把土翻醒

2026年4月4日 星期六 晴

今天爷爷正式收我当徒弟，教的第一课是种萝卜。他先把一小畦地指给我看：就从这儿开始，翻土、播种、浇水，一样一样来。

先翻土。铁锹立起来比我高，我把锹头踩进土里，压下去，土却只进去一点点，再抬起来，胳膊发酸。爷爷接过去，两脚一前一后，锹进去得又深又稳，一翻，土底下翻出几条蚯蚓，慌慌张张地钻。爷爷说：蚯蚓在，土就肥，别伤着它们。他翻过的土是松的，黑里带褐，一小块一小块，像没敲碎的冰糖。他递给我一把小锄，让我把土块敲碎。我敲了半天，手上磨出一道红印，土块还是有的大。爷爷蹲下来抓一把，指缝里漏下去的细土沙沙响：碎不碎不要紧，萝卜籽自己会找缝。

再播种。爷爷把萝卜籽摊在纸上，籽小得像沙子，棕黄色。他用手指在土上按出一条浅沟，两指深，说：种子埋深了不出，埋浅了干死，一指深正好。我捏着籽往沟里放，手抖，籽撒得东一颗西一颗。爷爷不嫌，跟在我后头，把挤成一堆的籽分开，说：苗跟苗也要有地方住，太挤了谁都长不好。

最后浇水。我抱着水管要往沟里冲，爷爷按住管口：水太急，会把籽冲跑。他把水开到最小，顺着沟边慢慢喂。水渗下去，土色变深，他让我蹲下看：看，土在喝水，喝到种子那儿就停了。

收工的时候太阳偏西，畦面平平的，看不出底下有种子。我问爷爷萝卜什么时候出来，他说：别催，它自己认得时候。我在日记里写：原来种菜最难的不是手上的活，是等。我把这一畦地画在日记本上，画了个箭头：种子在土底下，我在土上头等。

Waking the Soil Up

April 4, 2026, Saturday, sunny.

Today Grandpa formally took me on as his apprentice, and the first lesson was planting radishes. He pointed to a small bed and said: we start here — turning the soil, sowing the seeds, watering, one by one.

First, turning the soil. The spade stood taller than me when upright. I pressed the blade into the ground with my foot, and it barely went in; lifting it made my arms ache. Grandpa took it back, one foot before the other, and the spade went in deep and steady. One turn, and a few earthworms appeared from underneath, hurrying back down. Grandpa said: where there are worms, the soil is rich; do not hurt them. The turned soil was loose, dark brown, in small clumps like unbroken rock candy. He handed me a small hoe to break the clumps. I worked half a day and rubbed a red mark on my hand, and some clumps were still big. Grandpa squatted and grabbed a handful, letting fine soil sift through his fingers with a soft sound: big or small does not matter; the radish seeds will find their own cracks.

Then sowing. Grandpa spread the radish seeds on paper, tiny as sand grains, brownish yellow. With his finger he pressed a shallow furrow two fingers deep, saying: buried too deep they will not rise, too shallow they dry out; one finger deep is right. I pinched the seeds and dropped them along the furrow, my hand shaking, scattering them here and there. Grandpa did not mind; he followed behind me, separating the seeds that had piled together, saying: seedlings also need room to live; too crowded and none of them grows well.

Finally, watering. I grabbed the hose to flush the furrow, and Grandpa pressed the nozzle: too strong a stream will wash the seeds away. He opened the water to the smallest flow and fed it slowly along the edge of the furrow. The water seeped down and the soil darkened. He made me squat and look: see, the soil is drinking, and it stops drinking when it reaches the seeds.

When we finished the sun leaned west. The bed looked flat and empty, with no sign of the seeds below. I asked when the radishes would come out, and Grandpa said: do not rush them; they know their own time. In my diary I wrote: the hardest part of gardening is not the work of the hands but the waiting. I drew this bed in my diary with an arrow: the seeds are under the soil, and I wait above it.

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