十一天的绿豆，喂出了我的作文

我的作文本第一页上，老师用红笔写过四个字：内容空洞。那篇《第一次做饭》，我写了整整一页的开心，却没写清楚油温多少、鸡蛋下锅时响了多大一声。那时我不明白，好作文里的东西到底从哪里来。后来一次养绿豆的实验，把答案递到了我手上。

科学课布置了观察绿豆发芽，要连续记录十一天。第一周我像以前写日记那样，每天一行：今天浇水了，今天发芽了。第五天老师检查记录本，翻了两页就合上，问我：豆瓣裂开是在第几天？先裂的是哪一头？芽是直的还是弯的？我一个字也答不上来。记录本上那些今天也怎样、今天也怎样，全是一句套话。

从第六天开始，我换了一种记法。每天放学先蹲到杯子前，拿一把尺子、一支笔。水位线在杯子的第几条刻度上，我写数字；豆瓣裂开时露出一点白，像抿开嘴笑，我写看到的；根须长到四厘米那天，我把鼻子凑过去闻，有一股淡淡的生豆子味，我也写下来。妈妈笑我：你这是在给豆芽做档案。我说档案才好，档案里有真东西。

记录攒到第十一天，作文课正好写《我的第一次实验》。我翻开记录本抄了一遍——不对，不是抄，是挑。我挑出第六天烂掉的两颗，挑出根须绕成圈的那颗，挑出妈妈那句档案。写完一数，六百多字，没有一句是我编的。老师这次批的是：细节扎实。

回头看，那十一天的记录本比这篇作文更值钱。它教会我一件之前怎么也想不通的事：观察日记不是作文的作业本，是作文的原料库。每天那几行数字和看到的画面，当时觉得琐碎，写的时候全用上了。以前我总对着题目想词，词想出来也是空的；现在我明白，先让手上有活儿，眼睛里有东西，笔才有东西可倒。

现在我的抽屉里还留着那个记录本，纸边起了毛。它提醒我：数字不会骗人，细节不会骗人。写之前，先亲手养出一样东西来。

Eleven Days of Bean Sprouts Fed My Essay

On the first page of my essay notebook, my teacher once wrote four words in red ink: empty content. That piece, My First Time Cooking, filled a whole page with how happy I was, yet never said how hot the oil was or how loud the egg cracked when it went in. Back then I did not understand where the real stuff in a good essay comes from. Later, one experiment with bean sprouts handed me the answer.

Our science class assigned an observation of sprouting mung beans, to be recorded for eleven days straight. In the first week I wrote the way I used to write diaries, one line a day: watered today, sprouted today. On the fifth day the teacher checked our notebooks, flipped two pages, closed mine, and asked: on which day did the seed leaves split? Which end split first? Was the sprout straight or crooked? I could not answer a single one. All those today-this, today-that lines were stock phrases.

From the sixth day I changed my method. After school I squatted by the cup first, with a ruler and a pen. I wrote numbers for where the water line sat against the cup marks. I wrote what I saw when the seed leaves split and showed a bit of white, like a mouth just opening into a smile. On the day the root reached four centimeters, I put my nose close and smelled a faint raw-bean smell, and I wrote that down too. My mother laughed: you are making a file for the sprout. I said files are good, files hold real things.

By day eleven the notes were full, and the writing class asked for My First Experiment. I opened the notebook and copied it over - no, not copied, picked. I picked the two beans that rotted on day six, the one whose root curled into a circle, and my mother line about the file. When I finished, I counted: over six hundred words, and not one sentence was invented. This time the teacher wrote: solid details.

Looking back, those eleven days of notes were worth more than the essay itself. They taught me something I could never figure out before: an observation diary is not homework for essays, it is the warehouse of raw material for them. Those few lines of numbers and images each day felt trivial at the time, yet every one of them went into the essay. I used to stare at a title and fish for words, and the words came out hollow. Now I understand: let the hands do work first, let the eyes catch things, and the pen will have something to pour out.

The notebook still sits in my drawer, its paper edges frayed. It reminds me: numbers do not lie, details do not lie. Before writing, grow something real with your own hands.

我的观察本里住着一百个小实验

三年级开始，妈妈给我一个硬皮本，说专门用来记你看到的东西。头半年我只记过种子发芽，后来记的东西越来越杂：泡糖水、听冰糖、看盐水结白边。现在这个本子里住着一百多个小实验，我的作文有一半是从里面挑出来的。

本子前几页的字又乱又大。记泡糖水那次，我一开始只写了一句糖一会儿就化了。妈妈看了一眼，问我：一会儿是多久？你数了几勺？从那以后我记东西先写数字。冷水和温水各一杯，每分钟加一勺糖、搅拌十圈。温水到第七勺，杯底开始躺下细小的糖粒；冷水到第四勺，糖就站在杯底不化了。我在旁边写：温水比冷水能吞下更多的糖。这是我自己得出的句子，不是从作文书上抄的。

记到第三个本子，我不光用眼睛，还用鼻子和耳朵。冰糖丢进热水，会发出很细的咔嚓声，像有人在很远的地方掰小树枝。我把这个声音写进《我的妈妈》，因为妈妈煮汤炒糖色的时候，我就站在灶边听。妈妈听见我念那段，说：你连这个都记得。我说本子里记着呢，第七页。

本子里也记失败。盐水挂绳结晶，我挂了三天，杯沿结出一圈白边，正高兴，第四天杯子被碰倒，盐水泼了一桌。我在记录里写：失败，前功尽弃，下次用带盖的杯子。后来写《一次失败》，我把泼在桌上的盐水画成一小片地图，把白边写成雪。老师评语是：有现场。

这些记录还教会我记人说的话。妈妈看糖水时说温水能吞糖，同学看结晶时说像下雪，我都原样记下来。写作文的时候，人物一开口，就是他们真说过的话，不用我编。

现在我每天早上翻开观察本看一眼，像运动员看训练表。它让我明白：观察不是看一眼就过去，是把稍纵即逝的东西固定下来。数字会固定，声音会固定，别人的一句话也会固定。固定下来的东西，就是下一篇文章的种子。写作的功夫，一半在写之前。

A Hundred Small Experiments Live in My Observation Book

In third grade, my mother gave me a hardcover notebook and said it was only for recording what you see. In the first half year I recorded nothing but seeds sprouting. Later the entries grew mixed: dissolving sugar in water, listening to rock candy, watching salt water leave a white rim. Today that book houses over a hundred small experiments, and half of my essays were picked out of it.

The handwriting on the early pages is messy and huge. That time with the sugar water, I started with one line: the sugar melted after a while. One glance at it, my mother asked: how long is a while? How many spoonfuls did you count? Since then I write numbers first. One cup of cold water, one of warm; one spoonful of sugar every minute, stirred ten turns. In the warm cup, at the seventh spoonful, fine grains of sugar began to lie on the bottom; in the cold cup, at the fourth, the sugar stood there and refused to melt. I wrote beside it: warm water can swallow more sugar than cold. That sentence was mine, not copied from an essay book.

By the third notebook I used my nose and ears, not just my eyes. Rock candy dropped into hot water gives off a fine crackling, like someone snapping small twigs far away. I wrote that sound into My Mother, because while she stir-fried sugar for soup I stood by the stove listening. When she heard me read that part aloud, she said: you remembered even that. I said it is in the book, page seven.

The book also keeps failures. For salt water crystals on a string, I hung it three days, and a white rim formed on the cup edge. Just as I got excited, on day four the cup got knocked over and salt water spread across the table. My entry read: failed, all work lost, next time use a cup with a lid. Later, writing One Failure, I drew the spilled salt water as a small map on the table and wrote the white rim as snow. The teacher comment was: you were there.

These records also taught me to write down what people say. My mother said warm

water can swallow sugar; a classmate said the crystals look like snow. I kept their words as they were. In an essay, when a character opens a mouth, it is what they truly said, and I do not have to invent it.

Now I open the observation book every morning for a glance, the way an athlete checks a training log. It taught me that observing is not one passing look; it is pinning down what vanishes in a second. Numbers get pinned, sounds get pinned, one sentence from someone else gets pinned too. What gets pinned is the seed of the next piece. Half the craft of writing happens before the writing.

被贴到展示栏的那篇周记

上周三，我的周记被语文老师用磁铁贴到了教室后面的展示栏。课间总有同学去抄最后一段。没人知道，那篇周记的原料，是我科学课上一个塌掉的纸桥，和一本涂得乱七八糟的观察记录。

科学课搭纸桥，桥墩是两摞书，桥面是一张A4纸。第一次，我把纸平摊上去，放第一个钩码没事，放到第二个，桥面中间弯出一个难看的角度，塌了。第二次，我把纸折出波浪形的折痕再放，钩码加到十二个才塌。第三次，我在折痕两侧各立了一道纸墙，十九个。我们小组把三次都记下来，包括塌的那次。我还多记了一句：塌的时候，纸角先弯。

那天晚上我把记录摊在桌上写周记。写到塌的那一次，我犹豫过，想把它略过去，只写十九个钩码的风光。笔尖悬了一会儿，还是照实写了：先写第二个钩码压塌桥面时我们几个同时缩手的动作，再写折痕，再写十九个。写完我读了一遍，忽然发现，塌的那一段最好看。因为缩手的动作是真的，纸角先弯是我自己看出来的。

周记交上去，第二天老师把我叫到办公室。她指着被我涂掉的一行问：这里原来写的什么？我说：塌的时候，纸角先弯。老师说：这句留着才对，你贴展示栏吧。她告诉我，全班写纸桥的周记里，只有我写了桥塌的样子。别人的桥都从放钩码开始，稳稳当当升到十九个，读起来像说明书。

这件事让我重新认识了观察日记。以前我以为那是科学老师布置的任务，写完就完。现在我明白，它是给未来的自己留证据。写周记的时候，我不用编，只要回到记录本里，回到那个塌掉的下午：钩码碰桌面的声音、我们缩手的动作、纸弯下去的角度，全在纸上等着我。

展示栏那篇周记现在还贴着。有同学问我怎么写得这么像真的。我说你去把科学老师的实验记录借来看一遍就知道了。真实的记录，包括失败、意外和涂改的痕迹，比编出来的漂亮句子有力量。这是我这个学期最大的一条心得。

The Weekly Journal Pinned to the Display Board

Last Wednesday, my weekly journal got pinned to the display board at the back of the classroom by our Chinese teacher with a magnet. During breaks, classmates kept copying down its last paragraph. No one knew that the raw material of that journal was a collapsed paper bridge from science class and an observation notebook scribbled all over.

In science class we built paper bridges, with stacks of books as piers and a single A4 sheet as the deck. The first time, I laid the paper flat. The first weight was fine; at the second, the middle of the deck bent into an ugly angle and the bridge collapsed. The second time, I folded wave-shaped creases into the paper, and it took twelve weights to bring it down. The third time, I stood a paper wall along each side of the creases, and it held nineteen. Our group recorded all three rounds, including the collapse. I added one extra line: when it fell, the corners bent first.

That evening I spread the notes on my desk and wrote the journal. When I reached the collapse, I hesitated. I wanted to skip it and write only the glory of nineteen weights. My pen tip hovered, then I wrote it straight anyway: first the way we all pulled our hands back when the second weight crushed the deck, then the creases, then the nineteen. When I finished I read it once and suddenly saw that the collapse was the best part. Because the pulled-back hands were real, and the corners bending first was something I spotted myself.

The next day after we handed it in, the teacher called me to the office. She pointed at a line I had crossed out and asked: what was written here? I said: when it fell, the corners bent first. She said that line deserved to stay, and told me to pin the piece to the display board. She said that among all the paper-bridge journals in class, mine was the only one that described how the bridge fell. Everyone else started at placing weights and climbed steadily to nineteen, reading like an instruction manual.

This made me see observation diaries differently. I used to think they were tasks assigned by the science teacher, done and over. Now I understand they are evidence left for the future self. Writing the journal, I did not invent anything. I only went back to the notebook, back to that collapsed afternoon: the sound of weights hitting the desk, our hands pulling back, the angle of the bending paper - all of it waited for me on paper.

The piece on the display board is still up. When classmates ask how I made it feel so real, I tell them to borrow the science teacher experiment records and read them once. Honest records, failures, accidents, and crossed-out marks included, carry more power than pretty invented sentences. That is the biggest lesson I took away

this term.