作业在前，玩在后

我的计划表贴在书桌正上方，人却整天贴在床上。太阳爬上来，光正好照在那张纸上，我在凉席上翻个身，心想暑假还长，晚上写也一样。头几天，作业本一页没动，动画片倒是一部没落下。

七月十号夜里十一点，我被一道数学题卡住，草稿画满两张，手抖得厉害。妈妈站在门口说，白天干什么去了。我答不上来。不是题难，是我把六天的作业全堆到了晚上，白天玩得心虚，晚上写得潦草，第二天自己看都认不出。

隔天早上我破天荒先坐到桌前，把上午的作业清完才下楼。头三天最难熬，蝉在树上叫，小伙伴在院里喊我，我手心都痒。第四天下午，我和表哥去河堤捉知了，一整个下午没有一本作业在身后等着我，那感觉跟平时不一样。表哥的网兜够不着高处的知了，我替他望风，我们笑得蹲在草里。回程碰上一只大白鹅伸着脖子追我们，表哥的鞋跑掉一只，我笑得直不起腰。

从那以后我把计划表改了：作业放最前，玩放最后，中间留一个自由块。八月里每天上午两页数学、两页语文，下午爱干什么干什么。有天帮妈妈剥豆角，我一边剥一边想，原来计划表不是摆设，它把一天摆顺了，人就不拧巴了。

八月里有一天下午，爸爸卸车上的西瓜，喊我搭手。我搬了十几趟，晒得脖子发红，晚上捞起井里的西瓜吃，甜到心里，没有一丝惦记作业的味道。以前也吃西瓜，嘴里甜、心里悬着事，味道总差一截。那晚我才尝出，痛快的滋味是要先用白天的正经事换来的。

八月二十七号晚上，我把那张皱巴巴的计划表重新贴回墙上。它被汗手摸出了黑印子，边角也卷了。我贴它不是纪念，是提醒自己：管住一天的办法，是把最难的事放到最前面。顺序对了，整个假期就顺了。

Homework First, Play After

My plan was taped right above the desk, while I stuck to my bed all day. As the sun climbed, its light fell right on that sheet of paper, and I rolled over on the cool mat, thinking vacation was still long and night writing would do the same. In the first days, my homework books stayed untouched, while I missed not a single cartoon.

At eleven at night on July tenth, a math problem blocked me. Two sheets of scratch paper filled up, and my hands were shaking. My mother stood at the door and asked what I had done all day. I had no answer. The problem was not hard; I had piled six days of homework into one night. I played uneasily by day and wrote sloppily by night, and the next day I could barely read my own writing.

The next morning I sat down before anything else and cleared the morning homework before going downstairs. The first three days were the hardest. Cicadas sang in the trees, friends called me from the yard, and my palms itched. On the afternoon of the

fourth day, my cousin and I went catching cicadas on the river dike, with no homework waiting behind me all afternoon. That felt different. His net could not reach the high cicadas, so I kept watch for him, and we laughed until we squatted down in the grass. On the way home a big white goose chased us with its neck stretched out; my cousin lost one shoe, and I laughed so hard I could not stand straight.

After that I changed the plan: homework first, play last, with one free block in between. Every morning in August, two pages of math and two of Chinese, and the afternoon was mine. One day, shelling beans with my mother, I thought as I worked: the plan was not decoration. It straightened out the day, and a person stops feeling twisted.

One afternoon in August, my dad was unloading watermelons from the truck and called me to help. I carried over a dozen trips, my neck red in the sun, and at night we fished a watermelon out of the well and ate it, sweet to the heart, with not a trace of unfinished homework in the taste. I had eaten watermelon before too, sweet on the tongue but with a worry hanging behind it, and the flavor always fell short. That night I finally tasted that the feeling of pure joy has to be traded for first, with the serious work of the daytime.

On the evening of August twenty seventh, I taped that wrinkled plan back on the wall. Dark marks from sweaty hands covered it, and its corners had curled. I put it back not as a souvenir but as a reminder: the way to master a day is to put the hardest thing first. Get the order right, and the whole vacation runs smooth.