我的日记里搬来了一位新住户

我的日记本里搬来了一位新住户。它住在操场东南角的砖缝里，我已经连续两个星期写它了。

第一篇日记只有三行：今天看见蚂蚁了，它们在搬米粒，很勤劳。交上去以后，老师在那三行下面画了波浪线，批了一句：你真的看见了吗？它搬米粒的时候是什么样子的？

我有点不服气，回到那块砖缝前蹲下去。这一蹲，才发现事情没那么简单。一只蚂蚁靠近米粒，先用触角轻轻点一下，再退半步，围着米粒转一圈，然后才用前腿抱住，举起来走。整个过程不到十秒钟，我以前一点都没看见。

回家我把那篇划掉重写，把触角、退半步、转一圈都写了进去。第二天老师批：这就对了，我看见了你写的东西。

从那天起，我的日记变了样。我开始记时间、记天气、记队伍里有几只大蚂蚁几只小蚂蚁。第五天我写：两只蚂蚁碰头，停下来，触角对触角碰了一下，又各自走开。我不知道它们说了什么，但我把碰触角这个动作原原本本记了下来。科学课上老师讲到蚂蚁靠触角传消息，说全班数我记的最细。

第十天下了雨，我打着伞去看，蚁洞门口围了一圈细土，像一道小小的堤。我把这个也写进日记，后面加了一句：它们也懂得防洪水。

两个星期下来，砖缝在我的日记里成了一个完整的世界：有堆着细土的门口，有当桥用的平石头，有绕开树根的拐弯路线。我慢慢明白，写日记不是把话攒多，是把东西看清楚。看清楚了，写出来才可信。

现在我落笔之前，会先问自己：我真的看见了吗？它的动作是什么？这个问题是蚂蚁教给我的。它们不会说话，只会一天一天地在我面前慢慢做事，教我蹲下来，慢下来。

A New Tenant Moved Into My Diary

A new tenant has moved into my diary. It lives in a crack between the bricks at the southeast corner of the playground, and I have been writing about it for two weeks straight.

My first entry was only three lines: today I saw ants, they were carrying rice grains, they were hardworking. When I handed it in, the teacher drew wavy lines under the three lines and wrote: did you really see it? What did it look like when it carried the rice grain?

A little unconvinced, I went back and crouched in front of that brick crack. Only then did I find out it was not so simple. An ant approached a rice grain, first tapped it lightly with its feelers, then stepped back half a pace, circled the grain

once, and only then hugged it with its front legs and lifted it up to go. The whole process took less than ten seconds, and I had seen none of it before.

At home I crossed out that entry and rewrote it, putting in the feelers, the half-step back, the full circle. The next day the teacher wrote: now this is right. I can see what you saw.

From that day my diary changed. I began to record the time, the weather, and how many big ants and small ants were in the line. On the fifth day I wrote: two ants met, stopped, touched feeler to feeler for a moment, then each went on its way. I do not know what they said, but I recorded the touching of feelers exactly as it happened. In science class, when the teacher explained that ants pass messages with their feelers, she said mine was the most detailed record in the whole class.

On the tenth day it rained. I went to look under an umbrella and found a ring of fine soil piled at the entrance of the nest, like a tiny levee. I wrote this into the diary too, and added one line: they also know how to hold back the flood.

After two weeks, the brick crack had become a complete world inside my diary: an entrance ringed with fine soil, a flat stone used as a bridge, a route that bent around a tree root. I came to understand little by little that keeping a diary is not about piling up words, but about seeing things clearly. Only what is seen clearly can be written convincingly.

Now, before I put pen to paper, I ask myself first: did I really see it? What exactly was the action? The ants taught me this question. They cannot speak. They simply work slowly in front of me day after day, teaching me to crouch down and slow down.

同一窝蚂蚁，我看三遍

科学老师布置了一项作业：观察一种小动物，写一份记录。我在小区花园里选了一窝蚂蚁，就在滑梯下面的沙坑边上。我原本打算十分钟搞定它。

第一遍看，我记下的只有：洞口三个，蚂蚁很多，来回走。写完自己读了一遍，干巴巴的，像一份说明书。那天晚上我翻科学书，书上写观察要用眼睛，还要用尺子、用时间。我合上书，决定明天再去。

第二遍我蹲了二十分钟，带了一根冰棍棍和一块手表。我用棍子在离蚁洞一步远的地方轻轻画了一条线，数蚂蚁过线。十分钟里过去了四十七只，其中嘴里叼东西的有三十一只。我还看清了它们分两种：头大的走得慢，头小的跑得快。这些我全记进本子，字都写歪了，因为腿麻。

第三遍隔了两天。我想知道它们从哪儿搬来东西。我沿着队伍走，走到花坛边，发现它们排着队搬我们喂鱼剩下的鱼食渣。回来的路上我数了，从鱼食到洞口一共十四步大蚂蚁的步子。我把路线画在记录本上，标上时间：下午四点十分到四点四十。

交作业那天，老师在我的记录上写：三遍看同一窝，这才是观察。同桌凑过来看，说你写得像侦探小说。我心里清楚，不是我会写，是我看得够久。第一遍看见的是黑点，第二遍看见的是分工，第三遍看见的是路线。每一遍都是新的。

这份记录让我明白一个理：细节不是聪明人一眼看出来的，是老老实实看出来的。我以前写作业总想一遍成，写观察日记才知道，好东西是第二遍第三遍才肯露面的。蚂蚁不躲我，它们就在那儿，你待多久，它们就给你看多少。

现在我的文具盒里常年放着一根冰棍棍。它提醒我：看东西，别只看一遍。

I Watched the Same Nest of Ants Three Times

Our science teacher assigned one task: observe a small animal and write a record. I chose a nest of ants in our neighborhood garden, at the edge of the sandpit under the slide. I had planned to finish it in ten minutes.

The first time I watched, all I wrote down was: three holes, many ants, walking back and forth. That evening I read it over. It was as dry as an instruction manual. I opened my science book, and the book said observation needs eyes, but also a ruler and time. I closed the book and decided to go back the next day.

The second time I crouched for twenty minutes, bringing a popsicle stick and a wristwatch. With the stick I drew a light line one step away from the nest and counted ants crossing it. In ten minutes, forty-seven passed, and thirty-one of them carried something in their mouths. I also saw there were two kinds: the big-headed ones walked slowly, the small-headed ones ran fast. I wrote all of it into my notebook, with crooked handwriting, because my legs had gone numb.

The third visit came two days later. I wanted to know where they brought their food from. I followed the line to the flower bed and found them carrying scraps of the fish food we had thrown there. On the way back I counted: from the fish food to the nest hole was fourteen big steps of a large ant. I drew the route in my record book and marked the time: 4:10 to 4:40 in the afternoon.

On the day I handed in the work, my teacher wrote on my record: watching the same nest three times, now that is observation. My deskmate leaned over and said it read like a detective story. I knew it was not because I write well, but because I watched long enough. The first look showed black dots, the second showed the division of work, the third showed the route. Every look was new.

This record taught me one thing: details are not spotted at a glance by clever people; they come out of honest, patient looking. I used to want every piece of homework done in one pass. Keeping observation diaries showed me that the good stuff only reveals itself on the second and third look. The ants do not hide from me. They are just there. However long you stay, that is how much they let you see.

There is a popsicle stick in my pencil case all year round now. It reminds me: never look at something only once.

日记本里的十四天蚁事

翻开我的日记本，中间有十四页是给蚂蚁的。我把它们一页一页读给你听。

九月十二日：蚂蚁在搬一只死虫子。虫子太大，它们好像没办法。我写到这里就停了，因为作业还没写完。

九月十三日：昨天那只虫子还在。今天多了好多蚂蚁，它们把虫子拆开了。原来它们不是没办法，是昨天人还没来齐。

九月十五日：我今天问自己一个问题：它们晚上回不回家？我在洞口撒了一小圈面包屑，趴在窗台上看。天黑以后看不清，我只记到七点半。这一页下面我写：明天带手电筒。

九月十六日：手电筒只能照一小块。七点五十分，面包屑边上的蚂蚁全不见了，洞里黑黑的。我写：它们回家，而且不用灯。

九月十九日：今天它们搬家！队伍往坡上走，每只都叼着白白的卵。我追着队伍跑了一段，忘了记时间。这一页被我自己画了个哭脸。

九月二十日：我改了办法。蹲在原地不动，看队伍从我面前过，数大蚂蚁小蚂蚁，记开始和结束的时间。今天记得比昨天好一百倍。

九月二十三日：下雨。蚁洞新门口围了一圈土。我想起自然课说的排水，在日记里写：蚂蚁自己会修排水工程。

九月二十五日：今天没看蚂蚁，我在整理前十三页。我把它们排成一张图：洞口、路线、坡上的新家。原来这十四天，蚂蚁把家从低处搬到了高处，我全给记下来了。

写完这张图，我在最后一页写了一段心得。以前我以为写日记是把一天的事记下来，现在我知道，真正的日记是带着问题去看：它们晚上回不回家？下雨它们怎么办？问题出来了，眼睛才有地方放。

这十四页日记字都不漂亮，还有两个哭脸一个错别字。可它们是我写得最真的十四页。蚂蚁不会写作文，它们只管过日子；我把它们的日子一天一天接住，接成了我的观察日记。

Fourteen Days of Ant Affairs in My Diary

Open my diary, and fourteen pages in the middle belong to the ants. Let me read them to you one by one.

September 12: The ants are carrying a dead insect. The insect is too big; they seem stuck. I stopped writing here, because my homework was not finished.

September 13: The insect from yesterday is still there. Today there are many more ants, and they have taken the insect apart. So they were not stuck. The relatives of the day before had not all arrived.

September 15: Today I asked myself a question: do the ants go home at night? I sprinkled a small ring of breadcrumbs at the nest entrance and lay on the windowsill to watch. It got too dark to see, and I could only record until half past seven. Under this page I wrote: bring a flashlight tomorrow.

September 16: The flashlight only lights a small patch. At ten minutes to eight, every ant by the breadcrumbs was gone, and the hole was dark. I wrote: they go home, and they do not need lamps.

September 19: They are moving house today! The line heads up the slope, each ant carrying a white egg in its mouth. I ran after the line for a stretch and forgot to note the time. I drew a crying face on this page myself.

September 20: I changed my method. I squatted in one spot and let the line pass in front of me, counting big ants and small ones, noting the start and the end. The record from today is a hundred times better than the one from yesterday.

September 23: Rain. The new entrance of the nest is ringed with piled soil. I remembered the drainage we learned about in nature class, and wrote: ants build their own drainage works.

September 25: I did not watch the ants today. I went through the previous thirteen pages and arranged them into one picture: the entrance, the route, the new home on the slope. So over these fourteen days, the ants moved their home from low ground to high ground, and I had written it all down.

After drawing that picture, I wrote a reflection on the last page. I used to think a diary records the events of a day. Now I know a real diary means watching with a question: do they go home at night? What do they do when it rains? Once the question appears, the eyes know where to rest.

The handwriting across these fourteen pages is not pretty, and there are two crying faces and one misspelled word. But they are the truest fourteen pages I have

ever written. The ants cannot write essays; they simply live their days. I caught their days one by one, and they became my observation diary.