我把蚂蚁窝搬上了台阶

连下了两天雨，第三天早上终于停了。我下楼扔垃圾，走到单元门口那块洼地，忽然停住了。洼地中间积着一汪水，水面上漂着细小的土粒，还有一两只蚂蚁抱着一粒白色的卵，在水里打转。

我蹲下去看。洼地边上有一个蚂蚁洞，洞口塌了半边，水正往洞里灌。洞外的蚂蚁乱成一团，有的往高处爬，有的回头往洞里冲，又被水冲出来。我认得这块洼地，天晴时它们在这儿进进出出，排成一条黑线，我一直从旁边绕着走。

我跑回家，找来一个浅花盆、一把小铲，还有一截树枝。我在洼地边的高处选了新地方，那里的土是干的，晒得到太阳。我把花盆里的土倒掉，用小铲从旧洞口旁边铲起一小铲土，连土带蚂蚁一起放进花盆。铲的时候我屏住气，怕伤到它们。

第一铲下去，几只蚂蚁受惊四散，我停下来等它们回到铲子上，才把铲子抬起来，稳稳放到台阶上。第二铲、第三铲，我越铲越慢。卵是白色的，比米粒还小，有几只蚂蚁叼着卵不松口，我就把它们连土一起请进花盆。

花盆放上台阶最上面一格，那里水淹不到。我把树枝横在花盆和洼地之间，树枝一头搭着旧窝旁边，一头搭着花盆。蚂蚁爬上树枝，一只接一只，往花盆那边走。有的蚂蚁下到水里，把漂着的卵托起来，再爬上树枝。

妈妈在楼上喊我，问我蹲在楼下干什么。我说我在帮蚂蚁搬家。她下来看了一眼，没有说话，回屋给我拿了一条干毛巾，让我把手上的泥擦掉。

雨又下过一场，台阶上没积水。第三天傍晚，我蹲在花盆边看：新洞口排着一条细细的黑线，蚂蚁进进出出，有的顶着米粒，有的叼着白色的卵。我把小铲和树枝收好，花盆就留在台阶上，给它们当新家。

上楼的时候我回头看了一眼。洼地还积着水，可洼地边上一个蚂蚁也没有了。它们都搬到干的地方去了，住在我给它们找的那个花盆里。

I Moved the Ant Nest Up onto the Steps

It rained for two days straight. On the morning of the third day it finally stopped. I went downstairs to throw out the trash, and when I reached the low patch by the building entrance, I suddenly stopped. A pool of water had gathered in the middle of the low patch, with tiny soil particles floating on the surface, and one or two ants clinging to white eggs, spinning in the water.

I squatted down to look. By the edge of the low patch there was an ant hole. Half of the entrance had collapsed, and water was pouring in. The ants outside the hole swarmed in confusion: some climbed toward high ground, some rushed back toward the hole and were washed out again. I knew this low patch. On sunny days the ants came and went here in a thin black line, and I had always walked around it.

I ran home and got a shallow flowerpot, a small trowel, and a stick. I chose a new spot on the higher ground by the low patch, where the soil was dry and the sun reached. I emptied the flowerpot, and with the trowel I scooped small portions of soil from beside the old hole, putting the soil and the ants together into the pot. While scooping, I held my breath, afraid of hurting them.

With the first scoop, several ants scattered in alarm. I stopped and waited for them to climb back onto the trowel before lifting it steadily onto the steps. Second scoop, third scoop, I went slower and slower. The eggs were white, smaller than grains of rice. A few ants held the eggs in their jaws and would not let go, so I invited them into the pot together with the soil.

I placed the flowerpot on the top step, where water could not reach. I laid the stick across between the pot and the low patch, one end near the old nest, the other end on the pot. The ants climbed onto the stick, one after another, heading toward the pot. Some ants went down into the water, lifted the floating eggs up, and then climbed onto the stick.

My mother called from upstairs, asking what I was squatting there for. I said I was helping the ants move. She came down, took one look, said nothing, went back inside, and brought me a dry towel to wipe the mud off my hands.

It rained once more, but no water collected on the steps. On the evening of the third day, I squatted by the flowerpot and looked: a thin black line lined up at the new hole, ants coming and going, some carrying grains of rice, some holding white eggs in their jaws. I put away the trowel and the stick, and left the flowerpot on the steps as their new home.

Going upstairs, I looked back once. The low patch still held water, but there was not a single ant left at its edge. They had all moved to the dry place, into the flowerpot I had found for them.