立起来的鸡蛋，和我先跳了起来

十月十八日 星期六 晴

这周科学老师布置了一个任务：回家让一个生鸡蛋自己站起来。我一到家就把书包扔到沙发角上，跑去厨房准备材料：冰箱里挑一个生鸡蛋，一个平盘子，一小碟盐，还有一杯水。我把这几样东西在桌上摆开，觉得自己像个正经做实验的人。

我把鸡蛋往盘子里放，两只手扶着，慢慢松手，它啪一下躺倒了，还转了个圈。再来一次，又躺倒。第三次它滚出了盘子，撞到桌脚，吓我一跳，我赶紧蹲下去看，蛋壳没裂，才放心。鸡蛋趴在桌上，像睡着一样的，怎么都不肯为我起来。

我想起老师提过一句小窍门：可以用盐。我在盘子里撒了一小堆盐，把鸡蛋立在盐堆上，特别特别慢地松手。鸡蛋晃了两下，站住了！盐粒像许多小脚，托着它的底。我盯着它，连气都不敢出，等我把气吐出来，它还站着。

我没停。我往杯子里倒盐，搅啊搅，水都变浑了。再把立起来的鸡蛋放进盐水里，它一开始沉在杯底，后来慢慢地、慢慢地往上浮，浮到露出了头顶，像小鸡从蛋里探出脑袋。我数了数手指头，一共加了六勺盐。

我跑到门口喊妈妈，声音大得邻居家的狗都叫了两声。妈妈以为我摔了，跑过来，我拉她到桌前，让她蹲下来看那个立着的鸡蛋。妈妈说，哇，怎么做到的？我说，盐帮它站起来，盐水帮它浮起来，水里的盐有力气，托着鸡蛋。妈妈给我竖了大拇指，我比考了一百分还神气。

晚上爸爸回来，我又给他表演了一遍。这回我贪快，盐撒得太少，鸡蛋又倒了。我重新补了一撮盐，它才站稳。爸爸笑我，说实验还带彩排砸的。我说不是砸，是我发现盐少了不行，多了倒没关系，这个是我自己试出来的，书上没写。

睡觉前我把这些写进日记。鸡蛋那么圆，自己站不起来，可盐堆在底下一垫，它就站起来了。我想，我大概也一样，做不到的事不是我不行，是我还没找到那堆盐。

The Egg Stood Up, and I Jumped First

Saturday, October 18. Sunny.

This week our science teacher gave us a task: go home and make a raw egg stand up by itself. The moment I got home I threw my schoolbag into the corner of the sofa and ran to the kitchen to get my materials: one raw egg from the fridge, a flat plate, a small dish of salt, and a glass of water. I lined these things up on the table and felt like a real person doing a real experiment.

I placed the egg on the plate, held it with both hands, let go slowly, and it flopped over and spun around. I tried again, and it flopped again. The third time it rolled off the plate and bumped into the table leg, and I nearly screamed. I crouched down to look: the shell was not cracked. What a relief. The egg lay on the table as

if it had fallen asleep, and it refused to get up for me.

Then I remembered a hint the teacher once gave: use salt. I sprinkled a little pile of salt on the plate, stood the egg on the salt, and let go very, very slowly. The egg wobbled twice, and it stood. The grains of salt held its bottom like many tiny feet. I stared at it and did not dare to breathe, and when I finally breathed out, it was still standing.

I did not stop there. I poured salt into the glass of water and stirred until the water turned cloudy. Then I put the standing egg into the salt water. At first it sank to the bottom, and then it floated up, slowly, slowly, until the top of it showed above the water, like a chick poking its head out of the shell. I counted on my fingers: six spoonfuls of salt.

I ran to the door and shouted for Mom, so loud that the neighbor dog barked twice. Mom thought I had fallen and came running. I pulled her to the table and made her crouch down to look at the standing egg. She said, wow, how did you do it? I said, the salt helped it stand, and the salt water helped it float. There is strength in the water now, holding the egg up. Mom gave me a thumbs-up, and I felt prouder than when I scored one hundred on a test.

When Dad came home at night, I performed the whole thing for him again. This time I was in a hurry and used too little salt, and the egg fell over. I added another pinch of salt, and only then did it stand firm. Dad laughed and asked whether experiments come with rehearsal failures. I said it was not a failure: I discovered that too little salt does not work, while too much is fine. I found that out by myself, and it is not written in any book.

Before bed I wrote all of this in my diary. The egg is so round that it cannot stand by itself, but with a pile of salt under it, it stands. I think I am the same. When I cannot do a thing, it is not because I am no good. It is because I have not found my pile of salt yet.