书里那杯没浮起来的鸡蛋，我也遇到过

《一次有趣的实验》里最吸引我的，不是鸡蛋浮起来的那一段，而是鸡蛋没浮起来的那一段。书里那个人往杯子里加了两勺盐，搅了搅，鸡蛋还躺在杯底睡觉。换作是我，我肯定把杯子一推，说一句失败了，去玩别的了。可是书里的人没有。他停下来，看着杯底那颗蛋，又舀了一勺盐下去，再搅，鸡蛋还是不动。他第三勺、第四勺接着加，水慢慢变浑，最后那颗鸡蛋晃晃悠悠地站起来了，接着浮上来了。

读到这里我的脸有点热，因为我干过一模一样的事。上学期自然课老师布置浮鸡蛋的作业，我回家拿杯子加了两勺盐，鸡蛋不浮，我加了第三勺，还是不浮。我当时认定是鸡蛋的问题，挑三拣四换了两个鸡蛋，又怀疑是杯子不行，最后怪到盐头上，说家里的盐不咸。我把那杯盐水端到水池边倒掉了。倒的时候我还想，肯定是书上写错了。

书里那个人是怎么做的呢？他没有换鸡蛋，没有换杯子，也没有怀疑盐。他只做了一件事：继续加。他还在心里数着勺数，每一勺都搅够时间。书里写他数到第九勺的时候，鸡蛋先是在杯底翻了个身，像睡醒了伸了个懒腰，然后才慢慢浮上来。原来不是实验骗人，是我加得不够，就提前下了结论。

上周末我把那件事重新做了一遍。还是家里的盐，还是那个杯子，还是最大的那个鸡蛋。我一勺一勺加，每勺搅三十下，心里数着。第五勺，鸡蛋没动。第六勺，水开始发白。第七勺，鸡蛋从杯底滚了一下。第八勺，它站起来了。第九勺，它浮上来了，露出一个小圆顶，像从被窝里探出头。我妈进来看见了，说你这不也成功了嘛。我说，我这次只是没提前放弃。

合上书以后我明白的道理，其实书里早就写得很平常：实验不会一下子成功，盐要一勺一勺加。以前我读这种句子，眼睛滑过去就完了。现在它长在我身上了。数学题想不出来，我不再马上说我不会，我会再多想一步，就像多加一勺盐。那颗在书里浮起来的鸡蛋，把我心里一个爱说失败的人，也慢慢托起来了。

The Egg That Would Not Float, in the Book and in My Cup

What pulled me hardest in One Fun Experiment was not the part where the egg floats. It was the part where it does not. The person in the book adds two spoonfuls of salt, stirs, and the egg is still asleep on the bottom of the cup. If it were me, I would have pushed the cup away, said it failed, and gone off to do something else. But he did not stop. He sat there looking at the egg on the bottom and added a third spoonful, stirred, still nothing. He kept going, fourth spoon, fifth. The water grew cloudy, and at last the egg rocked upright, and then it floated.

My face got warm reading that, because I had done the exact opposite. Last term our science teacher assigned the floating egg as homework. I went home, put two spoonfuls of salt in a cup, and the egg would not float. I added a third. Still nothing. I decided it was the egg's fault. I swapped in two other eggs. Then I blamed the cup. Then I blamed the salt, saying our salt is not salty enough. I carried that

cup of brine to the sink and poured it out. As I poured, I even thought the book must be wrong.

What did the man in the book do? He did not change the egg. He did not change the cup. He did not suspect the salt. He did one thing only: he kept adding. He counted his spoonfuls, and he stirred each one long enough. The book says that at the ninth spoonful, the egg first rolled over on the bottom, like someone stretching after sleep, and only then did it rise. The experiment never tricked me. I simply had not added enough before I gave my verdict.

Last weekend I did the whole thing over. Same salt, same cup, same biggest egg. I added spoon by spoon, stirring thirty turns each time, counting in my head. Fifth spoon: nothing. Sixth: the water began to turn white. Seventh: the egg rolled off the bottom. Eighth: it stood up. Ninth: it floated, a small round dome showing above the surface, like a head poking out of a quilt. My mother walked in and said, see, you made it too. I said, this time I just did not give up early.

The lesson I understood after closing the book is one the book wrote plainly: an experiment does not succeed all at once; the salt goes in spoon by spoon. Before, my eyes would slide right over such a sentence. Now it has grown onto me. When a math problem stumps me, I no longer say I cannot do it. I think one step further, like adding one more spoonful of salt. That egg which floated inside the book is slowly lifting up, too, the part of me that always said failure.