妹妹画了一只搬东西的蚂蚁

周末在家，上三年级的妹妹趴在桌上画蚂蚁，说明天美术课要交。我本来在旁边写作业，看她画得认真，笔停了，就凑过去看。

她画的蚂蚁比指甲还大，六条腿，头上两根长长的触角。奇怪的是，触角没有停在脑袋上，而是从头上伸出去，连到远处另一只小蚂蚁的触角上，中间画了一条弯弯的线，线上写着三个字：碰一碰。

我问她这是什么意思。她说：蚂蚁碰一碰触角，后面的蚂蚁就知道面包在哪儿了。她说得特别肯定，好像亲眼见过。我放下笔，拉她下楼，去小区花坛边找真蚂蚁。

真蚂蚁比她画的小得多，可事情让她说对了大半。我们蹲在砖沿上，看一只蚂蚁发现饼干渣，看它往回走，看它在半路跟迎面来的蚂蚁触角碰了一下。碰完，那两只各走各的，可几分钟后，越来越多的蚂蚁朝饼干渣那边去。妹妹小声说：看吧，我画的就是这个。

她还想看蚂蚁怎么搬，我们等到太阳偏西，只等到两只蚂蚁合抬一只小虫。妹妹问：它们抬的时候谁在前面？我说前面那只领路。她皱起脸，说不对，它们俩都看着虫子，谁也没看路。我愣住了，仔细再看，两只蚂蚁确实都顶着虫子往后退，方向是虫子定的，不是谁定的。

回家路上她蹦蹦跳跳，说她的画能得优。我没说话，心里在想：我蹲花坛蹲过那么久，把蚂蚁写成一篇又一篇，可谁在前面这个问题，我从来没想过。妹妹不会写字那么复杂，她只把看见的画下来，触角连触角，碰一碰，三个字，把我没看懂的东西说中了。

晚上她举着画给妈妈看。我把那张画要过来，贴在我书桌的台灯边上。以后每次写观察，我都先抬头看那两根弯弯的触角，提醒自己：眼睛蹲下去之前，先承认自己没看见的比看见的多。

My Little Sister Drew an Ant Carrying Something

On the weekend at home, my third-grade little sister lay flat on the table drawing ants for tomorrow's art class. I had been doing homework nearby. She looked so serious that I put down my pen and leaned over to watch.

Her ant was bigger than a fingernail, with six legs and two long antennae on its head. Strangely, the antennae did not stop at the head. They reached outward and joined the antennae of another small ant drawn far away, with a wavy line between them and three characters written on the line: touch-touch.

I asked her what it meant. She said: when ants tap antennae, the ants behind know where the bread is. She sounded completely sure, as if she had seen it herself. I set down my pen, took her downstairs, and went to the flower bed in our neighborhood to find real ants.

The real ants were far smaller than her drawing, but she had most of it right. We squatted on the brick edge, watching one ant discover a crumb of biscuit, watching it

head back, watching it meet another ant halfway and tap antennae. After the tap the two went their separate ways, yet minutes later more and more ants streamed toward the crumb. My sister whispered: see? This is exactly what I drew.

She wanted to see how ants carry things, so we waited until the sun leaned west and finally caught two ants lifting a small insect together. She asked: which one is in front when they carry? I said the front one leads. She frowned and said no — both of them are watching the insect, and neither is watching the road. I froze, looked closely, and she was right: both ants were backing up under the insect, and the direction was set by the insect itself, not by any leader.

On the way home she bounced along, saying her drawing would get an A. I kept quiet, thinking: I have squatted by flower beds for hours, writing observation after observation, yet I had never once thought about the question of who is in front. My sister cannot write complicated sentences. She simply drew what she saw — antenna touching antenna, touch-touch — three characters that named the thing I had failed to understand.

That evening she held the drawing up for our mother to see. I asked for it and stuck it beside the lamp on my desk. From then on, every time I write an observation, I first look up at those two curving antennae, reminding myself: before your eyes squat down, admit that what you have not seen is more than what you have.