我们把家抬起来

我们搬家那天，是后半夜决定的。前夜的雨把老蚁巢灌了，水一寸一寸往里涨，我们得在天亮前把全家搬到高的地方去。

队伍从老巢一直拉到石头底下的新巢，一个跟一个，像一条铺在地上的黑丝带。出去的身上都有东西，回来的身上都是空的，两条线谁也不挡谁。

先搬的是虫卵。虫卵白白的、圆圆的、软软的，每只蚂蚁用嘴轻轻衔着一枚，走得比平时慢，像衔着世界上最金贵的东西。

我衔着一粒米，够我们全家吃好多天。两个伙伴一头一个，我抬中间，米粒架在我们肩上走。路上有坑，有石子，还有一根横着的枯枝，谁也没有绊倒，因为大家都在看别人的步子。

路上热闹，可不乱。触角碰一碰，就知道哪儿要拐弯。谁手滑掉了东西，旁边两只马上过去帮着捡起来，再各自回到自己的位置，像什么都没发生。

洞口有一只年长的蚂蚁，不搬东西，只把进来的每一只都碰一遍触角，像在点名。少一只，它就朝老巢的方向看一次。等最后一只进来，它的触角才松下来，垂在头上。

新蚁巢在大石头底下，干的，暖的，洞口堆着刚挖出来的黄土。我们把东西一件一件抬进去：米粒、饼屑、虫卵，还有去年冬天藏下的记忆。

最后一件东西抬进去的时候，太阳已经高了。我们又排成队回去，接最后几个走不动的长辈。一只留在它们旁边，一步一步领路。谁也不能落在老巢里。

夜里，我们躺在新巢中，米粒码在身边整整齐齐。雨又下了，砸在大石头上，水再也进不来。我们用自己的腿搬了家，没有一个闲着，也没有一个被丢下。

天亮以后，石头底下的洞口又排出一条队伍，去的一列，回的一列，像什么都没发生过，又像一切都重新开始。大地湿湿的，我们的路干干的。

We Are Carrying Our Home

We decided to move in the middle of the night. The rain of the night before had filled our old nest, and the water rose inch by inch, so the whole family had to reach higher ground before dawn.

The procession stretched from the old nest to the new one under the stone, one after another, like a black ribbon laid across the ground. Those going out carried something; those coming back carried nothing. The two lines never blocked each other.

First we carried the eggs. They were white and round and soft, and each ant held one gently in its mouth, walking more slowly than usual, as if carrying the most precious thing in the world.

I carried a grain of rice, big enough for my whole family to eat for days. Two companions lifted the two ends and I lifted the middle, and the rice grain walked on our shoulders. The road had holes, pebbles, and a fallen twig lying across it, yet nobody stumbled, because everyone watched the steps of the others.

On the road it was lively but not chaotic. When antennae touched, everyone knew where to turn. If someone dropped something, two neighbors hurried over to pick it up, then returned to their places as if nothing had happened.

At the entrance stood an elder ant who carried nothing and only touched the antennae of every ant that came in, as if taking roll call. When one was missing, it looked toward the old nest. Only when the last one came in did its antennae relax and droop down over its head.

The new nest was under a big stone, dry and warm, with a pile of fresh yellow soil at the entrance. We carried things in one by one: rice grains, crumbs, insect eggs, and the memory we had stored last winter.

When the last thing was inside, the sun was high. We lined up again and went back for the last few elders who could not walk fast. One of us stayed beside them and guided them step by step. Nobody was allowed to be left behind in the old nest.

At night we lay in the new nest with the rice grains stacked neatly beside us. The rain fell again and beat on the big stone, but the water could not reach us anymore. We had moved our home with our own legs, and not one of us was idle, and not one of us was left behind.

After dawn, a line formed again at the mouth of the hole under the stone, one row going out and one row coming back, as if nothing had happened, and yet as if everything had begun again. The earth was wet, and our road was dry.