那场大雨，是蚂蚁提前通知我的

窗外的雨下得很大，雨点打在空调外机的铁皮上，像谁在敲一面鼓。我坐在书桌前写作业，写累了就听雨。我一点也不后悔傍晚没在外面多待，因为把我从外面拽回来的，不是妈妈的喊声，是蚂蚁。

时间倒回那个傍晚。放学路上我抄近道，从小区花坛边穿过去。走到一半，天忽然暗了。那种暗来得很急，刚才云缝里还有一条亮边，一转眼整片天都成了深灰色，楼房的窗户一盏一盏提前亮了。风从楼道里穿出来，带着一股湿土的味道，梧桐树的叶子哗地翻出白背面。

我加快脚步，路过花坛水泥沿的时候，眼角扫到一片黑。那片黑在动。我停下脚步回头，看见水泥沿上全是蚂蚁，一层叠一层，宽宽的一股，往花坛北边的高土堆涌。我站住了，把书包换到一只手，蹲下去。

这支队伍和我平时见的不一样。平时蚂蚁出门，三三两两，慢悠悠的。这一支像赶集，又像逃难。每只嘴里都有东西，白亮的蚁卵、饭粒、菜叶渣。领头的已经爬上了高土堆，钻进一个新挖的小洞。洞口的土是新的，颜色比周围的土浅，看得出挖了没多久。

我蹲在那里，天越来越暗，我竟然忘了走。我数队伍断没断，数了半天，那条黑流一直不断。旧洞口还有蚂蚁往外送东西，送出来的全是蚁卵，一只送到，另一只接上，像一条传送的链子。

一滴雨砸在我鼻尖上的时候，我才醒过来。雨点跟着密起来，我看见最后几只蚂蚁冲进了高处的新洞。它们前脚进洞，雨帘后脚就落下来，把水泥沿冲成一条小河。我站起来往家跑，跑到楼道口回头看，花坛那边灰蒙蒙一片，只有那个高土堆上的小洞口，安安稳稳的。

写完作业我坐到窗前听雨，想起科学老师讲过，动物里最会看天气的反倒是虫子。蚂蚁的洞通着地下的湿气，天要下雨，湿气先变，它们就动身。它们不懂气象学，可它们世世代代都住在离天气最近的地方。

我拉开台灯，把日记本翻到新的一页，写下日期，写下天暗、风起、蚂蚁成群、雨落。写到最后我加了一句：那天傍晚，是蚂蚁通知我要下大雨的。它们不会说话，它们用一条搬不完的队伍说话。谁肯蹲下来，谁就收得到这封信。

The Ants Warned Me About the Heavy Rain First

The rain outside the window is falling hard. The drops beat on the tin shell of the air conditioner unit, like someone drumming on a metal sheet. I sit at my desk doing homework, and when I tire of writing, I listen to the rain. I do not regret at all that I did not stay outside longer in the evening, because what pulled me back from outside was not my mother's call. It was the ants.

Turn the clock back to that evening. On the way home from school I took a shortcut across the edge of the flower bed in our neighborhood. Halfway there, the sky suddenly darkened. The darkness came fast. A moment before, there had still been

a bright edge in the clouds. In a blink the whole sky turned deep gray, and the windows of the apartment buildings lit up one by one ahead of time. The wind blew through from the stairwell, carrying the smell of wet soil, and the plane tree leaves rustled as they turned over their pale backs.

I walked faster. Passing the cement edge of the flower bed, my eye caught a patch of black. The black was moving. I stopped and turned back. The cement edge was covered with ants, layer upon layer, a wide stream surging toward the high dirt mound on the north side of the flower bed. I stood still, switched my schoolbag to one hand, and crouched down.

This column was different from the ones I usually saw. When ants go out on ordinary days, they come in twos and threes, unhurried. This column was like a market day, or like people fleeing a disaster. Each one held something in its mouth. Shiny white ant eggs, grains of rice, scraps of leaves. The ones in front had already climbed the high mound and dived into a freshly dug little hole. The soil at the hole's mouth was new, lighter in color than the soil around it, clearly dug not long ago.

I crouched there as the sky grew darker, and I forgot to leave. I tried to count whether the column ever broke. I counted for a long while, and the black stream never broke. At the old hole, ants were still sending things out, all of them ant eggs. One ant carried one out, another took it on, like a chain of delivery.

Only when the first raindrop landed on the tip of my nose did I come back to myself. The drops thickened right after. I saw the last few ants rush into the new hole on the high ground. Their front feet entered the hole, and the curtain of rain fell right behind them, turning the cement edge into a little river. I stood up and ran home. Reaching the stairwell, I looked back. The flower bed was a gray blur, and only the small hole on the high mound sat there, safe and steady.

After homework I sat by the window listening to the rain, remembering what our science teacher once said. Among animals, the ones best at reading weather are the insects. Ant holes connect to the dampness underground. When rain is coming, the dampness changes first, and the ants set out. They know nothing of meteorology, yet for generation after generation they have lived closer to the weather than anyone.

I pulled on the desk lamp, turned to a fresh page of my diary, and wrote the date, then the darkening sky, the rising wind, the crowds of ants, the falling rain. At the end I added one line. That evening, it was the ants who notified me of the heavy rain. They cannot speak. They speak with an endless moving column. Whoever is willing to crouch down will receive this letter.