爷爷的慢，是一种快

我这个人，从小有个毛病：开始得快，结束得也快。兴趣班报过五个，坚持过最长的是三个月。所有人都说我三分钟热度，我自己也认了。直到初二暑假，我在爷爷的菜园里待了一个月，才第一次看懂另一种活法——爷爷的慢。

爷爷种菜，慢得让人着急。播种前，他要翻两遍地，沤一冬的肥，还要看三天的天气。我催他，早点种下早点收嘛。他不答，只把土块捏碎，一颗一颗摆匀。播种之后，他每天早晚各绕畦一圈，看土的颜色，看芽的动静，从不伸手扒土。他等发芽的样子，像等一个信得过的朋友赴约，笃定，不急。

除草浇水，是他一天里最不动声色的部分。他除草不连根拔大草，只割去上面的叶，留根在土里慢慢烂掉肥田；浇水不漫灌，一瓢一瓢顺着畦沟走。我问为什么这么费事，他说，地是要种一辈子的，不能图快把它亏待了。他做这些事的时候没有表情，像呼吸一样自然。一个月里，他一天没缺过，也一天没加过班似的卖力。慢，但是不停。

九月底，那畦白菜收了三筐。邻居来帮忙搬，打趣说，老哥你这菜长得比谁家都齐整。爷爷抽烟，笑而不答。我在旁边心里一震：原来他一点都没误过农时。翻地、点种、间苗、追肥，每一样都比别人提前半步，只是那半步藏在看不见的地方。他的慢不是迟钝，是把力气花在别人看不见的地方；他的快也不喧哗，是到时候自然全都到位。

那天晚上我想了很久，想到我那些半途而废的兴趣班。我每次都是在最慢、最重复的阶段离开的——练琴的音阶，素描的线条，长跑的极点。我以为那些是通往乐趣的障碍，原来那些就是乐趣本身，就像爷爷的除草浇水，不是种菜的代价，种菜本来就是除草浇水。想跳过过程直接要收获的人，收获也会跳过他。

这学期我重新报了吉他，跟自己约法三章：最难听的那三个月，不许退。现在正是最难听的三个月，手指疼，曲子碎，可我每天练四十分钟，像爷爷绕畦一圈。我不催自己，我知道根先在下面走。等有一天我弹出完整的曲子，那不会是一夜之间的事，那是每天四十分钟攒出来的。爷爷的慢，是一种快；因为它把快拆成了每一天，藏在谁也抢不走的地方。

The Slow of Grandfather Is a Kind of Fast

Since childhood I have had one flaw: I start fast and finish fast too. I enrolled in five hobby classes, and the longest I lasted was three months. Everyone called me a three-minute enthusiasm kind of person, and I admitted it myself. It was not until the summer vacation of the second year of middle school, when I stayed a month in grandfather of the garden, that I first understood another way of living — the slowness of grandfather.

Grandfather grows vegetables so slowly it makes people anxious. Before sowing he plows the land twice, composts fertilizer over a whole winter, and watches the weather for three days. I urge him, plant early and harvest early. He does not

answer, only crumbles the clods and sets the seeds evenly, one by one. After sowing, he walks one round of the bed every morning and evening, watching the color of the soil and the doings of the sprouts, never digging with his hands. The way he waits for germination is like waiting for a trusted friend to keep an appointment: sure, unhurried.

Weeding and watering are the most unobtrusive parts of his day. When weeding he does not yank out the big grass by the roots; he cuts off the leaves above and leaves the roots in the soil to rot slowly into fertility. He does not flood the beds; he pours ladle by ladle along the furrows. I ask why so much fuss, and he says, the land is to be farmed for a lifetime; one must not cheat it for the sake of speed. His face shows nothing while he works, as natural as breathing. In a whole month he missed not one day, and never labored as if working overtime. Slow, but never stopping.

At the end of September, that bed of cabbages yielded three baskets. A neighbor came to help carry them, teasing, brother, your vegetables grow tidier than anyone of the village. Grandfather smokes and smiles without answering. Watching from the side, my heart shook: he had not missed a single farming season. Plowing, sowing, thinning, top-dressing, every step half a pace ahead of others, only those half paces were hidden where no one sees. His slowness is not dullness; it is spending strength where others cannot see. His speed makes no noise either; when the time comes, everything simply arrives.

That night I thought for a long time, thinking of my abandoned hobby classes. Each time I left at the slowest, most repetitive stage — the scales in piano practice, the lines in sketching, the wall in long-distance running. I had taken those for obstacles on the road to fun; it turns out those are the fun itself, just as the weeding and watering of grandfather are not the price of farming — farming is weeding and watering. A person who wants to skip the process and claim the harvest directly will also be skipped by the harvest.

This term I enrolled in guitar again, making three rules with myself: during the three ugliest months, no quitting. Now is exactly the three ugliest months; my fingers ache, the tunes break to pieces, yet I practice forty minutes every day, like grandfather walking his round of the bed. I do not urge myself; I know the roots travel below first. Someday when I play a whole piece, it will not have happened overnight; it will have been saved up forty minutes at a time. The slowness of grandfather is a kind of fast, because it dismantles fastness into every single day, hidden in a place no one can take away.

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