# 篱笆上的小洞

《爷爷的菜园》里，爷爷围着菜园扎了一圈篱笆，挡鸡，也挡鹅。可篱笆上留着一个洞，不大，只够一个小孙子侧身钻进去。书里爷爷说，大洞防鸡，小洞留人。孙子钻进去帮他看水、递绳子，出来时衣角挂一根草。作者写，那个洞爷爷隔几天就用指甲抠一抠，怕草把洞堵小了。我读到这里笑了，笑完心里发酸。书里还写，鸡从篱笆外头探脑袋，爷爷不骂，只把竹竿往篱笆上一横，说这是菜，不是你们的饭。

我四年级帮爷爷赶过偷吃豌豆的母鸡。爷爷拿着长竿跟在后头，却不打，只把鸡往河滩那边引，说鸡下蛋给咱们家，吃几颗豌豆不算偷。去年冬天篱笆倒了一段，风大，爷爷蹲在风里把铁丝一段段掰直，重新绑上木桩，手指冻得通红，一下一下，还是稳。我在旁边递钳子，手冻得握不住，爷爷把我的手捂在他手心里焐了一下，又接着绑。风把塑料布吹得哗啦响，爷爷的白头发让风吹得乱，他顾不上理。看他绑完，蹲在那儿看那个小洞看了半天。我长个儿了，四年级那年洞不够钻，爷爷把洞改高了一拳，改完还拿砂纸把洞边的毛刺磨了，磨完用手背扫一遍，再让我钻一次试试。书里那个隔几天抠一抠洞的爷爷，我天天见得到。

篱笆挡得住鸡，挡不住爷爷留给我的那条路。合上书我想好了：开春爷爷换篱笆铁丝，锈了的归我递新的，毛刺归我用砂纸磨光，那个小洞不堵，留着，等我长高了它跟着长。我还想把书里那个孙子换成我现在的样子：把书读好，让爷爷在菜园里直起腰的时候，心里踏实。一畦菜，一份情。爷爷把情扎在篱笆上，留了一个洞给我；我把情读进书里，攒起来，将来给他撑住整个家。

# The Little Hole in the Fence

In the book The Garden of Grandpa, the grandfather builds a fence all around the vegetable plot, to keep out chickens and geese. But the fence has one hole, not big, just enough for a small grandson to turn sideways and slip through. Grandpa in the book says: a big hole fails to stop chickens, a small hole keeps the person. The grandson crawls in to help watch the water and pass rope, and comes out with a blade of grass caught on his coat. The author writes that every few days Grandpa picks at the hole with his fingernail, afraid the grass will close it up. I laughed reading this, and after laughing my heart turned sour.

In fourth grade I helped Grandpa chase a hen that stole peas from the garden. He followed with a long pole but did not strike, only led the hen toward the riverbank, saying the hen lays eggs for our family and eating a few peas is not stealing. Last winter a section of our fence fell in the wind. Grandpa squatted in the gale, straightening pieces of wire one by one and tying them back to the stakes, his fingers red with cold, stroke after stroke, still steady. I passed him the pliers and watched him finish, then squat there looking at the little hole for a long time. I have grown; in fourth grade the hole was no longer enough, so Grandpa raised it by a fist, then sanded the burrs at its edges so my clothes would not snag. The

grandfather in the book who picks at his hole every few days, I see him every day.

The fence can stop chickens; it cannot stop the road Grandpa left for me. When I closed the book I had decided: in spring when Grandpa replaces the fence wire, the rusty pieces go to me and the new ones pass from my hands, the burrs are mine to sand smooth, and the little hole stays open, growing as I grow. I also want to swap the grandson in the book for myself as I am now: study well, so that when Grandpa straightens his back in the garden, his heart is at rest. One bed of vegetables, one share of love. Grandpa tied his love into the fence and left a hole for me; I will read my love into my books and save it, to hold up the whole family for him one day.