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.