百宝箱

四年级上学期，我的作文分数总在及格线上下晃。不是写不完，是写出来干巴巴，老师批语回回是「内容空洞」。好朋友孙小禾有个宝贝本子，牛皮纸包着皮，她叫它「百宝箱」，里面全是她抄的好词好句。她跟我说：她教我的是怎么用百宝箱，不是叫我去抄百宝箱。

她先让我准备一个本子，也抄好词好句。我抄得飞快，一个星期抄满两页，得意地给她看。她翻了一遍，指着其中一句「太阳像大火球」说：这句你抄了，可你用过吗？我摇头。她说：抄一百句不用，不如用熟一句。从那天起她的规矩是：每周只抄五句，但每句必须当天造一个句子，造的句子必须是我们班真发生过的事。

这就是她分享的方法：少抄，多用。我抄过一句「心里像揣了只兔子」，当天就写进日记：数学课发卷子，老师念到我的名字，我心里像揣了只兔子，跳得耳朵嗡嗡响。第二天日记本发下来，老师在那句下面画了波浪线。我头一回发现，好句子不是抄来好看，是用出来才好看。

造句比抄还难。第一周我只造出两句，孙小禾让我重造，说那不是班里真发生的事，是我编的。我想了想，班里真发生的是王浩把水桶碰倒，水在地上淌了一大片。我写水淌了一大片那句，她说这就对了。从那以后我上课专门留意班里的事，造的句子越来越长。

进步是攒出来的。一个月后，我的作文里开始出现自己的句子，不是抄的，是仿着抄来的句子长出来的。两个月后，我的作文第一次上了九十分。期末写「我的好朋友」，我写孙小禾翻本子时「眉头一皱一皱的，像在数页码」，老师批了四个字：活灵活现。

孙小禾看了我的百宝箱，说她的百宝箱可以退休了。我不肯，两个本子摞在一起，用一根皮筋捆着。她说：捆着就捆着，反正以后是你的。

这个心得我想告诉同学：朋友教我的不是好词好句，是个笨办法——少抄多用，抄一句用一句。抄是往兜里装种子，用才是往地里种。兜里装满不种，一季也打不出粮食。我现在兜里有种子，地里也有苗了。

The Treasure Box Notebook

In the first term of fourth grade my composition scores always wobbled around the passing line. It was not that I could not finish writing; what came out was dry and bare, and the comment of the teacher read empty content every time. My good friend Sun Xiaohe had a treasure of a notebook, its cover wrapped in kraft paper, and she called it her treasure box, because inside it were all the good words and sentences she had copied out. She told me: what she would teach me was how to use the treasure box, not how to copy from it.

She first asked me to prepare a notebook and copy good words and sentences too. I copied at a great speed, filled two pages in one week, and showed it to her proudly. She leafed through it, pointed at one sentence, the sun is like a big fireball, and

asked: you copied this one, but have you ever used it? I shook my head. She said: copying a hundred sentences without using them is worth less than knowing one sentence well. From that day on her rule was this: copy only five sentences a week, but each sentence must be turned into my own sentence that very day, and the sentence I made must be about something that really happened in our class.

That was the method she shared: copy less, use more. I once copied the sentence my heart felt like a rabbit tucked inside it, and that very day I wrote it into my diary: in math class the papers were handed out, the teacher read my name, and my heart felt like a rabbit tucked inside it, beating so hard that my ears buzzed. The next day the diary books came back, and the teacher had drawn a wavy line under that sentence. For the first time I understood that a good sentence is not beautiful because it is copied; it becomes beautiful only when it is used.

Making my own sentences was harder than copying. In the first week I managed only two, and Sun Xiaohe made me redo them, saying: that one did not really happen in our class, you dreamed it up. I thought it over, and what really happened was that Wang Hao knocked the water bucket over in the classroom and the water ran across the floor in one wide sheet. I wrote the sentence about the running water, and she said: now that is real. After that I began to watch what happened inside the classroom, and the sentences I made grew longer and longer.

The progress was saved up bit by bit. A month later my compositions began to carry sentences of my own, not copied ones but sentences that grew by imitating the copied ones. Two months later one of my compositions scored above ninety for the first time. In the final exam the topic was my good friend, and I wrote about how Sun Xiaohe leafed through her notebook with her brow knitting up again and again, as if she were counting the pages, and the comment of the teacher was four characters: vivid and alive.

Sun Xiaohe looked through my treasure box and said hers could retire now. I refused, and stacked the two notebooks together, bound with a single rubber band. She said: bind them if you want, for anyway from now on that box is yours.

This is the lesson I want to pass to my classmates: what my friend taught me was not good words and sentences but a clumsy way, copy little and use much, copy one sentence and use one sentence. Copying is putting seeds into the pocket, using is planting them in the field. A pocket full of unplanted seeds yields no grain in a whole season. Now I have seeds in my pocket and seedlings in the field.