一只水壶的日记

我是一只铁皮水壶，住在爷爷菜园的门后。我的肚子是圆的，嘴巴是长的，头顶还有一提手，像长了一对耳朵，专门听菜园的动静。

每天清早，小女孩踮起脚把我从门后取下，晃一晃，听我肚子里的水响不响。响，她就笑了，提着我往菜畦走。她的步子快，我在半路上叮叮当当地唱歌，篱笆听见了，一根一根挺直腰，像列队欢迎我。

我的本领是下雨。小女孩把我举高高，我的长嘴巴就洒出一片雨。雨很小，很轻，一颗一颗，刚好够菜苗张开嘴接住。菜苗是菜园里最小的娃娃，它们不躲雨，反而仰着脸迎上来，谁接的水多，谁就红着脸先长高一截。

豆角苗最爱撒娇，叶子缠上我的影子，要我多留一会儿；黄瓜秧个子高，站在篱笆边，够不着我的雨，我就挪过去，给它单独下一场。篱笆总在这时候哗啦啦地鼓掌，惊得麻雀扑棱棱飞起，又落回原处，假装什么都没发生。

爷爷有时也帮我。他把我提到井边，掀开我的盖子，看我还剩多少水。他添水的动作很轻，像怕呛着我。添满了，他把我递给小女孩，自己背着手站在畦那头，看我们俩给菜园下雨。

太阳爬到头顶的时候，我肚子里的水就见了底。小女孩把我放在畦边的石头上歇凉，我躺在那里，听见土地在慢慢咽水，听见菜苗在偷偷拔节。这是菜园最安静的时刻，也是我最骄傲的时刻。

到了秋天，我的肚子空的日子多了。可我不难过。我数过：番茄架上挂着一串红灯笼，篱笆边堆着小山一样的南瓜，小女孩抱着最大的一个，笑得露出缺了的门牙。我知道，那些全是我从前洒出去的雨，换了模样回来见我。

冬天，我回到门后，肚子里最后一滴水也干了。可我不着急。篱笆在门外守着，菜苗在地底下睡着，等下一场春雨。等雪一化，小女孩又会踮起脚把我取下，晃一晃，听我响。我最大的心愿，就是把自己肚子里的水，都变成黄瓜、番茄和豆角，再变成小女孩嘴角的笑。

The Diary of a Watering Can

I am a tin watering can, living behind the door of grandfather of the garden. My belly is round, my mouth is long, and on my head there is a handle, like a pair of ears grown for listening to what happens in the garden.

Every morning the little girl tiptoes to take me down from behind the door, gives me a shake, and listens whether the water inside me sounds. If it sounds, she smiles and carries me toward the vegetable beds. Her steps are quick, and I jingle along the way like singing; the fence hears it, and straightens pole after pole, like lining up to welcome me.

My talent is making rain. The little girl lifts me high, and my long mouth

sprinkles out a sheet of rain. The rain is small and soft, drop by drop, just enough for the seedlings to open their mouths and catch it. The seedlings are the smallest babies of the garden; they do not hide from rain but tilt their faces up to meet it, and whoever catches more blushes and grows tall first.

The bean seedlings love to act sweet, twining their leaves around my shadow and begging me to stay longer; the cucumber shoot stands tall by the fence, out of reach of my rain, so I move over and make it a private shower. The fence always applauds with a rustle at such moments, startling the sparrows into flight, and they settle back as if nothing had happened.

Sometimes grandfather helps me too. He carries me to the well and opens my lid to see how much water I have left. He refills me gently, as if afraid of choking me. When I am full, he hands me to the little girl and stands with hands behind his back at the far end of the plot, watching the two of us rain on the garden.

When the sun climbs to the top of the sky, the water in my belly runs low. The little girl sets me on the stone by the plot to cool off, and lying there I hear the earth swallowing water slowly, hear the seedlings secretly jointing up. This is the quietest hour of the garden, and the proudest hour for me.

In autumn, days with an empty belly become more common. But I am not sad. I have counted: a string of red lanterns hangs on the tomato trellis, pumpkins pile like a little hill beside the fence, and the little girl hugs the biggest one, smiling with her missing front tooth. I know that all of them are the rains I once sprinkled, coming back to see me in a new shape.

In winter I return behind the door, and the last drop in my belly dries up. Yet I am not in a hurry. The fence keeps watch outside, the seedlings sleep under the ground, waiting for the next spring rain. When the snow melts, the little girl will tiptoe to take me down again, shake me, and listen for my sound. My greatest wish is to turn all the water in my belly into cucumbers, tomatoes and beans, and then into the smile on the mouth of the little girl.