爷爷的竹篮子

七月的早晨，爷爷的菜园最好看。园子四周是竹篱笆，一根一根细竹竿插在土里，用麻绳绑在横杆上。篱笆上缠着牵牛花，早上开着紫花，到了中午就谢了。篱笆有个缺口，是爷爷留的门，也是递篮子的地方。

西红柿就种在篱笆边上。我蹲下来看，一个架子上挂着七八个果子，颜色都不一样。最小的那种是深绿的，摸上去硬硬的，还有一层细细的绒毛。大一点的是浅绿，绿里透着一点黄。最有趣的是半红的那种，一边红了，一边还青着，像谁拿刷子刷了一半。全红的最好看，皮亮亮的，太阳一照，像小灯笼。

爷爷站在篱笆外头，把竹篮子从缺口递进来。篮子不大，边上磨得发白，是爷爷用了几年的旧篮子。他说，挑红的摘，别硬拽，捏住果子往上一托，听见啪的一声就下来了。

我学着爷爷的样子摘。第一个我捏得太用力，捏出了一个坑。第二个我学乖了，托住果子往上一送，果柄啪地断了，果子稳稳落在手里，沉甸甸的，还带着太阳的温度。我一口气摘了六个，篮子里铺了满满一层。

摘到最后一个，我发现叶子底下还藏着一个全红的，藏得可深了，要不是拨开叶子，根本看不见。我把它摘下来，举给爷爷看。爷爷笑了，说菜园里的果子都老实，你认真找，它就让你找着。

中午奶奶用我摘的西红柿做了菜，还有一盘白糖拌西红柿，甜水都是红的。我吃撑了，坐在门槛上不想动。

我喜欢爷爷的菜园。喜欢竹篱笆上的紫花，喜欢半红半青的果子，喜欢爷爷从缺口递进来的旧竹篮子，喜欢啪的一声把果子摘下来的那个瞬间。明年七月，我还要去摘。

The Bamboo Basket of My Grandfather

In the mornings of July, the vegetable garden of my grandfather is the most beautiful place in the village. The garden is fenced with thin bamboo poles stuck into the ground and tied to cross bars with hemp string. Morning glories climb the fence, opening purple flowers at dawn and closing them by noon. There is a gap in the fence, left by my grandfather as a door, and it is also where he hands the basket through.

The tomatoes grow right along the fence. I crouch down to look. One stake holds seven or eight fruits, each a different color. The smallest are deep green, hard to the touch, covered with fine soft fuzz. The bigger ones are pale green with a hint of yellow inside. The most interesting are half red, one side red and one side still green, as if someone painted only half of them with a brush. The fully red ones are

the best, with shiny skin, and in the sun they look like little lanterns.

My grandfather stands outside the fence and hands the bamboo basket in through the gap. The basket is small, its rim worn pale white, an old basket he has used for years. He says, pick the red ones, do not pull hard, hold the fruit and lift it upward, and when you hear a snap it comes off.

I pick the way he showed me. On the first one I squeeze too hard and leave a dent with my thumb. On the second I am wiser. I hold the fruit and push it up, and the stem snaps, and the fruit lands safely in my hand, heavy and warm from the sun. I pick six in a row, and the basket has a full layer lying in it.

At the last one, I find a fully red tomato hiding under a leaf, hidden so deep that nobody would see it without parting the leaves. I pick it and hold it up for my grandfather. He laughs and says the fruits in the garden are honest creatures; if you look for them in earnest, they let themselves be found.

At noon my grandmother cooks the tomatoes I picked, and there is also a plate of tomatoes with white sugar, and the sweet water turns red. I eat until I am too full to move, and sit on the doorstep.

I love the vegetable garden of my grandfather. I love the purple flowers on the bamboo fence, the fruits half red and half green, the old bamboo basket handed in through the gap, and the moment of a snap when a tomato comes off the plant. Next July, I am going to pick again.

一场雨过后，菜园红了一半

放假第一天，我就住到了爷爷家。放下书包我就往菜园跑，心想终于能摘西红柿了。结果跑到篱笆跟前一看，我愣住了：满架子的果子还是青的，青得发亮，一个红的都没有。我站在篱笆外头，手搭在竹竿上，半天没说话。

爷爷从园子里出来，手上都是土。他说，急什么，再等几天。我问要等几天，爷爷说他也说不准，反正天一热，雨一下，它们自己就红了。

我不信。可是第二天夜里下了一场大雨，雨打在篱笆上噼噼啪啪，我在屋里听见了，心里还惦记着那些青果子。

早上雨停了，我穿着拖鞋就往菜园跑。跑到跟前，我啊了一声。红了一半。真的红了一半。昨天还全青的架子，今天挂着一串一串的红，红的上面还挂着水珠，一颤一颤的。青的那些也变了颜色，青里透黄，黄里透白，跟昨天不是一个样子了。

我喊爷爷。爷爷慢慢走过来，看了一眼说，你看，我说过的。他去墙角拿了竹篮子，从篱笆的缺口递给我。篮子是新的，竹篾还青着，爷爷说专门编的，等着果子红。

那天早上我摘了满满一篮。红透的放篮子底，半红的放上面，爷爷说半红的放几天也能吃。我蹲在架子底下往上看，叶子缝里全是红的，像藏了一架子的灯笼。有一只瓢虫爬在一个红西红柿上，红红的背，上面全是小点点，比西红柿还好看。

篮子太重，我提不动，爷爷从缺口把篮子接过去，一手提篮子，一手扶我出篱笆。走到院门口，我把篮子放下，挑了最红的一个，在衣襟上擦了擦，咬一口，沙瓤的，又甜又面。

晚上我在日记本上写：菜园最神奇的地方，是它不声不响。你看着它几天没变化，一场雨过去，它忽然红给你看。我喜欢爷爷的菜园，喜欢那些不声不响、一到时候就红透的西红柿。

After One Rain the Garden Turned Half Red

On the first day of vacation I went to live at the house of my grandfather. I dropped my schoolbag and ran straight to the garden, thinking at last I could pick tomatoes. When I reached the fence I froze. The whole shelf of fruits was still green, shining green, not one red among them. I stood outside the fence with my hand on a bamboo pole, and for a long while I said nothing.

My grandfather came out of the garden with soil all over his hands. He said, why the hurry, wait a few more days. I asked how many days. He said he could not say exactly, but once the weather turns hot and one rain falls, they will turn red by themselves.

I did not believe him. But that night a heavy rain fell, pattering on the bamboo fence, and I lay in the room listening, my heart still with those green fruits.

In the morning the rain stopped. I ran to the garden in my slippers. When I got there I cried out. Half red. Truly half red. The shelves that were all green yesterday now hung with strings of red, and the red ones still wore drops of water that trembled in the light. The green ones had changed too, green turning yellow, yellow turning pale, no longer the colors of yesterday.

I called my grandfather. He walked over slowly, took one look and said, you see, I told you. He went to the corner of the wall and brought a bamboo basket, and handed it to me through the gap in the fence. The basket was new, its bamboo strips still green. He said he wove it on purpose, waiting for the fruits to ripen.

That morning I filled the basket to the brim. The fully ripe ones went to the bottom, the half red ones on top, for grandfather said the half red ones will ripen in a few days at home. I crouched under the shelf and looked up. Between the leaves

everything was red, like a whole shelf of hidden lanterns. A ladybug crawled over one red tomato, its back red and covered with little dots, prettier even than the tomato.

The basket was too heavy for me to carry. My grandfather took it through the gap, lifting the basket with one hand and steadying me out of the fence with the other. At the yard gate I set the basket down, chose the reddest tomato, rubbed it on my shirt, and bit into it. It was sandy inside, sweet and soft.

At night I wrote in my diary: the strangest thing about the garden is that it makes no sound. You watch it for days with no change, then one rain passes and it suddenly turns red before your eyes. I love the vegetable garden of my grandfather, and those quiet tomatoes that ripen fully the moment their time comes.

我和爷爷比赛摘西红柿

八月里，爷爷菜园的西红柿红得忙不过来了。那天我提着小桶去摘，爷爷在篱笆那头看见了，隔着篱笆喊我：小丫头，咱俩比一场，一人摘一篮，看谁摘得多、摘得好。我把手上的桶往篱笆缺口里一放，说比就比。

爷爷从缺口把篮子递进来，我的桶也在缺口那头。篱笆不高，到我腰上，竹竿被太阳晒得温热。我们隔着篱笆各忙各的，园子里全是掐断果柄的啪啪声。

我一开始摘得飞快，专挑大的，一把攥住往上拽。摘到一半，爷爷隔着篱笆探头看了一眼我的篮子，笑了。他说，你看你摘的。我低头一看，坏了。篮子里有两个西红柿捏出了坑，一个皮破了，还有一个果柄拽掉了，露出一个小洞。这样的果子不耐放，奶奶说过，破皮的当天就得吃掉。

我改了办法。先看颜色，红透的才摘；再用手背轻轻按一下，软得刚好的才要；摘的时候捏住果子往上托，不拽果柄，让它自己啪地断。这样摘得慢了，可个个完好。

爷爷摘得才叫快。他的手在架子底下穿来穿去，一抬一放，啪、啪，篮子一会儿就冒尖了。我数了数，爷爷摘了二十三个，个个完好；我摘了十九个，还有两个带伤。我输了。

爷爷把篮子从缺口递过来，连我那一桶也提过去，说输赢都一样，都是咱俩摘的。回家路上他教我，带果柄的放一起，破皮的挑出来单独放，红透的当天吃，半红的摆窗台。

晚上奶奶问谁摘得多，爷爷指我。奶奶不信，爷爷说，她输给我，可她学会的比我还多。

我喜欢爷爷的菜园，喜欢竹篱笆，喜欢从缺口递进来的篮子，喜欢啪的一声断柄。比赛输了我不难过，因为我知道，明年八月，我就能赢爷爷了。

My Grandfather and I Had a Picking Contest

In August the tomatoes in the garden of my grandfather ripened faster than anyone could pick them. That day I went with a small bucket, and my grandfather saw me from the far side of the fence. He called through the bamboo poles: let us have a contest, one basket each, and see who picks more and picks better. I set my bucket down at the gap in the fence and said, deal.

My grandfather handed his basket in through the gap, and my bucket stood on the other side of it. The fence was not high, it reached my waist, and the bamboo poles were warm from the sun. We worked on our own sides, and the garden was full of the snapping sound of tomato stems breaking.

At first I picked as fast as I could, grabbing only the big ones and yanking them upward. Halfway through, my grandfather peeked over the fence at my basket and laughed. He said, look at what you picked. I looked down. Trouble. Two tomatoes in my basket had thumb dents, one had torn skin, and on another I had pulled the whole stem out, leaving a small hole. Such fruits do not keep, and my grandmother had said the ones with torn skin must be eaten the same day.

I changed my method. First look at the color, and pick only the fully red. Then press gently with the back of the hand, and take only those just soft enough. When picking, hold the fruit and lift it upward, do not yank the stem, and let it snap by itself. I picked slower this way, but every fruit came out whole.

My grandfather was the fast one. His hands moved through the shelves under the leaves, lift and release, snap, snap, and his basket filled to a mound in no time. I counted. He had picked twenty-three, every one whole. I had picked nineteen, two of them damaged. I lost.

He handed his basket through the gap, lifted my bucket over as well, and said win or lose it is all ours, picked by the two of us. On the way home he taught me: keep the ones with stems together, set aside the damaged ones separately, eat the fully ripe today, and place the half red ones on the windowsill.

At night my grandmother asked who picked more. My grandfather pointed at me. She did not believe it. He said, she lost to me, but she learned more than I did.

I love the vegetable garden of my grandfather, the bamboo fence, the basket handed through the gap, and the single snap of a breaking stem. Losing the contest did not sadden me, because I know that next August I will be able to beat my grandfather.