爷爷说，桶要两只手端

星期天，太阳很好，爷爷蹲在菜园门口看地。我跑过去问，爷爷你在看啥。爷爷用手扒开土给我看：土白了，裂了小口，菜苗渴了。爷爷站起来说，今天你帮我提水，我浇。我说好，其实我心里想的是，提水有什么难的。

井边的水桶是爷爷的旧木桶，箍着铁圈。我右手单拎提梁，往上一提，提起来了，可是桶直往一边坠。我走起来，桶晃，我身子也跟着晃。走了没五步，哗啦一下，水泼了半桶，我裤腿也湿了。我站在那儿，脸烫烫的。

爷爷没笑我。他走过来，把桶里的水添上，说，来，换两手。他把提梁摆正，让我左手扣住一边，右手扣住一边，两只手平平地端起来。爷爷说，眼睛别看脚，看前头的路，步子放小，桶就听话了。

我两手端着走，一开始还是晃。爷爷在旁边扶了一把提梁，又马上松开。他说，我不扶你，你自己找那个稳当的劲儿。我走了三步，忽然找到窍门了：走快一点反而稳，慢下来桶就晃。我就小跑着把水送到了菜园边，桶里还剩大半。

爷爷夸我：头一回两手端桶就能送到，了不起。他边说边把锄头放好，我们俩一起浇菜苗。爷爷提着桶，我拿瓢。爷爷蹲下，把桶歪向菜苗根边的土，我用瓢把水一勺一勺舀出来，顺着土倒。水一浇下去，土面上冒小泡泡，噗噗两下就没了。

浇到一半，我问爷爷，菜苗喝多少才够。爷爷说，浇到水不再往下钻、开始在土上趴着，就够了。我用手背蹭了蹭额头的汗，接着浇。

浇完最后一行，爷爷把瓢接过去，说今天你出力最多。他伸手揉了揉我的脑袋，说，走，回家，爷爷给你煮鸡蛋。回家的路上我两手空空，可胳膊还是酸的，一甩一甩的。

那天我懂得了一件事：提水看着简单，里面有名堂；劳动看着累人，里面有味儿。那个味儿，就是爷爷夸我那一句里头的味儿，也是菜苗喝饱水、叶子发亮的那个味儿。我喜欢帮爷爷浇菜，下回星期天，我还去。

Grandfather Said, Hold the Bucket With Both Hands

On Sunday the sun was bright. My grandfather squatted at the gate of the garden looking at the ground. I ran over and asked what he was looking at. He dug his fingers into the soil and showed me: the earth has turned pale and cracked in little lines, and the seedlings are thirsty. He stood up and said, today you carry the water for me, and I will water. I said all right, though in my heart I was thinking, how hard can carrying water be.

By the well stood the old wooden bucket of my grandfather, banded with iron. I hooked the handle with my right hand alone and lifted. It came up, but the bucket kept dragging to one side. As I walked, the bucket swayed and my body swayed with it.

After not quite five steps, splash, half the water spilled, and my trouser legs got wet. I stood there with my face burning.

My grandfather did not laugh at me. He walked over, refilled the bucket, and said, come, switch to two hands. He straightened the handle, had my left hand grip one side and my right hand grip the other, and lift it level with both hands. He said, do not look at your feet, look at the road ahead, take small steps, and the bucket will behave.

I walked holding it with both hands, still swaying at first. My grandfather steadied the handle once with his hand, then let go at once. He said, I will not hold it for you, find the steady rhythm yourself. After three steps I suddenly hit on the trick: moving a little faster is steadier, and slowing down makes it sway. So I nearly jogged the water to the edge of the garden, with most of it still in the bucket.

My grandfather praised me: for a first time with two hands, delivering it whole, that is fine work. While he spoke he set down his hoe, and we watered the seedlings together. He held the bucket, I held the ladle. He crouched and tilted the bucket toward the soil beside the roots, and I scooped the water out spoon by spoon and poured it along the earth. When the water went down, little bubbles rose on the soil and popped away in two breaths.

Halfway through, I asked my grandfather how much the seedlings should drink. He said, water until the water stops sinking and begins to lie on the soil, and that is enough. I wiped my forehead with the back of my hand and kept watering.

When the last row was done, my grandfather took the ladle from me and said that today I did the most work. He ruffled my hair and said, come home, I will boil you an egg. On the way home my hands were empty, yet my arms still ached and swung with every step.

That day I learned one thing: carrying water looks simple but has its craft, and labor looks tiring but has its flavor. That flavor is in the praise my grandfather gave me, and in the look of seedlings drinking their fill with shining leaves. I love helping my grandfather water the vegetables, and next Sunday I will go again.