田埂上的彩虹

八月六日 星期四 雨转晴

我在奶奶家已经住了一个星期。今天的雨是下午落的，整个村子一下子静了，只剩雨打在瓦上的声音，密一阵，疏一阵，墙边车前草的大叶子接雨，接一把撒一把。爷爷不出门，坐在屋檐下的小板凳上卷旱烟，一片一片叶子慢慢抹，跟他做所有事一样慢。我坐在他旁边剥玉米。雨从屋檐口滑下来，在湿地上砸出一个一个圆圆的小坑，坑满了，又在前头砸出新的坑。

雨停了，云往后山那边跑干净了，光回到田上。爷爷站起来，朝西边眯眼看了一会儿，说：你看，虹在田上。我顺着他的手指看——一道好大的彩虹，一头扎在后山的云里，一头垂到我们的玉米地上空，像谁在我们家田上搭了一座彩色的桥。玉米叶上还挂着雨，让光一照，整片地亮闪闪的，风一来，哗地轻轻晃一下，像地在出气。

爷爷说：西虹晒衣裳，东虹泼水缸。今天这道虹落在西边，往后几天是晴天，麦子可以按计划割了晒了。我问他这些老话是谁教他的。他说他爷爷教的，传了不知道多少辈，没错过。我忽然想起地理课本上那句「彩虹是阳光射进空气里的水滴、发生折射和反射形成的色散现象」，就背给他听。爷爷把烟卷好，点上，说：你说的对，我说的也对。我知道虹里有雨，你知道虹里有光——咱爷俩看的是同一道虹。

我站在田埂上，看那道彩虹一直看到它没了。在城里我也见过彩虹，在手机屏幕里，边上让手指挡掉一块，底下不挨着任何东西。这是我头一回看见有头的彩虹，一头挨着云，一头挨着地，挨着玉米地，挨着我和爷爷站的地方。照片里的彩虹是一张画，田上的彩虹是一个地方，人站在它底下，它罩着人。

我还想明白一件事：我书里的知识和爷爷田里的知识，从来没见过面，可它们说的是同一片天。课本能讲出彩虹为什么有七种颜色，老话能算出明天能不能晒麦子，两个都不撒谎，两个也都不是全部。光有书，我会知道彩虹是物理，可会误了晒麦子；光有田，我会知道天气，可永远不会去问为什么。这两种知识像两只手，人得两只手一起用，才捧得住这个世界。

今晚我在日记里写：这个夏天，我在奶奶的田上看见了一道真的彩虹。爷爷的彩虹是天气，我的彩虹是物理，彩虹自己呢，它就是一道彩虹，挂在每个人头顶上，谁愿意怎么懂，它就让人怎么懂。

The Rainbow Over the Cornfield

August 6th, Thursday, rain then clear

I have been staying at Grandma's in the village for a week now. Today the rain fell in the afternoon, and the whole village went quiet inside it. The only sounds were the rain on the tile roof of the house, dense for a while, sparse for a while, and the big plantain leaves by the wall catching handfuls of it and spilling them back out. Grandfather did not go out either. He sat on a small stool under the eaves rolling a cigarette, smoothing the leaf over and over, slowly, the way he does

everything, and I sat next to him shucking corn. The raindrops slid off the edge of the eaves and punched small round holes in the wet ground, one after another; each hole filled up, and a new hole opened in front of it.

When the rain stopped, the clouds ran away toward the mountain behind the village, and the light came back over the fields. Grandfather stood up, squinted toward the west for a moment, and said: look, there is a rainbow over the fields. I followed his finger. A big rainbow, one end stuck into the cloud on the back mountain, the other end hanging down right over our cornfield, as if somebody had set up a colored bridge above the place where our family works. The corn leaves were still wet from the rain, and under the light the whole field glittered; when the wind came, it swayed all at once with a soft rustle, like the ground breathing out.

Grandfather said: rainbow in the west, hang the clothes out to dry; rainbow in the east, the water comes down like a bucket. Today's rainbow sits in the west, so the next few days will stay fine, and we can cut and dry the wheat right on schedule. I asked him who had taught him these sayings. He said his grandfather taught him, and nobody knows how many generations back they go, and they have never once been wrong. I remembered a line from my geography textbook — a rainbow is the dispersion of sunlight refracted and reflected inside water droplets in the air — and I recited it out loud to him. Grandfather finished rolling his cigarette, lit it, and answered: what you said is right, and what I said is right too. I know there is rain inside the rainbow; you know there is light inside the rainbow. We two are looking at the same rainbow.

I stood at the edge of the field and watched that rainbow until it was gone. In the city I had seen rainbows before, on phone screens, cut off at the edges by somebody's thumb, floating above nothing. This was the first time I saw a rainbow with ends, a rainbow that touched the ground, that connected the cloud on the mountain, the cornfield, and the exact spot where Grandfather and I were standing. A rainbow in a photo is a picture. A rainbow over a field is a place. You stand underneath it, and it stands over you.

I also thought something through. The knowledge in my books and the knowledge in Grandfather's fields have never met each other, and yet they describe the same sky. My textbook can explain why the rainbow has seven colors, and Grandfather's sayings can tell whether tomorrow will let us dry the wheat. Neither one is lying, and neither one is the whole thing by itself. If I only had the book, I would know the rainbow was physics and I would miss the wheat. If I only had the field, I would know the weather and I would never ask why. These two kinds of knowledge are like two hands, and a person needs both of them to hold the world up.

Tonight I wrote in my diary: this summer I saw a real rainbow over Grandma's

field. Grandfather's rainbow is weather, my rainbow is physics, and the rainbow itself is only a rainbow. It hangs over everybody's head, and it lets every person understand it in his own way, and the sky does not mind at all.