雨后的那座桥

雨停了，蓝老师带全班到操场角落上科学观察课。她说不许摘花、不许踩草，只许带眼睛。大家散开，周周在一个水洼前蹲下，忽然大声喊：蚂蚁过不去了！同学们一下围过来。

一队蚂蚁停在水洼跟前，顶着米粒和小虫。水洼映着云，近岸的蚂蚁挤成一团，不动了。几片叶子从旁边的树上落进水里，慢慢漂着。

周周伸手，想把一片树叶搭到水洼上，替蚂蚁铺路。蓝老师按住他的手，说，再等等。周周缩回手，把身子蹲得更低。

几只大蚂蚁爬到水洼边上，互相拉住脚，一只接一只，朝对岸伸过去。孩子们屏住气。桥在抖，风一吹抖得更厉害，可没有一只蚂蚁松开。

有同学把脸压得更低，几乎贴到地面。蓝老师也蹲下来，站在周周旁边，看着那座细得几乎看不见的桥。操场上安静下来，只剩风把树叶上的剩雨抖下来的声音。

有人数桥上的蚂蚁，数到十几只就乱了，因为过桥的一个接一个，没有停。搬粮食的蚂蚁爬上去，有的爬到一半滑住，前面的蚂蚁掉头回来，把它拉过去。

一只一只，蚂蚁过了水洼。蓝老师小声问，队尾还有几只。没有人回答。最后几只从桥上解开，跑过湿湿的地面，钻进对岸的草丛。

蚂蚁全过了水洼。孩子们一个一个站起来，腿都麻了。周周说，它们自己搭了桥。蓝老师没有讲道理，只让大家写进观察日记。周周写：蚂蚁没有绕路，它们搭了桥。蓝老师看着那队蚂蚁，笑了，让周周把日期也补上。

回教室的路上，大家绕着那个水洼走。没有人说，可都知道蚂蚁的路在脚底下。下午放学，周周把几粒米放在水洼边上，蹲了一会儿，才回家。

The Bridge After the Rain

The rain stopped, and Teacher Lan took the whole class to the corner of the playground for a science observation lesson. She said: no picking flowers, no stepping on grass, bring only your eyes. Everyone spread out. Zhou Zhou squatted in front of a puddle and suddenly shouted: the ants cannot get across! The other children gathered around at once.

A line of ants stood in front of the puddle, carrying grains of rice and small insects. The puddle reflected the clouds, and the ants near the shore crowded together and stopped moving. A few leaves fell from the tree beside into the water and drifted slowly.

Zhou Zhou reached out, wanting to lay a leaf across the puddle to make a road for the ants. Teacher Lan pressed his hand and said: wait a little longer. Zhou Zhou

pulled his hand back and crouched even lower.

Several big ants reached the edge of the puddle and hooked their legs together, one after another, stretching toward the other side. The children held their breath. The bridge trembled, and the wind made it tremble harder, but no ant let go.

One child pressed his face even lower, almost to the ground. Teacher Lan also squatted down, standing beside Zhou Zhou, looking at the bridge so thin it was almost invisible. The playground fell quiet, with only the sound of wind shaking the last rain off the leaves.

Someone counted the ants on the bridge and lost count past a dozen, because the ones crossing never stopped. The ants carrying food climbed up; one slipped halfway, and the ant in front turned back and pulled it across.

One by one, the ants crossed the puddle. Teacher Lan asked quietly: how many are left at the end. No one answered. The last few unlinked themselves from the bridge, ran over the wet ground, and disappeared into the grass on the other side.

All the ants had crossed. The children stood up one by one, their legs numb. Zhou Zhou said: they built the bridge themselves. Teacher Lan did not explain any lesson; she only asked everyone to write it in the observation diary. Zhou Zhou wrote: the ants did not go around, they built a bridge. Teacher Lan looked at the line of ants and smiled, asking Zhou Zhou to add the date as well.

On the way back to the classroom, everyone walked around the puddle. No one said anything, but everyone knew the road of the ants was under their feet. After school that afternoon, Zhou Zhou placed a few grains of rice by the puddle, squatted for a while, and then went home.