一只七星瓢虫的自述

我是一只七星瓢虫，住后坡。一天清早，我闻见一股蚜虫味，从山脚菜园方向飘上来，甘蓝叶背上的蚜虫，怕是有好几千只。我叫上同伴，顺着篱笆往山下走。

到了园子，叶背上的蚜虫果然挤成一团。我们开工。一边吃，我一边留意那个背喷壶的小女孩。头一天她往叶背上喷过肥皂辣椒水，那水不好闻，可它不伤我们虫，喷过的叶子照旧能落脚。有个同伴落在她手背上，她抬手看了看，轻轻吹到叶子上，没捏。

后来我才知道，是她的爷爷教的：肥皂化水，泡上碎辣椒，专喷叶背。有人劝他打药，他摆手说，药一喷，蚜虫死了，我们瓢虫也死，菜上落的药，回头人自己吃。他们不用药，把叶背留给我们吃饭。

我们干了好几天，蚜虫一天比一天少。小女孩蹲在叶子旁边看我吃，脸凑得很近，呼吸吹得叶子轻轻晃。她一动不动，小声说：别怕，继续吃。我听不懂人的话，可我知道她没有赶我。她奶奶在院里喊她吃饭，她应一声，人不动，只把草帽扣在旁边的畦沟上，像是给我们留了个阴凉。

蚜虫快吃完那天，她爷爷在园里说：园子不光属于人，虫也住在这儿；想不伤益虫的办法，益虫就会自己来帮忙。我在叶子上听着，觉得这话对虫也说得上。

蚜虫吃完，我们回后坡过冬前又下了一趟山，把卵产在篱笆边的野芥菜上，不占他们的菜地。第二年园里刚长出几片新叶，我又闻见蚜虫味，照旧叫上同伴下山。小女孩认得我，喊：爷爷你看，瓢虫又来了！她爷爷抬头看了一圈，笑了，没说话。

我是一只小瓢虫，不会浇水，不会拔草，只会吃蚜虫。园子里的人给我们留了一顿饭，我们用吃虫还他们。这笔账，两边都公道。

Confessions of a Seven-Star Ladybug

I am a seven-star ladybug, and I live on the hillside. One early morning I caught the smell of aphids drifting up from the garden at the foot of the slope, on the backs of cabbage leaves; there must have been several thousand. I called my companions, and we went down along the hedge.

At the garden the aphids on the leaf backs were indeed packed in crowds. We went to work. As we fed, I kept an eye on the small girl with the sprayer on her back. The day before she had sprayed soapy chili water on the leaf backs; the water smelled bad, yet it did not harm us insects, and a sprayed leaf was still a place to land. One companion landed on the back of her hand; she raised her hand, looked at it, and blew it gently onto a leaf instead of crushing it.

Later I learned that her grandpa had taught her: melt soap in water, soak crushed chili in it, and spray the backs of leaves only. Someone urged him to use medicine; he waved it off, saying one spray kills the aphids and kills us ladybugs too, and the

medicine that settles on the vegetables is eaten by people themselves. They used no medicine and left the leaf backs to us for a meal.

We worked for several days, and the aphids grew fewer day by day. The girl squatted beside a leaf and watched me feed, her face quite close, her breath making the leaf sway lightly. She sat still and whispered: do not be afraid, keep eating. I cannot understand human words, yet I knew she was not driving me away. Her grandmother called her from the yard for a meal; she answered, but the person did not move, only set her straw hat down over the furrow beside us, as if leaving us a patch of shade.

The day the aphids were nearly gone, her grandpa said in the garden: the garden does not belong to people only; insects live here too; think of a way that spares the good insects, and the good insects will come to help by themselves. I heard it on my leaf, and the words seemed true for insects as well.

When the aphids were finished, we went back to the hillside, and before winter we came down the slope once more to lay our eggs on the wild mustard by the hedge, not taking their vegetable beds. The next year, when the garden had just put out a few new leaves, I again caught the smell of aphids, and called my companions down as before. The girl knew me and shouted: Grandpa look, the ladybugs are back! Her grandpa looked up around the garden, smiled, and said nothing.

I am only a small ladybug. I cannot water and cannot pull grass; I can only eat aphids. The people of the garden left us a meal, and we pay them back by eating the pests. This account is fair on both sides.