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.

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.

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.