菜园里第一根黄瓜

暑假下到乡下，爷爷指着菜园尽头的一架黄瓜说：这根归你，你看着它长。

黄瓜才小指头大。每天早起，我第一件事就是跑到架下。第一天它长了一截，第二天它弯了一点，第三天它身上的小刺扎了手。我蹲在架下数，问爷爷：什么时候能摘？爷爷说：等它头上的花干了、掉了，等它身子从浅绿转成深绿，就熟了。我又问：那要几天？爷爷说：说不准，天热就快，天凉就慢，黄瓜自己知道时候，你替它着急没用。

打那以后我天天看花。花是黄的，干的时候先卷边。第五天花干了一半，第六天只剩一小撮。我急了，问爷爷：现在能摘吗？爷爷笑：摘早了没开花，嘴里发苦，这一根就白等了。

第七天早上，花掉了，黄瓜深绿，身上蒙一层白霜。我伸手摸了摸，硬实了，跟前几天软塌塌的手感不一样。我喊爷爷过来，爷爷说：你来摘。我伸手拧，拧不动，爷爷过来托着我的手，一起咔的一声，拧下了第一根黄瓜。

我举着黄瓜往屋里跑，一路喊：奶奶，黄瓜熟啦！奶奶接过去掂了掂，说这根长得真好，刺还扎手呢，新鲜。我说：不行，这根是第一根，要分着吃。于是奶奶切成片，我端着盘子挨个送：先送爷爷，再送奶奶，再送爸爸妈妈，最后送隔壁王奶奶，因为爷爷平日总给王奶奶送黄瓜。王奶奶咬一口，说这丫头有心，黄瓜也甜。

爷爷咬一口，问我：苦不苦？我摇头，说甜。其实我不知道是真甜，还是等了七天才觉得甜。盘子里的黄瓜片很快就没了。奶奶说：明天再去看第二根。

晚上躺在凉席上，我听见院子里爷爷跟奶奶说话，说这丫头头一回这么勤快，天天早起。我闭着眼笑，心里已经在盘算明早几点去架下等着。

The First Cucumber in the Garden

The summer I went down to the countryside, Grandpa pointed to a cucumber frame at the end of the garden and said: this one is yours, watch it grow.

The cucumber was as small as a finger then. Every morning after getting up, the first thing I did was run to the frame. On the first day it grew a little; on the second day it bent; on the third day the fuzz on its body pricked my hand. I squatted under the frame, counted, and asked Grandpa: when can I pick it? Grandpa said: wait until the flower on its head dries and falls, wait until its body turns from pale green to deep green, then it is ripe. I asked again: how many days? Grandpa said: hard to say; hot weather makes it fast, cool weather slow. The cucumber knows its own time; worrying for it will not help.

From then on I watched the flower every day. The flower was yellow, and when it dried, the edges curled first. On the fifth day half of it was dry; on the sixth day only a small bunch was left. I could not wait and asked: can I pick it now? Grandpa

laughed: pick it early and the bloom has not settled, it will taste bitter, and this one will be wasted.

On the morning of the seventh day the flower fell off. The cucumber was deep green, with a coat of white frost on its body. I called Grandpa over, and Grandpa said: you pick it. I reached out and twisted, but could not get it off; Grandpa came over, held my hand, and together we twisted with a snap, and the first cucumber came off.

I held the cucumber and ran into the house, shouting all the way: Grandma, the cucumber is ripe! Grandma took it and said: this one grew well, the fuzz still pricks the hand, quite fresh. I said: no, this is the first one, we must share it. So Grandma cut it into slices, and I carried the plate around: first to Grandpa, then to Grandma, then to Mom and Dad, and last to Grandma Wang next door, because Grandpa often gave her cucumbers. Grandma Wang took a bite and said: this girl has a good heart, and the cucumber is sweet too.

Grandpa took a bite and asked me: is it bitter? I shook my head and said: sweet. I do not know if it was truly sweet, or sweet because I had waited seven days. The slices on the plate disappeared fast. Grandma said: tomorrow go and look at the second one.

At night on the cool mat, I heard Grandpa and Grandma talking in the yard, saying this girl had never been so diligent, getting up early every day. I smiled with my eyes closed, already planning what time to wait under the frame tomorrow morning.