我猜了三年，它只做了三天

《一次有趣的实验》里有一段，书里那个人想知道种子该埋多深才发芽。这个问题说起来多简单，谁都能猜：一厘米，两厘米，随便说一个数，说完就完了。他没有。他准备了六个杯子，分别埋半厘米、一厘米、两厘米、三厘米、五厘米，每天浇水，每天记录，整整做了三天才有眉目，最后又重复了一遍才敢写进文章。书里有一句话我抄在了文具盒背面：猜十次，不如做一次。

这句话让我坐立不安，因为我这六年，一直在猜。科学书上说根往下长，我猜是；说种子发芽要水，我猜是；说土里有什么，我全凭插图想象。三年级自然老师问，谁挖开过自己种的豆芽的土，全班没几个人举手，我也没举。不是不敢，是从来没想过可以挖。答案在书上印着，我背下来就行了，为什么要自己动手去确认呢？这本书里的人替我确认了：因为背下来的答案是你的，做出来的答案才是长在你身上的。

我做过唯一一次自己的实验，是腌黄瓜，失败了。我按书上的方子，盐水、黄瓜、压石头。三天以后打开，黄瓜烂了一半，臭的。我当时下结论：书上骗人，腌黄瓜根本做不成。读完这本书我重新翻我那次的记录，才发现我盐放少了，石头用的是小区花坛边的花岗岩，压得也不严实。书上写的每一步我都省了，省到最后，实验替我惩罚了我。

上周末我重做了一次腌黄瓜。盐按秤称，石头换成洗净的鹅卵石，每天打开看一次，摸一摸，闻一闻，记一行。第五天，黄瓜变成透亮的黄绿色，咬一口，脆的，咸里带一点酸。我妈尝了没说话，又夹了一根。那种高兴跟考试考好不一样，它很安静，就是心里有个地方稳稳地落下了：这是我做出来的，不是我背出来的。

这本书给我的打算很小，但很具体：以后凡是书上写的结论，能做的我就做一次，做不了的我就记下来，等能做了再做。种子埋多深，腌黄瓜放多少盐，这些事书本答得出来，可只有手知道答案落下来的那一下有多踏实。猜了六年，我想从现在开始做。

I Guessed for Three Years; He Experimented for Three Days

In the book One Fun Experiment there is a passage where the author wants to know how deep a seed should be buried to sprout. Anyone can guess a number and be done with it. He was not. He prepared six cups, burying seeds at half a centimeter, one, two, three and five centimeters, watered and recorded every day, spent three full days before a pattern appeared, and repeated everything before he dared write it down. One line from the book is copied on the back of my pencil case: guess ten times, or do it once.

That line made me restless, because for six years I have been nothing but guessing. The science book says roots grow downward, and I guessed yes. It says seeds need water, and I guessed yes. In third grade our science teacher asked who had ever dug up a bean sprout to look at the soil, and almost nobody raised a hand, myself

included. It was not that we were afraid; it never occurred to us that we could dig. The printed answer feels enough. The man in this book proved otherwise: an answer you memorize belongs to the book, an answer you make grows into you.

My only experiment of my own was pickling cucumbers, and it failed. I followed the recipe loosely: brine, cucumbers, a stone on top. Three days later half of them were rotten and smelly. I concluded that books lie and pickling does not work. After reading this book I checked my notes from that day and found I had used too little salt, taken a granite stone from the flower bed, and pressed poorly. I skipped every careful step, and the experiment punished me for it.

Last weekend I did it again. Weighed salt, a washed pebble instead of granite, one look, one touch, one smell and one line of notes every day. On the fifth day the cucumbers turned a clear yellow-green, crisp when bitten, salty with an edge of sour. My mother tasted one without a word and took another. The joy was quiet, not like a good exam score: something inside settled firmly. I made this; I did not memorize it.

My plan from this book is small and concrete. For every conclusion in a book, if I can test it, I will test it once; if I cannot, I will write it down and wait. How deep to bury a seed, how much salt for cucumbers: books can answer, but only the hand knows how steady the answer lands. I have guessed for six years. From now on I want to start doing.