# 那句批语，是蚂蚁替我请来的

我有一个好词好句本，抄了大半本。什么太阳升起啦，什么花儿点头啦，抄的时候觉得个个漂亮，写作文的时候一个也用不上。老师在我上一篇作文里批了四个字：太空，添肉。

我不太明白肉在哪儿。十月的一个下午，我在老槐树底下看见一群蚂蚁抬一只死蚂蚱。蚂蚱比它们大太多，它们抬不起来，就把它拆开。一只蚂蚁咬住一条腿，往后坐，腿动了；三只蚂蚁挤在一块儿抬肚子，抬得歪歪扭扭。还有一只特别急，在队伍边上跑来跑去，谁也不理它。我蹲到腿麻才回屋。

我找了张作业纸反面记下来：几点几分，几只大蚂蚁，腿是怎么动的，那只急蚂蚁跑了几趟。记完我把它压在文具盒底下。

周记布置的题目是《劳动》。我本来想写扫地，想起文具盒底下那张纸，就写蚂蚁。我写它们抬不动就拆，写一只蚂蚁坐着往后拽，写那只急蚂蚁谁也不理。写完我有点心虚，觉得蚂蚁不算劳动。

周记发下来，老师在我那篇下面批：这才是看见过的劳动。后面还加了一句：继续看，继续写。那天我把这句话读了三遍。

后来我才知道差别在哪儿。好词好句本里的句子是别人看见过的，作业纸上的句子是我自己看见过的。别人看见的东西，借来用总差一口气；自己看见的东西，写出来它自己会动。

现在我的好词好句本还在，不过我在它后面夹了一沓作业纸反面，全是蚂蚁。那只急蚂蚁我到现在也没弄明白它在干什么，我在周记结尾写：它可能是工头。老师批：有可能。这两个字让我高兴了一星期。

蚂蚁不会讲话，可是它们教会我写作文。它们让我明白，肉不在好词好句里，肉在腿麻的那二十分钟里。

# The Ants Helped Me Earn That Comment

I have a notebook of good words and sentences, more than half filled. Sunrise this, flowers nodding that. Every sentence looked beautiful when I copied it, and not one of them was useful when I wrote. My teacher wrote four characters on my last composition: too empty, add some meat.

I did not know where the meat was. One afternoon in October, I watched a group of ants carrying a dead grasshopper under the old locust tree. The grasshopper was far bigger than them, so when they could not lift it, they took it apart. One ant bit onto a leg and sat backward, and the leg moved. Three ants squeezed together to lift the belly, walking crooked and crooked. One more ant ran back and forth along the edge of the line, and nobody paid attention to it. I stayed crouched until my legs went numb before going inside.

I took the back of a worksheet and wrote it down: what time, how many big ants, how the leg moved, how many trips the anxious ant ran. Then I tucked the paper under the lid of my pencil case.

My weekly journal assignment was titled labor. I had planned to write about sweeping the floor, but I remembered the paper under the pencil case and wrote about the ants instead. I wrote that they took the prey apart when they could not carry it, that one ant sat and pulled a leg backward, that the anxious ant was ignored by everyone. When I finished I felt a little unsure, because ants hardly count as labor.

When the journals came back, my teacher had written under mine: now this is labor you actually saw. She added one more line: keep watching, keep writing. I read that sentence three times that day.

Later I understood the difference. The sentences in my good-phrases notebook were seen by other people; the sentences on my worksheet were seen by me. Borrowed things always fall a breath short of alive. What your own eyes have caught moves by itself on paper.

My notebook of good phrases is still around, but now I keep a stack of worksheet backs behind it, all about ants. I still do not know what that anxious ant was doing. I wrote at the end of my journal: maybe it was the foreman. The teacher commented: quite possibly. Those two words made me happy for a whole week.

The ants cannot talk, yet they taught me to write. They showed me that the meat is not inside fine phrases. The meat is inside those twenty minutes when your legs go numb.