墙根下的蚂蚁窝

周五放学，我在教学楼后墙的根上发现了一个蚂蚁洞。洞口只有铅笔头那么粗，外面堆着一圈细细的土，像谁用小刷子扫出来的。我蹲下去看，土堆边上有几只蚂蚁进进出出，身子是黑褐色的，肚子比头大一圈。它们走路的样子我以前没注意过：不是直着走，是走几步拐一下，触角一直朝前探着。我蹲在那儿看了很久，书包都忘了背。回家路上我一直在想，那个洞里到底住着多少只蚂蚁。我在观察本上写下第一篇日记，日期后面画了个圈，提醒自己明天还要来。

等到第二天放学，我兜里装了一块饼干，特意绕到后墙根。洞口还是那个样子，蚂蚁还在进出。我把饼干掰下几粒碎屑，摆在离洞口十几厘米的地方，然后蹲在旁边等。过了好一阵，一只蚂蚁路过，用触角碰了碰饼干屑，绕着它转了半圈，想搬，搬不动，掉头往洞口走。我以为它放弃了，结果没过多久，它领着几只蚂蚁回来，每只都用触角碰对方的头，然后一起抬那块碎屑。最大的那块饼干屑，最后是二十来只蚂蚁围着抬走的。我在本子上记：它们是靠碰触角叫伙伴的。

到了第三天，怪事来了。蚂蚁不再走墙根那条老路，全部绕到墙的另一头去，排成一条细线，翻过一块红砖。我盯着那条新线看了半天，又跑回老洞口——洞口还有蚂蚁守着我昨天放的饼干屑，可大部队不走这边了。我猜是我前天在墙根洒了半瓶水，把老路冲坏了。新路上多了一个小洞，比老洞口还小，我数了数，从那儿进出的蚂蚁比老洞口还多。我在第三篇日记里写：蚂蚁的路不是固定的，路变了，它们会再找一条，但总能找到回家的方向。我还写了一句私人的话：它们碰触角的时候，可能在互相说话。这句话没有依据，可我把它留在本子上，打算下周接着看。

The Ant Nest by the Wall

On Friday after school, I found an ant hole at the foot of the wall behind the teaching building. The opening was no wider than a pencil, with a ring of fine soil around it, as if someone had swept it out with a tiny brush. I squatted down. A few ants went in and out along the soil mound. Their bodies were dark brown, and their bellies were a size bigger than their heads. I had never noticed how they walked before: not in a straight line, but a few steps, then a turn, with their antennae always reaching forward. I squatted there for a long time and forgot all about my schoolbag. On the way home I kept wondering how many ants lived inside that hole. I wrote my first diary entry in my observation notebook and drew a circle after the date to remind myself to come back tomorrow.

The next day after school, I carried a biscuit in my pocket and made a detour to the wall. The hole looked the same, and the ants were still coming and out. I broke off a few crumbs and placed them about ten centimeters from the opening, then squatted and waited. After a while, an ant passed by, touched a crumb with its antennae, circled halfway around it, tried to lift it, failed, and turned back toward the hole. I thought it had given up. But soon it returned leading several other ants,

each touching the head of another with its antennae, and together they lifted the crumb. The biggest biscuit crumb was finally carried off by around twenty ants. I wrote in my notebook: they call for help by touching antennae.

On the third day, something strange happened. The ants no longer used the old road along the wall. The whole line had moved to the other side of the wall, marching in a thin thread over a red brick. I stared at the new line for a long time, then ran back to the old hole. A few ants were still guarding the crumbs I left, but the main group no longer used this side. I think it was because I had spilled half a bottle of water by the wall, which washed out their old road. There was a new small hole on the new road, even smaller than the old one, and more ants went in and out of it than of the old hole. In my third diary entry I wrote: the road of an ant is not fixed; when the road changes, they find another one, and they always find the way home. I also wrote one personal line: when they touch antennae, maybe they are talking to each other. There is no proof for that sentence, but I left it in my notebook and plan to keep watching next week.

蚂蚁搬家那三天，我天天迟到

我本来不是个有耐心的人。这次能连着三天去看蚂蚁，连我妈都觉得奇怪。事情是从花坛边那个蚂蚁窝开始的。周一傍晚，我在小区花坛边系鞋带，看见蚂蚁排着队，每只嘴里都叼着一个白色的小颗粒，往花坛沿的高处走。我查过书，知道那可能是它们的卵或者幼虫。它们要把家往高处搬。那天天阴沉沉的，空气黏糊糊的，我蹲在花坛边看了二十分钟，直到裤腿沾了土。回家我翻出观察本，把看到的写下来：蚂蚁叼着白颗粒往高处走，天要下雨的样子。写完我给自己定了个规矩：连着三天，每天去看一次。

第二天我带了一小块苹果，放在队伍旁边。蚂蚁一开始不理会，后来有一只停下来，围着苹果转，触角贴在果皮上。再后来，队伍里不断有蚂蚁离队过来，把苹果围住，有的爬上去，有的在下边拱。最让我吃惊的是它们排队的样子：搬东西的往一个方向走，空手的朝另一个方向走，两边不打架，像马路分了道。我在本子上画了一条线，标上两个箭头。我妈喊我吃饭，我喊回去再等五分钟。那五分钟里，我看见一只大蚂蚁把挡路的小土粒一颗颗推开，别的蚂蚁就顺着它让出来的位置走。

第三天傍晚，我又去，队伍不见了——原来那条沿花坛边的线整个消失了，蚂蚁改从花坛另一侧的砖缝里进出。我沿着新路线找，发现砖缝旁边多了一个新洞口，比旧洞口干净，边上没有土堆。旧洞口还开着，有零星几只蚂蚁守着，可大部队全搬走了。我蹲在两个洞口之间来回看，忽然明白它们不是搬家一次就完事，是边住边挪。我在第三篇日记里写：旧洞没堵死，新洞已经开工，蚂蚁的家像一直在扩建。我还写：三天里我迟到了三次，我妈说我眼里有东西了。我想了想，觉得她说得对——那窝蚂蚁，真的钻进我眼睛里了。我打算下周继续，数一数新洞口一天进出多少只。

Three Days of Watching Ants Made Me Late Every Day

I am not a patient person by nature. That I watched ants three days in a row even surprised my mother. It started with the ant nest by the flower bed. On Monday evening, I was tying my shoelaces beside the bed in our compound when I saw ants marching in line, each carrying a tiny white pellet in its mouth, heading up toward the raised edge of the bed. I had read in a book that those might be their eggs or larvae. They were moving their home to higher ground. The sky was gloomy and the air felt sticky. I squatted by the bed for twenty minutes until my trousers got covered in soil. At home I took out my observation notebook and wrote down what I saw: ants carrying white pellets uphill, sky looking like rain. Then I made a rule for myself: come and watch once a day, for three days in a row.

The next day I brought a small piece of apple and set it beside the line. At first the ants ignored it. Then one stopped and circled the apple, its antennae pressed against the peel. After that, more and more ants left the line and surrounded the apple; some climbed on top, some pushed from below. What amazed me most was how they queued: those carrying things walked one way, those empty-handed the other, never bumping into each other, like a road with two lanes. I drew a line in my notebook and marked two arrows. My mother called me to dinner; I shouted back, five more minutes. In those five minutes I saw a big ant push the small soil grains blocking the path aside, one by one, and the others followed the space it cleared.

On the third evening I went again, and the line was gone. The whole column along the edge of the flower bed had vanished; the ants now came and went through a crack between the bricks on the other side. I followed the new route and found a new opening beside the crack, cleaner than the old one, with no soil mound around it. The old opening was still open, with a few ants guarding it, but the main group had moved. I squatted between the two openings, looking back and forth, and suddenly understood that moving house was not a one-time thing for them; they kept shifting while still living there. In my third diary entry I wrote: the old hole is not sealed, the new one is already in use, an ant home keeps expanding. I also wrote: I was late three times in three days, and my mother said something had gotten into my eyes. I thought about it and decided she was right. That nest of ants really had crawled into my eyes. Next week I plan to keep going and count how many ants pass through the new opening in a day.

科学课作业：盯着一窝蚂蚁看三天

科学老师布置了一项作业：选一个小动物，连续观察三天，每天写一条记录，还要写出自己的发现。别的同学选蜗牛、选金鱼，我选了我们教室门口台阶下的蚂蚁窝，因为它每天都在，我随时能看。我在本子上写下第一天的问题：这个洞里到底有多少只蚂蚁？这个问题我当然知道一天答不完，但我可以先数一数门口忙活的有多少。下课铃一响我就蹲到台阶下，盯着洞口数，进出一次算一只，可数到三十几就乱了，老有蚂蚁从别的缝里钻出来。我换了个办法：在洞口旁边放一片树叶当记号，看蚂蚁走哪条线。数出来的结果是，光我蹲着的十分钟里，从那个洞口进出的蚂蚁有五十多只。我在记录里写：洞里的蚂蚁肯定比这多得多，我数的只是出来干活的。

第二天我带着问题去：它们到底爱吃什么？我摆了三样东西在离洞口一样远的地方：一粒米饭、一小块糖、一小片肉干。然后上课去了，课间跑回来看。糖那里围的蚂蚁最多，米粒那儿只有两三只，肉干边上有一只大蚂蚁绕着转，转了半天，走了。我下午放学又去看，肉干那儿反而来了十几只，正一小块一小块往下掰。我在记录里写：它们先找到甜的，后来才发现肉。蚂蚁选食物不是一次就选完的，它们会一直找，找到新的就改主意。我把三样东西的位置记了下来，还画了个简图，标出哪条线最热闹。

第三天，我想试试它们的路是怎么认的。我趁早读课没下课，用手指把台阶下那条蚂蚁线从头到尾抹了一遍，指纹蹭过的地方土都平了。我有点心虚，怕把它们害惨了。结果第二节课间去看，蚂蚁全乱了：有的原地转圈，触角举得高高的，有的干脆贴着台阶边重新走。到了中午，一条新线慢慢成形，绕开了我抹过的那一段，改从地砖缝里走。更让我没想到的是，傍晚我再看，老线上又有蚂蚁走了，像重新铺好了一样。我在第三天的记录里写：抹掉路，它们会迷路一阵，但一定能再找出来。它们认路靠的不是眼睛看见的那条线。这个结论后面我画了个问号，因为老师说过蚂蚁靠气味认路，我打算再做个实验：用酒精棉球擦一段路，看它们还找不找得到。

Science Class Homework: Watch One Ant Nest for Three Days

Our science teacher assigned a project: pick a small animal, observe it for three days in a row, write one record each day, and note what you discover. Other classmates chose snails or goldfish. I chose the ant nest under the steps outside our classroom, because it is there every day and I can look any time. On the first day I wrote my question in the notebook: exactly how many ants live in that hole? I knew one day would not answer it, but I could at least count how many are busy at the entrance. When the bell rang I squatted under the steps and counted the ants going in and out, one per trip, but I lost count past thirty, since ants kept coming out of other cracks too. I switched methods: I placed a leaf beside the hole as a marker and watched which line they used. The result was that in the ten minutes I squatted there, more than fifty ants passed through that opening. I wrote in my record: there

must be far more ants inside than that; I only counted the ones out working.

On day two I went with a new question: what do they actually like to eat? I set three things at equal distance from the hole: a grain of rice, a small piece of sugar, a sliver of dried meat. Then I went to class and ran back at break. The sugar had the most ants swarming it, the rice had only two or three, and one big ant circled the meat for a while, then left. After school I checked again, and by then a dozen ants had come to the meat, breaking off tiny pieces. I wrote in my record: they found the sweet thing first and discovered the meat later. Ants do not finish choosing their food at once; they keep searching, and when they find something new they change their minds. I noted the positions of the three items and drew a simple map marking the busiest line.

On day three, I wanted to test how they recognize their road. During morning reading class, I dragged my finger along the whole ant line under the steps, flattening the soil wherever my fingerprint passed. I felt a little guilty, afraid I had ruined them. At the break after second class, the ants were in chaos: some spun in circles on the spot with their antennae held high, some simply walked along the edge of the steps. By noon, a new line slowly took shape, avoiding the section I had smeared, detouring through the gap between the floor tiles. What surprised me even more: when I looked again in the evening, ants were walking the old line again, as if it had been relaid. In my third record I wrote: erase their road and they get lost for a while, but they always find a way out. They do not rely on the line their eyes see. I drew a question mark after that conclusion, because our teacher once said ants navigate by scent. I plan to run one more test: wipe a section of their road with an alcohol swab and see whether they can still find it.