书包里那个记菜园的小红本

上初中以后，语文老师要求每周一篇周记。头几个星期，我坐在书桌前翻来覆去地想，写来写去就是上学、吃饭、睡觉，连我自己都不想看第二遍。后来是爷爷的菜园，救了我的周记，也救了我那篇寒假大作文。

转折是从一个小红本开始的。那个周末去乡下，爷爷在菜园里给蚕豆培土，我蹲在田埂上玩手机。爷爷递过来一个红皮小本和一支铅笔：你闲着也是闲着，回去的路上记一样东西，今天你在菜园里看到的。我嘟囔着接过来，想了想，记了一句：蚕豆苗矮矮的，叶子边上卷着，土埋到脖子。就这一句，交差了。

没想到第二个周末，我自己从书包里摸出了那个小红本。那天下了小雨，菜园里的泥是黑的、亮的，蚯蚓爬到路面又慌慌张张钻回去，白菜叶上的雨珠滚来滚去，就是不散。我蹲在那里记了大半页，记完才发现手上有泥，鞋也湿了，可心里是满的。从那以后，小红本一直塞在书包夹层里，去一次菜园就记一条：丝瓜的卷须往哪边绕，蚂蚱从哪片叶子上跳起来，爷爷的草帽为什么有一道裂口用胶带粘着。

寒假作业里有一篇大作文，题目是《一种植物》。班里同学写兰花的、写仙人掌的都有，我坐在桌前翻开小红本，一条一条看过去，看到去年冬天那条：霜下了，别的菜都蔫了，蚕豆苗还直着腰，叶子上那层白霜一化，绿得发亮。我就写它。写蚕豆怎么在冷天里站着，写爷爷说蚕豆是笨作物，不用管，自己会过冬，写开春时它开出带紫边的白花，花心里藏着一小滴蜜。那篇作文我写得又快又顺，像有人把话递到我嘴边。

作文发下来，老师在末尾写了一行批语：有生活的气息，读得到泥土味。我把那行字看了三遍。放学骑车去乡下，跟爷爷晃本子，爷爷翻开看，看得比我还慢，半天说了一句：记东西好，记下来的东西不会丢。

现在我书包里那个小红本已经写满了，边角都起了毛。它里面没有一句好词好句，全是蚕豆、蚯蚓、霜、草帽这类不起眼的东西。可我知道，等哪天要写点什么，它们都在。那些字不是我想出来的，是菜园一片叶子一片叶子交给我的。

The Little Red Notebook in My Schoolbag

After entering middle school, the language teacher required a weekly journal entry. For the first few weeks I tossed and turned at my desk, and whatever I wrote came down to school, meals, and sleep; even I did not want to read it twice. In the end it was grandpa vegetable garden that saved my journal, and also saved that big composition assigned over winter break.

The turning point began with a little red notebook. That weekend in the countryside, grandpa was hilling soil around the fava beans while I squatted on the ridge playing on my phone. He handed me a small red-covered book and a pencil: since you are idle anyway, on the way home write down one thing you saw in the garden

today. I grumbled, took it, thought for a moment, and wrote one line: the fava bean seedlings are short, the leaf edges curl, and the soil is mounded up to their necks. One line, and the job was done.

I did not expect that the next weekend I would dig the red notebook out of my schoolbag on my own. It had drizzled that day; the mud in the garden was black and glossy, earthworms crawled onto the path and hurried back in, and rain beads rolled on the cabbage leaves without scattering. I crouched and filled most of a page, and only finished noticing the mud on my hands and the wet shoes when I stood up, though my heart felt full. After that the red notebook stayed in the hidden pocket of my schoolbag, and one entry went in for every visit: which way the loofah tendrils coil, from which leaf a grasshopper jumps, why the straw hat of my grandpa has a crack patched with tape.

The winter break homework included a long composition titled one plant. Classmates wrote about orchids and cacti. I sat at my desk, opened the red notebook, read entry by entry, and came to the line from last winter: frost fell, other vegetables wilted, but the fava bean seedlings still stood straight, and when the white frost on their leaves melted they turned a shining green. I wrote about that. I wrote how fava beans stand through cold days, how grandpa calls the fava bean a plain crop that needs no tending and survives winter on its own, and how in spring it opens white flowers edged with purple, each blossom hiding a tiny drop of nectar. That composition came out fast and smooth, as if someone were passing the words to my lips.

When the papers came back, the teacher had written one line at the end: it carries the breath of real life; you can smell the soil through it. I read that line three times. After school I rode my bike to the countryside and waved the notebook at grandpa. He opened it and read more slowly than I did, and after a long while said: keeping records is good; what you write down will not get lost.

Now the red notebook in my schoolbag is full, its corners frayed. Not one line in it is a fine phrase; it is all fava beans, earthworms, frost, straw hats, and other unremarkable things. But I know that whenever I need to write something, they are all there. Those words were not invented in my head; the garden handed them to me leaf by leaf.