忽然想到一个问题，它们搬面包，是不是因为要下雨了，要把吃的都存进家里？老师听见我嘀咕，说，可以回去查一查，蚂蚁对空气里的湿气很敏感，搬家常常是在准备躲雨。

那天我的观察日记写了很多行，比平时写作文还顺。我在最后写：几十个同学围着一堵墙看蚂蚁搬面包，谁也不说话，这大概就是团结最好的样子。蚂蚁搬的是面包，我们看懂的是它们谁也没有丢下谁。

On Duty Day, the Whole Class Crowded Around One Wall

Our science teacher assigned an observation task. Each student had to observe one small animal and write an observation diary. I chose ants, because ants are right inside the school, and I did not need to go anywhere else to find them.

On Thursday it was our class's turn for cleaning duty. Liu Xiaopang, who was sweeping, swept up to the wall corner at the back of the classroom. Suddenly he bent down, stared at the gap between the floor tiles, and shouted once. The whole class crowded over in a rush.

At the baseboard in that corner there was a very thin crack, with a bit of soil piled at its mouth. From the crack came a column of ants, walking along the foot of the wall, passing the mop sink, all the way to beside the trash bin. The column was as thin as a line someone drew on the wall with a pencil.

Somebody said that Liu Xiaopang had an unfinished piece of bread in his desk. Liu Xiaopang broke off a small piece and put it on the ground beside the column. That crumb was dozens of times bigger than one ant. One ant came over first, circled the crumb once, touched it with its feelers, then turned and walked back along the direction of the column.

After a while, a small branch split off the column and headed straight for the crumb. When they arrived, they did not scramble. Each one found its own place. Some climbed onto the bread, some went under it, some lined up between the bread and the wall. Then the crumb moved, inch by inch, toward the foot of the wall.

For those minutes, dozens of classmates stood in a circle around it, and not one of them spoke. Zhao Tiantian, who always blurted things out in class, kept his mouth shut too. We were all crouching, our heads close together, watching that small piece of bread walk across the ground. The crumb could not climb the step at the mop sink. The ants lifted it once and failed, and it fell back down. The second time, it seemed more ants joined, and the crumb rolled over the step.

Later the teacher came from the office and saw us in a circle, asking what happened. The monitor whispered, teacher, look quickly, the ants are carrying bread. The teacher crouched down to look too. After a while, the teacher said nothing and took out a phone to take a photo.

When the last corner of the crumb slipped into the crack, there were still ants in the column walking outward. A question suddenly came to me. Were they carrying bread because it was going to rain, and they wanted to store all the food at home? The teacher heard me muttering and said, you can look it up when you go home. Ants are very sensitive to moisture in the air, and moving house is often them getting ready to hide from rain.

That day my observation diary ran to many lines, smoother than my usual compositions. I wrote at the end: dozens of classmates crowding around a wall to watch ants carry bread, and nobody speaking. That is probably the best shape of unity. The ants were carrying bread, and what we understood was that none of them left any other behind.