奶奶说蚂蚁搬的是天

《观察蚂蚁》里有一段写搬家。作者发现蚂蚁全家往高处转移，叼着蚁卵、抬着食物，队伍又急又稳。作者查了书，说蚂蚁觉出空气里湿气重，知道雨要来，提前搬家。小蚂蚁有大力量，连天气也搬得动。

连天气也搬得动——我读到这七个字，一下想起乡下奶奶。有一年暑假，我在院子里玩，看见院墙根下排着一条长长的蚂蚁队，全往堂屋台阶上爬。我蹲下去数，奶奶从屋里出来，看了一眼就说：蚂蚁搬家，大雨要下，快帮你妈把绳上的衣裳收进来。

我不太信，可还是踩着板凳把衣裳一件件摘下来。衣裳刚收完，天就黑透了，雨砸下来，院子里瞬间积起一层水。我趴在门框边看蚂蚁，那条队伍还在往上爬，一直爬到台阶最高处的墙缝才停住。雨那么大，没有一只蚂蚁散队，也没有一只拐进别的地方躲。

奶奶坐在门槛上剥豆子，跟我说，蚂蚁比人早知道雨。我问它又不会说话，怎么知道。奶奶说，它不用说话，它搬的就是天。我那时觉得这话没有道理，蚂蚁搬的明明是白蚁卵和泥粒，跟天有什么关系。奶奶也不跟我分辩，只把剥好的豆子倒进盆里，说等雨落下来你就懂了。

书里把奶奶的话讲明白了：蚂蚁觉出湿气，就全家往高处搬。它们搬的不是雨，是雨要来这件事。谁都知道要下雨，谁都不掉队，队伍又急又稳——这就是书里说的大力量。奶奶不识字，她的大力量是看了几十年蚂蚁；作者会查书，他的力量是蹲在墙根看。两个人说的是同一件事，中间隔着一本书，却一句都没差。

以前我总觉得，认天气是大人的事，看云识雨要大人来。蚂蚁让我改了看法：那么小的东西，把整个家从低处搬到高处，一步不乱。去年夏天，我在自家楼下又看见一次蚂蚁列队上楼。我上楼告诉妈妈赶紧收衣裳。妈妈半信半疑，衣裳收进来不到半小时，雨真的来了。妈妈问我怎么知道的，我说，蚂蚁告诉我的。

那天我把《观察蚂蚁》放回书架，又把奶奶那句蚂蚁搬家大雨要下写在书签上，压在书里写搬家那一页。书和奶奶，我如今都信了。

Grandma Said the Ants Were Carrying the Weather

One passage in Watching Ants is about moving house. The author finds a whole ant family shifting to higher ground, carrying eggs in their jaws and food in their legs, the column hurried yet steady. The author looks it up and learns that ants feel the heavy moisture in the air, know rain is coming, and move before it falls. Small ants have great strength — they can even carry the weather.

They can even carry the weather — reading those words, I thought at once of my grandma in the village. One summer holiday I was playing in the courtyard when I saw a long column of ants marching along the foot of the wall, all climbing toward the steps of the main room. I squatted down to count them. Grandma came out of the house, took one look, and said: when ants move house, heavy rain is coming — go help your

mother take the clothes off the line.

I half believed her, but I still stood on a bench and picked the clothes off the line one by one. No sooner were they in than the sky went black and the rain came down, and the courtyard filled with a sheet of water in moments. I leaned by the doorframe and watched the ants. The column was still climbing, all the way to the highest crack in the wall by the top step, and only there did it stop. The rain fell hard, yet not one ant left the line, and not one turned aside to hide.

Grandma sat on the doorstep shelling beans and told me the ants know the rain before people do. I asked how they could know, since they cannot speak. Grandma said they do not need to speak; what they carry is the weather itself. I thought then that this made no sense — the ants were plainly carrying white eggs and grains of soil, what was that to the sky.

The book made Grandma words clear: when ants feel the damp, the whole family moves uphill. What they carry is not the rain but the fact that rain is coming. Everyone knows the rain is near, nobody falls out of line, the column is hurried yet steady — that is the great strength the book means. Grandma could not read; her strength came from watching ants for decades. The author could look things up; his strength came from squatting by walls. The two were saying one and the same thing, with a book between them and not a single word different.

I used to think reading the sky was a job for grownups. The ants changed my mind: so small a creature can move an entire home from low ground to high without one confused step. Last summer I saw ants marching up the stairs in our building again. I ran up and told my mother to bring the clothes in. She half doubted me; within half an hour of the clothes coming in, the rain really came. She asked how I knew. I said the ants told me.

That day I put Watching Ants back on the shelf, and I wrote Grandma saying — when ants move house, heavy rain is coming — on a bookmark, and tucked it into the page about moving. The book and Grandma, I believe both of them now.