墙根下的搬家天

一大早，还没上课，我蹲在墙根底下一嗓子喊出去：蚂蚁搬家啦！一群人呼啦一下围过来，连后排那个最高的男生都挤进来了。

队伍好长，从墙缝一直排到草垛底下的洞口，黑黑的、细细的，像谁用铅笔画的一条线。没有人喊口令，它们却排得整整齐齐，去的一列，回的一列，谁也不撞谁。

每只蚂蚁嘴里都衔着东西。有的衔白米粒，有的衔圆圆的虫卵，有的衔黄色的饼干屑，还有的什么也没衔，跑来跑去，这里碰碰触角，那里碰碰触角，比谁都忙。

一粒米太大，一只蚂蚁搬不动，三只围上去，一边一只，抬起来走。它们走得飞快，米粒在半空一晃一晃，像一叶黄色的小船漂在风上。

新蚁巢在一块大石头底下，洞口堆着刚挖出来的黄土，一粒一粒，码得跟我们堆的沙堡一样整齐。有几只守在洞口，用触角碰碰进来的蚂蚁，再把它们领进去。

队伍里还有一只特别大的，嘴里衔着一只绿虫子，虫子比它整个身子都长，它走得却稳稳的，六条腿一步一步数着走。有只小蚂蚁想帮忙，凑上去碰了碰它的触角，它摇摇头，继续走，像大人不让小孩提重东西。

那么热闹，却没有一点声音。我们看得屏住气，后来连老师也蹲了下来。有人起了头：小蚂蚁，搬家忙，抬米粒，搬虫卵，一队接一队。我们跟着一起念，念得整面墙根都在响，蚂蚁们好像走得更快了。

最后一只蚂蚁钻进洞，队伍不见了。上课铃响，我们拍拍手往教室跑，约好放学还来，看看新家舒不舒服。

那一天我总想起那条队伍。那么多蚂蚁，搬那么多东西，没有一个是闲着的。雨后的地还湿着，它们把整个家搬到了干的地方。

Moving Day at the Wall

Early in the morning, before class, I crouched down at the corner of the wall and shouted that the ants were moving house. The whole group came crowding over, and even the tallest boy in the back row squeezed in to look.

The procession was long, reaching from a crack in the wall to a hole under a grass clump, thin and black, like a line drawn with a pencil. Nobody told them to line up, yet they walked in two neat rows, one going and one coming, never bumping into each other.

Each ant carried something in its mouth. Some carried white grains of rice, some carried round insect eggs, some carried yellow crumbs, and some carried nothing at all but ran back and forth, touching antennae here and there, busier than everyone

else.

A grain of rice was too heavy for one ant, so three of them surrounded it, one on each side, and lifted it as they walked. They walked so quickly that the rice grain swayed in the air, like a small yellow boat floating on the wind.

The new nest was under a big stone, with a pile of fresh yellow soil at the entrance, grain by grain, stacked as neatly as the sandcastles we build in the sandbox. A few ants stood at the entrance and touched the arriving ants with their antennae, then led them inside.

In the line there was also one very large ant carrying a green caterpillar in its mouth, longer than its whole body, yet it walked steadily, counting off its six legs step by step. A small ant tried to help and touched its antennae, but it shook its head and kept going, like a grown-up refusing to let a child carry something heavy.

It was so lively, yet nobody made a sound. We watched with our breath held, and later even the teacher crouched down to look. One of us started a little rhyme: little ants, moving day, carrying rice, carrying eggs, one line after another. We all recited it together until the whole corner of the wall seemed to ring, and the ants seemed to walk even faster.

When the last ant went into the hole, the line disappeared. The bell rang, we brushed our hands and ran to class, promising to come back after school and see whether the new nest was comfortable.

All day I kept thinking about that line. So many ants, carrying so many things, and not one of them was idle. The earth was still wet from the rain, and they had moved their whole home onto dry ground.