科学课上没学到的，蚂蚁给我上了一课

科学老师在课上问，除了手机里的天气软件，还有什么办法能知道要下雨。教室里安静了几秒，有人说是燕子低飞，有人说是蚯蚓出洞。我坐在座位上，想起了前天傍晚我在花坛边看到的那一幕。

那天傍晚，天暗得特别快。我在花坛边等我妈来接，抬头看见云从河那边漫过来，把半个天都染成灰的，风里全是潮气，吹在脸上黏黏的。花坛的水泥沿上，有一条黑压压的蚂蚁队伍，比平时见的任何一队都大。它们从花坛底下的旧洞出发，翻过水泥沿，往花坛另一头的高处去。

我蹲下来数，数到五十多只就乱了，因为队伍太密。我改看它们叼着什么。叼白卵的，叼饭粒的，叼虫子的，一只挨一只。队伍最前面的蚂蚁已经爬上了花坛边的高土堆，那里有一个小洞，洞口有蚂蚁在往里拖东西。我看明白了，它们是把整个家从低处搬到高处。

我正看着，天上传来一声闷响，雨点就落下来了，先是一滴一滴砸出小印子，然后连成一片。蚂蚁队伍里最后那几只加紧脚步，叼着卵钻进高处的洞口。雨大起来的时候，水泥沿上的旧洞口已经被雨水漫过去了。

我回家以后翻开观察日记，把这一幕写下来，写完加了一句自己的猜想：蚂蚁是不是知道要下雨，才赶在雨前搬家？我妈在旁边洗衣服，说她们老家也这么说，蚂蚁搬家要大雨，老话传了好几辈。

科学课上我把手举起来，把日记里的经过讲了一遍。老师让我把日记拿出来，她走上讲台，把那段话读给全班听。读到蚂蚁叼着蚁卵钻洞、雨点跟着落下来的地方，全班很安静，和那个傍晚我蹲在花坛边的心情一模一样。

老师在日记本上写了一行批语，说观察有顺序，有细节，还有自己的问题。她在课上解释，蚂蚁的洞又深又窄，空气里的湿气、地面的震动、气压的变化，它们都能觉出来。雨前湿气重，低洞会变闷变潮，它们就提前往高处搬。这不是迷信，是蚂蚁几千万年练出来的本事。

那天晚上我重新写了一篇观察日记，把书上的道理和那天傍晚的场面并排写在一起。左边是天暗、风起、蚂蚁成群、雨落，右边是湿气、气压、往高处搬家。写完我忽然觉得，大自然每天都上课，只是它不站在讲台上，它蹲在花坛的水泥沿上，排成一条黑压压的队伍，等谁肯蹲下来看它。

What Science Class Did Not Teach Me, the Ants Taught Me

Our science teacher asked in class whether there was any way to know rain was coming besides the weather app on a phone. The classroom went quiet for a few seconds. Someone said swallows flying low. Someone else said earthworms coming out of their holes. I sat at my desk and remembered the scene I had seen by the flower bed the evening before.

That evening the sky grew dark very fast. I was waiting by the flower bed for my

mother to pick me up. I looked up and saw the clouds spreading over from the river, turning half the sky gray. The wind was full of dampness, and it felt sticky on the face. On the cement edge of the flower bed there was a dense column of ants, bigger than any column I had ever seen. They set out from the old hole under the flower bed, crossed the cement edge, and headed to the higher ground at the other end.

I crouched down and counted. I lost track past fifty, because the column was too dense. I switched to watching what they carried. Some carried white eggs, some grains of rice, some insects, one pressed against another. The ants at the very front had already climbed the high dirt mound at the edge of the flower bed, where there was a small hole, and ants at its mouth were dragging things in. I understood. They were moving their whole home from low ground to high ground.

While I watched, a muffled sound came from the sky, and raindrops fell. First one by one they stamped small marks, then they joined into a sheet. The last few ants in the column hurried and dived into the hole on the high ground with their eggs. By the time the rain grew heavy, rainwater had already spread over the mouth of the old hole on the cement edge.

After I got home I opened my observation diary and wrote down the scene. When I finished, I added a guess of my own. Did the ants know rain was coming, and that was why they moved house before it? My mother was washing clothes nearby. She said her hometown had the same saying. When ants move house, heavy rain follows. The old saying had been passed down for generations.

In science class I raised my hand and told the class what had happened, just as it stood in my diary. The teacher asked me to bring out the diary. She walked up to the podium and read that passage to the whole class. When she reached the part where the ants dived into the hole carrying their eggs and the raindrops followed, the whole class was quiet, and the feeling was exactly like mine that evening by the flower bed.

The teacher wrote a line of comment in my diary. She said the observation had an order, had details, and had a question of my own. She explained in class that an ant hole is deep and narrow, and ants can sense the moisture in the air, the tremors in the ground, and the changes of air pressure. Before rain the moisture rises, and the low hole becomes close and damp, so they move to higher ground in advance. This is not superstition. It is a skill ants have practiced for tens of millions of years.

That evening I wrote a new observation diary, placing the lesson from the book side by side with the scene of that evening. On the left were the darkening sky, the rising wind, the crowds of ants, and the falling rain. On the right were moisture, air pressure, and moving to higher ground. When I finished, I suddenly felt that nature gives a lesson every day. It simply does not stand at the podium. It crouches

on the cement edge of the flower bed, lined up in a dense black column, waiting for someone willing to crouch down and look.