爷爷村子里的雪

寒假里小满跟着爸妈回乡下，到的那天夜里就下起了大雪。第二天清早小满还没起，爷爷已经站在院子里了。他穿着那件旧棉袄，手背在身后，绕着院子慢慢走了一圈，仰头看看天，又低头看看地，嘴里说，好雪，下透了。

村里的雪跟城里的不一样。城里的雪落在柏油路上，让车轮压成灰黑的泥；这里的雪落在麦田里，落在房顶上，落在河面上，全是干净的白。麦田是一整块一整块的白，白得平平整整，只有几垄麦苗的背露出来，白底下透出一条一条浅绿。村后的杨树全白了，枝丫支棱着，像开了一夜的花。屋顶上的白跟墙根的白中间隔着一条黑黑的檐沟，颜色一层一层，谁也没画过，倒比画的还齐整。小满站在门口看，觉得整个村子像刚洗过、刚铺好的。

声音也是不一样的。城里的雪落下来没有声，这里的雪落在草垛上扑扑的，落在井台上嗒嗒的。爷爷领小满往麦田走，雪没到脚踝，一脚下去咯吱一声，抬起来又是一声。家里那条黄狗先冲出去，四条腿在雪里乱蹬，滚了两个身，站起来时胡子上都挂着雪，冲他们摇尾巴。远处有人扫院子，扫帚划过土地，唰啦，唰啦，声音传得很远。村子静，静得能听见雪从树上滑下来的声音，扑簌一下，落在人头顶上。

爷爷在田边走下来，蹲下去，把雪扒开一层。底下的土是湿润润的，麦苗贴着地皮，绿得很结实。爷爷抓起一把雪，攥在手里捏了捏，雪从他指缝里挤出来，凉气顺着手指往上冒。他把手上的雪拍掉，说，雪盖被，麦苗睡得香，来年准是好收成。小满也学着抓了一把，手心一下子凉透了，赶紧甩手，爷爷笑他。

回村路上，太阳出来了，雪开始滴水，屋檐下一滴一滴，砸在雪地上砸出小坑。房檐上的雪块掉下来，碎成一团白雾。小满的手还凉着，指尖红红的，可心里热热的。晚上她给同学打电话，说乡下的雪是盖在麦子上的，说爷爷攥雪的样子。她说了很多，说到最后只说了一句，明年的麦子一定很好。

The Snow in Grandpa's Village

During winter vacation Xiaoman went back to the countryside with her parents, and the night they arrived a heavy snow began to fall. Before she got up the next morning, Grandpa was already standing in the yard. Wearing his old padded coat, hands behind his back, he walked slowly around the yard once, looked up at the sky and down at the ground, and said, good snow, a soaking one.

The snow in the village was not like the snow in the city. In the city snow falls on asphalt and is pressed into gray-black mud by wheels; here it falls on the wheat fields, on the roofs, on the river, all of it clean white. The wheat fields lay in whole blocks of white, flat and smooth, with only the ridges of a few rows of wheat showing through, pale green streaks under the white. The poplars behind the village were all white, branches jutting out, as if they had bloomed all night. On the roofs the white and the white at the wall bases were separated by a dark gutter line,

colors layer upon layer, drawn by nobody yet neater than a painting. Xiaoman stood at the doorway and felt the whole village looked freshly washed, freshly laid out.

The sounds were different too. City snow falls silently; here snow patters onto the haystacks and taps onto the well platform. Grandpa led Xiaoman toward the fields, the snow at ankle height, each step down a crunch, each step up another. The family's yellow dog shot out first, all four legs paddling wildly in the snow, rolling twice, and when it stood up its whiskers were hung with snow, and it wagged its tail at them. Someone far off was sweeping the yard, the broom scraping the earth, shala, shala, the sound carrying far. The village was quiet, quiet enough to hear a lump of snow slide off a tree and plop onto someone's head.

Grandpa stepped down at the field's edge and crouched, pushing aside a layer of snow. The soil underneath was damp and moist, the wheat seedlings pressed flat to the ground, green and sturdy. He grabbed a handful of snow and squeezed it in his hand, the snow oozing out between his fingers, cold rising up his fingers. He brushed the snow off his hand and said, snow is a quilt; the wheat sleeps warm, and next year will surely be a good harvest. Xiaoman grabbed a handful too, and her palm went cold through at once; she shook her hands fast, and Grandpa laughed at her.

On the way back the sun came out, and the snow began to drip, drop by drop from the eaves, pitting the snow below with little holes. Chunks of snow fell from the eaves and burst into white mist. Xiaoman's hands were still cold, her fingertips red, but her heart was warm. That evening she phoned her classmate and said the village snow lies on top of the wheat, and described the way Grandpa had squeezed the snow. She said a great deal, and at the end said only one line: next year's wheat will surely be good.