菜园里的声音课

你听过菜园吗？菜园不是哑巴。菜园里，每一种菜都会说话，每一种声音都不一样。

黄瓜说话很轻。它一夜长一寸，顶着一朵小黄花，那是它把声音举在头顶上，不响，只亮。你要是凑近听，能听见它拔节的动静，咔，很轻的一下，像铅笔削尖。

豆角说话很脆。嫩豆角一掐，啪，断了，那声音又白又嫩，带着水汽。老豆角更会说话，晒干以后一捏，哗啦，哗啦，整面墙都在给它鼓掌。

爷爷也有自己的声音。他的咳嗽最特别，比雷轻，比门响，比锄头落地还要慢半拍。咳嗽一响，黄瓜藤抖一下，豆角架应一声，整个菜园都知道爷爷来上工了。

爷爷的锄头是菜园里的鼓。咚，咚，咚，土翻过来，露出湿的一面，虫子吓得搬家，蚯蚓探头看戏。爷爷的脚步是鼓刷，沙，沙，沙，从黄瓜畦走到豆角畦，再从豆角畦走回黄瓜畦。

菜园还有安静的声音。黄瓜顶花，是安静；豆角挂架，是安静；爷爷蹲在地头不说话，把耳朵贴在叶子边上，那种安静最大，盖过了整条马路。我学会了这种安静，考试前我在心里念一遍，心就稳了。

我在教室里朗诵《菜园》。我念黄瓜，念得又轻又亮；我念豆角，念得又脆又响；我念到爷爷弯下腰的那一行，全班忽然安静，静得能听见一颗种子，在谁的课本里发芽。

老师请我念第二遍。第二遍我加上了声音，咳嗽声，锄头声，豆角哗啦声。念完，后排一个男生举手，说老师，我闻见了，我闻见菜园了。

放学我跑下楼，冲进菜园，站在爷爷跟前，一个字都不说。爷爷也不问，递给我一根黄瓜。我咬一口，咔嚓，真脆。我把这个声音还给菜园，它接住了。

原来朗诵不用念完。一根黄瓜咔嚓一声，就是菜园替我念完了最后一段。爷爷笑了，皱纹里全是声音，一层一层，都是我的，都是菜园的。

A Lesson of Sounds in the Garden

Have you ever listened to a garden? A garden is not mute. In a garden, every vegetable can speak, and every voice sounds different.

The cucumber speaks very softly. It grows an inch in one night, wearing a small yellow flower on its head. That flower is its voice held up on top, not loud, only bright. If you lean close, you can hear it stretching its joints, snap, one very light sound, like a pencil being sharpened.

The green bean speaks very crisply. Snap, a tender bean breaks in two, and that sound is white and soft, carrying water vapor. The old beans are even better at speaking. Once dried, squeeze them, rustle, rustle, and the whole wall claps for them.

Grandpa has his own voice too. His cough is the strangest of all, lighter than thunder, louder than a door, half a beat slower than a hoe hitting the ground. When the cough sounds, the cucumber vine shivers, the bean trellis answers, and the whole garden knows grandpa has come to work.

The hoe of grandpa is the drum of the garden. Dong, dong, dong, the soil turns over, showing its wet side, the bugs move house in fright, and the earthworms poke their heads out to watch the show. The footsteps of grandpa are a drum brush, swish, swish, swish, from the cucumber bed to the bean bed, then back from the bean bed to the cucumber bed.

The garden also has quiet sounds. A cucumber wearing its flower is quiet; beans hanging on the trellis are quiet; grandpa crouching at the head of the field saying nothing, pressing his ear against the edge of a leaf, that quiet is the loudest of all, louder than the whole street. I have learned this kind of quiet. Before an exam I recite it once inside my heart, and my heart steadies.

In the classroom I recite my poem about the garden. I recite the cucumbers, softly and brightly; I recite the beans, crisply and loudly; and when I reach the line where grandpa bends down, the whole class suddenly goes quiet, so quiet you could hear a seed sprouting inside the textbook of somebody.

My teacher asks for a second round. In the second round I add the sounds, the cough, the hoe, the rustle of dried beans. When I finish, a boy in the back row raises his hand and says: teacher, I smelled it, I smelled the garden.

After school I run downstairs, dash into the garden, stand in front of grandpa, and say not a word. Grandpa asks nothing either. He hands me a cucumber. I bite into it, crunch, truly crisp. I give that sound back to the garden, and the garden catches it.

So a recitation does not have to be finished aloud. One crunch of a cucumber, and the garden has read the last stanza for me. Grandpa smiles, and his wrinkles are full of sounds, layer upon layer, all of them mine, all of them belonging to the garden.