篱笆换过很多次

爷爷菜园的篱笆换过很多次。小时候我以为篱笆一直就在那里，后来才知道，每隔几年，他就要去屋后砍一回竹子，把整排换掉。

旧篱笆是树枝和竹篾扎的，上面缠着几根枯了的藤蔓，每年春天又爬满牵牛花，开出淡紫的小花。篱笆的缺口刚好够一个孩子钻进去，我进进出出许多回，鞋常常忘在畦沟边，爷爷看见了，给拎回篱笆外摆好。菜畦就在篱笆里头，一畦挨一畦，菠菜一畦，白菜一畦，葱一畦，他按节气下种，畦里的菜像听了他的话，到点就发芽，到点就变绿。春天点蚕豆，秋天栽蒜苗，节气在他手里比日历还准。

爷爷总在畦里弯腰。薅草的时候弯着，浇水的时候弯着，给西红柿搭架的时候弯得更深。我人小，从篱笆缝里望进去，只看见他的背在叶子中间一伏一伏，像风里一张拉不满的弓。中午的风吹过去，他的褂子贴在背上，汗印深一块浅一块。后来我长高了，从篱笆上望进去能看见他的白头，才发现他的背一年比一年弯。

我上初中那年夏天，一场大雨压倒了半排篱笆。爷爷把篱笆重新扎起来，扎完了，手搭在篱笆头上，站在跟前看了很久。我过去帮他扶竹子，他说这排篱笆立了二十年，挡过鸡，挡过狗，挡过路过孩子贪嘴的手，就是没挡住时间。菜畦还在，一畦挨着一畦，他种的菜长起来，割了一茬，又长出一茬。

上周末回爷爷家，他正弯着腰在畦里间苗。篱笆的竹篾是新的，泛着浅黄，竹子的清气混着土腥气。我站在篱笆外看了一会儿，没有喊他。光阴就是这么过去的，从篱笆的缝里漏过去，落在爷爷的背上，也落进这一畦一畦的菜里。

The Fence Has Been Rebuilt Many Times

The fence around the garden of Grandpa has been rebuilt many times. As a child I believed the fence had always stood there, and only later did I learn that every few years he cut bamboo behind the house and replaced the whole row.

The old fence was tied together from branches and bamboo strips, with a few withered vines tangled on it, and every spring it was covered again with morning glories opening small pale purple flowers. The gap in the fence was exactly wide enough for a child to squeeze through. I went in and out many times, and Grandpa never scolded me, only saying, mind the seedlings. The vegetable ridges lay inside the fence, one beside another: one ridge of spinach, one of cabbage, one of green onions. He sowed by the solar terms, and the vegetables in the ridges seemed to obey him, sprouting when they should, turning green when they should.

Grandpa was always bent over in the ridges. He bent while pulling weeds, bent while watering, and bent even deeper while building supports for the tomato plants. I was small, and looking through the gap in the fence, I could only see his back rising

and falling among the leaves, like a bow never pulled full in the wind. At noon the wind blew across, his jacket clung to his back, and the sweat stains spread in dark and light patches. Later I grew tall enough to see his white hair over the fence, and only then did I notice that his back curved more each year.

The summer I entered middle school, a rainstorm pushed down half the fence. Grandpa tied the fence up again, and when he finished, he rested his hand on the top rail and stood looking at it for a long time. I went over to hold the bamboo for him. He said this fence had stood for twenty years, keeping out chickens, keeping out dogs, keeping out the greedy hands of passing children, but it had never kept out time. The ridges were still there, one beside another, and the vegetables he planted grew up, were cut for one harvest, and grew back for another.

Last weekend, back at the home of Grandpa, he was bent over in a ridge, thinning seedlings. The bamboo strips of the fence were new, glowing pale yellow, and the fresh smell of bamboo mixed with the smell of soil. I stood outside the fence and watched for a while without calling him. This is how the years pass: leaking through the gaps of the fence, landing on the back of Grandpa, and soaking into these rows of vegetables.