我们是大地上的一条队列

我们是大地上的一条队列。大地不知道我们走过它多少次，我们只知道太阳升起就出发，太阳落下，就把最后一片光搬回洞里。

触角是我们的话。两根触角碰一碰，前面的路就传了过来，连一滴雨的消息也一起传了过来。我们不喊，大地那么大，喊没有用。我们把身体贴紧大地，大地替我们驮着所有的消息。

打头的那只从不回头。它信任身后的同伴，像信任自己的六条腿。走在后面的也不问要去哪里，碰一碰前面那只的身体就够了。队列是我们共用的一副身体，从洞口一直拉到草地的尽头。

我们抬起一粒米，对我们来说它是一块黄色的巨石。一片虫翅落下来，对我们是一张帆。大地把这些东西摆在我们的路上，像在试探我们的肩膀还硬不硬，步子还齐不齐。

太阳升到头顶的时候，路面发烫，大地把热都收在自己身上，只留一点影子给路边的草。我们贴着影子走，影子挪一寸，我们跟一寸。走累了也不停，把步子放小一点，队列就短不了。谁摔倒了，后面的绕开他，把他驮的东西分着背走，没有一个东西掉在路中间。

有时一只巨脚落下来，大地晃了一下。队列散了，像一句被风吹散的话。可是很快，触角一根一根重新找到触角，那句话又被拼了回来，比原来更直。

下雨的时候，大地变软，我们往高处爬，带着卵，带着谷粒，带着整个冬天的记忆。雨点砸在我们的背上，我们把背互相抵住。队列没有断，队列把自己搭成了一座桥。

我们中有一些再也回不来。一只麻雀带走了一只，一滴蜜留住了一只。队列不停下来哀悼，我们把它驮的东西接过来，把它没走完的路走完。大地记得每一个倒在路上的小小的身体。

夜深了，最后一只进了洞。大地安静下来，可它知道，明天天亮我们还会列队。它一直在等我们，像母亲等孩子回家那样，轻轻地等。

We Are a Column Marching on the Earth

We are a column marching on the earth. The earth does not know how many times we have crossed it. We only know that we set out when the sun rises, and we carry the last piece of light back into our home when it sets.

Our antennae are our words. When two antennae touch, the road ahead is passed along, along with the news of a falling raindrop. We do not shout. The earth is so wide that shouting is useless. We press our bodies close to the ground, and the earth carries every message for us.

The one at the front never looks back. It trusts the one behind as much as it trusts its own six legs. The one behind asks no questions. A touch on the body in front is enough. The column is one shared body of ours, stretching from the mouth of the nest to the far end of the grass.

We lift a grain of rice, and to us it is a yellow boulder. A wing falls down, and to us it is a sail. The earth places these things in our path, as if testing whether our shoulders are still hard and our steps still even.

When the sun climbs overhead, the ground grows hot, and the earth keeps the heat inside itself, leaving only a little shade for the grass at the roadside. We walk along the shade, and when it moves an inch, we move an inch. When we are tired we do not stop; we only shorten our steps, and the column never grows shorter. If one of us falls, the ones behind step around and share the load on his back, so that nothing is ever left lying in the middle of the road.

Sometimes a giant foot comes down and the earth shakes. The column scatters like a sentence blown apart by the wind. Before long, the antennae find each other again, one by one, and the sentence is put back together, straighter than before.

When rain falls, the earth turns soft. We climb to higher ground, carrying our eggs, the grain, and the memory of a whole winter. The rain beats on our backs, and we press our backs against each other. The column does not break. The column builds itself into a bridge.

Some of us will not come back. A sparrow took one away, and a drop of honey held one fast. The column does not stop to mourn. We take over what it carried and finish the road it left half done. The earth remembers every small body that fell along the way.

When night is deep, the last of us enters the nest. The earth grows quiet, but it knows we will line up again at dawn. It has always been waiting for us, gently, the way a mother waits for her children to come home.