浇水的学问，爷爷的木瓢教给我的

暑假我在乡下爷爷家，每天最烦的事就是被喊去菜园浇水。一担水从井边挑到地里，肩膀又酸又疼，我浇得越来越潦草，瓢一歪，水泼在地皮上就算完事。直到那天中午，我闯了祸。

那天日头正毒，地烫得能烙饼。我图省事，中午把一桶水哗啦全泼在青菜苗上，想着太阳大，浇完正好凉快。傍晚爷爷去菜园，蹲在地边看了半天，把我喊过去：你看，中午浇了水的这几棵，叶子蔫得贴在地上了。我不信：水不是救命的吗，怎么浇了反而蔫？

爷爷没直接答，拎起木瓢让我跟他浇一遍地。他先绕着地走，看土的颜色，哪块土发白才浇哪块。他把水浇在菜根边上，不是泼在叶子上，瓢放得很低，水贴着地面慢慢渗。他说：正午地热，冷水一激，根受不了，就像人大热天猛灌凉水也要肚子疼。水要浇在根上，慢慢浇，让它渗下去，泼在叶面上，太阳一晒全蒸了，根还是喝不着。

我照着做。瓢放低，水放慢，浇到第三垄，我看见水在土里洇出一个深色圆，慢慢往下走，土从发白变成发黑。第二天去看，头天蔫的那几棵青菜，叶子又立起来了。我蹲在地边看了好久，心里有种说不出的高兴。

后来整个暑假的浇水活都归我，我再也不中午浇，也不泼叶子。我还学会了看天：连着晴天要浇透，下雨天不用浇，早上浇比晚上好。爷爷说，菜园里的水最诚实，你糊弄它，它就糊弄菜。

开学后同学问我暑假学了什么，我说我学会了浇水。他们笑，浇水谁不会。可我知道这里头的讲究：避开正午、浇根不浇叶、慢水渗深根。这些是课本上没有的。我还明白了一个理：做事不能图快，水泼得再猛，根喝不着等于白浇；看着慢，水却到了最需要的地方。学习原来也是这样，我把它记在心里，一辈子用得上。

The Art of Watering That Grandpa Wooden Dipper Taught Me

During summer vacation I stayed at my grandpa home in the countryside. The thing I disliked most each day was being called to water the garden. Carrying a pole of water from the well to the plot made my shoulders sore, and my watering grew sloppier and sloppier: tilt the dipper, splash the water on the surface, done. Until at noon one day I made a mess of things.

The sun was fierce that day, the ground hot enough to fry a pancake. To save trouble I dumped a whole bucket over the greens at high noon, thinking the big sun would dry it fast and cool things off. In the evening grandpa went to the garden, crouched at the edge for a long look, and called me over: look, these few plants watered at noon have their leaves wilted flat onto the ground. I could not believe it: is not water life-saving? Why would watering make them wilt?

Grandpa did not answer directly. He picked up the wooden dipper and told me to water a round of the plot with him. First he walked around the plot reading the color of the soil, watering only the patches gone pale. He poured the water beside the

roots, not over the leaves, holding the dipper low so the water hugged the ground and sank in slowly. He said: at noon the soil is hot, and a shock of cold water hurts the roots, just as gulping icy water on a scorching day gives a person a stomachache. Water goes to the roots, poured slowly so it seeps down; splashed on the leaves, the sun evaporates it all and the roots still drink nothing.

I did as he showed. Dipper low, water slow. By the third row I watched the water spread into a dark circle in the soil and travel downward, the pale earth turning black. The next day the greens that had wilted were standing up again. I crouched at the edge of the plot for a long time, with a joy I cannot name.

For the rest of that summer the watering was mine. I never watered at noon again, and never splashed the leaves. I also learned to read the sky: long clear days need a deep soak, rainy days need none, and morning is better than evening. Grandpa said water in a garden is the most honest thing; fake it, and it will fake the vegetables.

After school started, classmates asked what I learned over summer. I said I learned to water. They laughed: who cannot water? But I know the craft in it: avoid noon, water the roots not the leaves, let slow water reach deep roots. None of this is in textbooks. I also understood one principle: do not rush. No matter how hard you splash, if the roots drink nothing it is wasted; what looks slow still carries water to exactly where it is needed. Learning works the same way. I keep this in my heart, and it will serve me a lifetime.