那天，我起得比爷爷早

七月十四日，星期一，晴。这条日记是我坐在院里的葡萄架下写的，胳膊上的蚊子包还痒着。

今天我起得早。爷爷不到五点就出了门，我迷迷糊糊坐起来，院里没人，只有菜园方向传来水声。我趿上凉鞋跑过去，爷爷正握着水管的头，水甩出一道弧线，落在西红柿畦的叶子上，叶子在晨光里亮得发闪。他看见我，什么也没说，把水管递过来。我以为握水管是件轻松事，真握上了才知道水在管子里顶人，手腕抖个不停，水花溅了一裤腿。爷爷走过来托住管子中段，说握这里，它就不跟你较劲了。我们俩轮流，浇完三畦地，天才彻底亮透。泥土有一股凉丝丝的腥气，畦沟边上钻出来两条蚯蚓。

中午太热，爷爷不让我下地。下午四点多，日头软下来，他领我去摘菜。黄瓜躲在叶子底下，得掀开叶子才能看见。爷爷不掀叶子，他看地上的影子，说影子又圆又沉的地方，准挂着黄瓜。我伸手去够，黄瓜须上的刺毛扎了手。秋葵要用剪刀剪，硬掰会伤一整枝。盆很快就满了：三根黄瓜、一把秋葵、两个茄子、一小把香菜。爷爷端着盆，我提着水壶，走在水泥路上，影子被拉得很长。

傍晚最舒服。奶奶在院里铺开竹席，爷爷搬出一暖瓶茶水。天从橘红一点点变成青蓝，菜园里的虫叫一阵接一阵起来。爷爷指着天上说，晚霞这么红，明天准是个大热天。奶奶提起爷爷年轻时推着满满一车菜，走三十里去镇上卖。我靠在竹席边上想：暑假这些天，我天天睡到日上三竿，抱着手机不放，爷爷的背一年比一年弯，却还每天清晨浇三畦地。明天，我要起得比他更早。

That Day I Woke Up Before Grandpa

July 14, Monday, sunny. I am writing this diary under the grape trellis in the yard, and the mosquito bites on my arms still itch.

I woke up early today. Grandpa had slipped out before five. When I sat up, the yard was empty, and only the sound of water came from the direction of the vegetable garden. I pulled on my sandals and ran over. Grandpa was holding the end of the hose, and the water arced out onto the leaves of the tomato ridge, shining in the early light. He saw me, said nothing, and handed me the hose. I thought holding a hose would be easy, but the water pushed inside the pipe, my wrist shook, and drops splashed all over my pants. Grandpa came over and supported the middle of the pipe, saying, hold it here, and it will not fight with you. We took turns and finished watering three ridges. When we ended, the sky had just fully brightened. The soil gave off a cool, damp smell, and two earthworms had poked their heads out at the edge of the ditch.

At noon it was too hot, and Grandpa would not let me go to the field. After four in the afternoon, when the sun softened, he took me to pick vegetables. Cucumbers hid under the leaves and had to be found by lifting them. Grandpa did not lift leaves; he looked at the shadows on the ground and said that where the shadow is round and

heavy, a cucumber is hanging there. I reached for one, and the tiny spines on the tendril pricked my hand. Okra had to be cut with scissors; snapping it by hand hurts the whole branch. The basin filled quickly: three cucumbers, a handful of okra, two eggplants, a small bunch of cilantro. Grandpa carried the basin and I carried the watering can, and our shadows stretched long on the concrete road.

Evening was the best part. Grandma spread the bamboo mat in the yard, and Grandpa brought out a thermos of tea. The sky turned from orange to blue, and the insects in the garden started one after another. Grandpa pointed at the sky and said that when the evening glow is this red, tomorrow will surely be another hot day. Grandma recalled that when Grandpa was young, he pushed a cart piled full of vegetables thirty li to the town market. I leaned on the edge of the mat and thought: during these days of summer vacation, I had slept until noon and never let go of my phone, while the back of Grandpa grows rounder every year, yet he still waters three ridges every morning. Tomorrow, I will get up even earlier than him.