它们去哪儿

学新课那天，老师带我们到墙根去看蚂蚁搬家。回到教室，我们把看到的编成一首诗写在黑板上，男生问，女生答，排好队到讲台前往前朗诵。

男生问：长长的队伍去哪儿？女生答：搬家啦，去高处！嘴里衔的什么呀？白米粒，圆虫卵！我们的声音在窗户上弹来弹去，男生用拳头在桌上打拍子，一句一响，又亮又脆。

男生问：它们为什么从来不迷路？女生答：触角碰一碰，路就传开了！男生问：全队谁最有力气？女生答：抬米粒的那只，还有它旁边的两只！念到这一句，全班互相看了看，谁都明白最有力气的是大家在一起。

诗一共二十行，每一行里都有东西：队列、米粒、蚁巢、黄土。老师每写完一行就点一下头，我们念到那里就停一拍，像敲一面小鼓。

后排的男生自告奋勇加了一行：下雨天，它们往高处走！老师把它写进诗里，念到这一行，全班的声音格外大。科学课上学过的东西，原来真的能让蚂蚁做给我们看。

女生问：新家在哪里？男生答：大石头底下，又干又暖和！谁把新家修好的？一粒黄土一粒黄土修好的！念这两行的时候，我想起新巢门口那堆土，一粒一粒，像被无数只小手码上去的。

男生问最后一行：明天它们还出来吗？女生答：出来！太阳一出，它们就排队出门找吃的！念完，教室里全是笑声和掌声，墙根下的蚂蚁一点也没被我们吓着。

后来每次经过墙根，我们都要念上几句。句子好记，队列、米粒、蚁巢都在里面。诗短短的，二十行，可它热闹，像蚂蚁搬家的那个早上，也像我们全班一起出声的那些早晨。念到高兴处，连路过的值日生都要停下来跟一句。

Where Are They Going

The day we started a new lesson, the teacher took us to the corner of the wall to watch the ants moving house. Back in the classroom we turned what we saw into a poem and wrote it on the blackboard, the boys asking and the girls answering, then lined up at the front of the class to recite it.

The boys asked: where is that long column going? The girls answered: moving house, to higher ground! What do they carry in their mouths? White rice grains and round insect eggs! Our voices bounced off the windows, and the boys beat the rhythm on their desks with their fists, one beat for every line, bright and clear.

The boys asked: why do they never get lost? The girls answered: two antennae touch, and the road is passed along! The boys asked: who is the strongest in the whole crew? The girls answered: the one lifting the rice grain, and the two beside it! When we recited this line, the whole class looked at one another, and everyone understood that the strongest is all of them together.

The poem had twenty lines, and every line held something: the procession, the rice grain, the nest, the yellow soil. After each line the teacher nodded, and we left a beat of silence there, like tapping a small drum.

A boy in the back row volunteered one more line: on rainy days they march to higher ground! The teacher wrote it into the poem, and when we recited that line the whole class rang out louder than ever. What we had learned in science class, it turned out, was real enough for the ants to demonstrate for us.

The girls asked: where is the new home? The boys answered: under the big stone, dry and warm! Who built it? One grain of yellow soil at a time! As we recited these lines, I remembered the pile of soil at the entrance of the new nest, grain by grain, as if stacked by countless tiny hands.

The boys asked the last line: will they come out again tomorrow? The girls answered: they will! When the sun is up, they will line up and go out to find food! When we finished, the classroom filled with laughter and clapping, and the ants at the wall were not frightened by us at all.

After that, every time we passed the corner of the wall, we recited a couple of lines. The lines were easy to remember, and the procession, the rice grain, and the nest were all inside them. The poem was short, only twenty lines, yet it was lively, like the morning the ants moved house, and like all the mornings our whole class spoke out loud together. When we reached the fun parts, even the student on duty walking past would stop and shout a line along with us.