橙子里的周末

周末睡到自然醒，冰箱空了，女儿提议去水果店。她穿上鞋还不忘往书包里塞一个本子，说要记账。我说好，今天的账归你管。

水果店刚卸货，门口一筐筐码着橙子。女儿踮起脚挑，先拿起来看，再放到鼻子底下闻，最后掂在两只手之间比轻重。她挑得慢，卖货的阿姨也不催。她举起一个递给我看，说这个皮薄，闻着就甜。我接过来，果皮的清香沾了一鼻子，确实浓。她最后选了六个，每个都擦得亮，摆进袋子里像列队。

回家的路上她抱着袋子不撒手，说怕颠坏了。走到小区门口她忽然停下，从袋子里摸出一个，说要现在闻一个。我说好。她指甲在果皮上掐出一个小圈，细小的汁雾喷出来，她眯起眼睛闻，说整个周末都是这个味。旁边遛狗的老太太笑了，说这丫头会过日子。

到家她踩着凳子够榨汁机，把橙子切成两半，一半一半按下去，汁水顺着机器流进壶里，泡沫浮在顶上。她尝一口，皱眉说酸，又加了一勺蜂蜜，再尝，点头。那壶汁在冰箱里镇了一下午，晚饭时倒出来，一人一杯。她举起杯子宣布，这是她自己挑的橙子。我们碰杯，杯子里全是那个下午的阳光味。

晚上她记账，六个橙子多少钱，写得工整，末尾画了一个橙子当图案。我瞥见她在金额旁边写了个小字：值。水果店还是那个水果店，橙子还是那个橙子，可同一个周末，经她的手挑过、闻过、榨过，就不一样了。

周一她书包里揣了两个橙子，说要分给同桌。出门前她在门口举着本子晃，说这周的账本第一页是橙子，下周还要去。我点头。门关上以后，桌上还剩半壶汁，我给自己倒了一杯，酸里带甜，确实是那个周末的味道。

A Weekend Inside the Oranges

On the weekend we slept until we woke naturally. The fridge was empty, and my daughter suggested going to the fruit shop. Putting on her shoes, she still stuffed a notebook into her schoolbag, saying she would keep the accounts. I said fine, the accounts today are yours.

The fruit shop had just received its delivery, crates of oranges stacked at the door. My daughter stood on tiptoe to choose. She picked one up to look, brought it under her nose to smell, then weighed it between her two hands. She chose slowly, and the saleswoman did not hurry her. She held one up for me to see and said this one has thin skin and smells sweet. I took it, and the clean fragrance of the peel filled my nose; it really was strong. In the end she picked six, each one polished bright, laid into the bag like a little formation.

On the way home she hugged the bag and would not let go, afraid of bruising the fruit. At the gate of our compound she suddenly stopped, fished one out of the bag, and said she wanted to smell one right now. I said fine. Her fingernail pressed a small ring into the peel, a fine mist of juice sprayed out, and she smelled with her eyes closed, saying the whole weekend smells like this. An old lady walking her dog laughed and said this girl knows how to live.

At home she climbed on a stool to reach the juicer, cut the oranges in half, pressed them down one half at a time, juice running into the pitcher with foam floating on top. She tasted a sip, frowned and said sour, added a spoon of honey, tasted again, and nodded. The pitcher chilled in the fridge all afternoon, and at dinner we poured it out, one cup each. She raised her cup and announced these were oranges she picked herself. We clinked glasses, and the cups were full of the taste of the sunlight of that afternoon.

At night she wrote the accounts, how much the six oranges cost, neatly, and drew an orange as a decoration at the end. I glimpsed a small word beside the amount: worth it. Same fruit shop, same oranges, but once a weekend has passed through her hands, chosen, smelled, and juiced, it is no longer the same.

水果店里的小学徒

我开水果店第六年，周末上午最热闹。来的多是带孩子的家长，孩子往筐前一站，比大人还认真。上个周六来的一对父子，让我记到今天。

爸爸问橙子怎么卖，儿子已经把手伸进筐里了。他不挑大的，专挑模样周正的，拿起来转一圈，看看肚脐，再换下一个。我逗他，挑橙子要掂分量，越沉的越有水。他听了，两只手一边一个比起来，比完把沉的那个递给爸爸，说这个归你。爸爸接了，放进袋里，一句没多说，像是早就习惯了儿子替他做主。

挑到第五个，孩子把橙子凑到鼻子底下，闭着眼闻。我说闻不出好坏，他睁开眼认真反驳我，说能，这个香，那个没味。他把有味的留下，没味的放回筐里，放回的时候还转了个方向，让有味的继续晒到太阳。爸爸在旁边笑，我也笑，从此他成了我们店的熟客，来了就直奔橙子筐。

结账时数了数，十二个橙子，一兜橘子。爸爸要拎，孩子不让，把袋子换到自己手上，说周末的任务是他完成的，得他自己拿。爸爸由着他，两人在门口分吃一个橘子，一人几瓣，皮丢进我店门口的垃圾桶，丢得比谁都准。

后来他们常来。孩子从够不着筐，到踮脚，到伸手就够得着，掂分量的手法越来越像老主顾。有一回他妈妈来，说孩子上周非要自己榨汁，把厨房弄得一塌糊涂，榨出来的汁倒真甜，全家喝完了。我装橙子的时候想，这店里的橙子，数他挑得最慢，也数他挑得最认真。

入冬后店里进橙子，他放学路过非要进来挑两个，说要给值班的妈妈带去。我给他留了个大的，他不要，说挑橙子不能靠别人让，得自己捱。最后他自己拿了四个，个个沉。我找零的时候多塞了一把橘子瓣干，他攥着走了，回头冲我摆手。这样的孩子，我这店开下去就有意思。

The Little Apprentice at the Fruit Shop

I have run this fruit shop for six years, and weekend mornings are the busiest. Most customers come with children, and a child standing in front of the crate can be more serious than the grown-ups. A father and son came last Saturday, and I still remember them.

The father asked how much the oranges were, and the son already had his hands in the crate. He did not pick the biggest ones but the well-shaped ones, turning each over to look at its navel before putting it down. I teased him, saying to weigh an orange for its heft, the heavier the juicier. Hearing that, he compared one in each hand, then handed the heavier one to his father, saying this one is yours. His father took it and put it in the bag without saying much, as if long used to his son deciding for him.

By the fifth orange, the child brought it under his nose and smelled with his eyes shut. I told him you cannot smell quality. He opened his eyes and argued seriously: yes you can, this one is fragrant, that one is not. He kept the fragrant ones and returned the rest to the crate, turning them around on the way back so the good ones kept their sun. His father laughed, and so did I. From then on he became a regular, heading straight for the orange crate when he came.

At checkout we counted twelve oranges and a bag of tangerines. His father wanted to carry them; his son would not allow it, switching the bags to his own hands, saying the weekend mission was his to finish. His father let him. At the door the two shared one tangerine, a few segments each, and dropped the peels into my trash bin with better aim than anyone.

They came often after that. The child grew from unable to reach the crate, to tiptoeing, to simply stretching out a hand, and his way of weighing oranges looked more and more like an old customer. Once his mother came and said he had insisted on juicing them himself last week, making a mess of the kitchen, but the juice really was sweet and the whole family finished it. As I stacked oranges I thought: of all the oranges this shop sells, his are picked the slowest, and picked the most earnestly.

After winter came and the shop restocked oranges, he passed by after school and insisted on coming in to pick two, saying he would take them to his mother who was on

duty. I set aside a big one for him, but he refused, saying that picking oranges cannot rely on someone giving way, you have to weigh them yourself. In the end he chose four himself, every one heavy. When I gave change I slipped in an extra handful of dried tangerine segments; he clutched it and left, turning back to wave at me. With children like this around, running this shop is worth it.

我的第一次榨汁任务

那个周六早上，妈妈把十块钱拍在桌上，说今天的水果归我买，要六个橙子，挑最甜的。我攥着钱出门，感觉这任务比期末考试还重。

水果店的橙子堆成小山。我想起姥爷挑橙子的手艺，看皮要挑细的，肚脐要挑小的，拿两只比重量。我照方抓药，拿起一个，指甲在皮上掐出一个小圈，凑近闻，一股清亮的香钻进鼻子里，就是它了。连着闻了七八个，卖货阿姨看着我笑，说闻得比她挑得还细。我挑满六个，钱还剩两块五，路上买了根冰棍奖励自己。

回家我宣布橙子由我洗、我切、我榨。妈妈把刀让给我，我两半切开，切的时候汁水顺着手腕流。榨汁机嗡嗡响，汁子进壶，白沫浮上来，我舀一口尝，酸得整张脸皱起来。翻出蜂蜜加了一勺，再尝，正好。爸爸下班回来喝了一大口，说这汁有水平，我表面上淡定，心里乐开了花。

下午我把壶搬去阳台，给姥爷留了一杯。姥爷尝了，问是不是掐皮闻着挑的，我说是。他点头，说他那套手艺传下来了，比传家传得还顺。

后来每个周末我都去挑橙子，从六个挑到一兜。那十块钱的任务我早忘了金额，忘不掉的是掐开橙皮那一瞬间的香，和那壶酸得眯眼、加了蜂蜜才完美的汁。原来长大就是，从妈妈拍在桌上的十块钱，变成自己攥着钱去挑一兜甜。

班里开班会，老师让每人带一样水果。别人带苹果香蕉，我抱了一兜橙子去，当场掏皮给同学闻。有个同学说超市的橙子也这样，我摇头，说超市的橙子没人替你闻，自己闻过的才作数。老师尝了一瓣，问我怎么挑的，我把看皮、比重量、掏圈闻香说了一遍，说得比课文还熟。那兜橙子当天就分光了。

My First Juicing Mission

That Saturday morning my mother slapped ten yuan on the table and said the fruit was mine to buy today, six oranges, the sweetest ones. I gripped the money and went out feeling the mission was heavier than a final exam.

The oranges at the fruit shop were piled into a small hill. I remembered a trick

of my grandpa: choose thin skin, choose a small navel, compare two for weight. I followed the recipe exactly. I picked one up, pressed a small ring into the peel with my nail, brought it close, and a bright fragrance drilled into my nose. That was it. I smelled seven or eight in a row, and the saleswoman watched me laughing, saying I smelled more carefully than she picked. I filled six oranges with two yuan fifty left, and bought myself a popsicle on the way home as a reward.

At home I announced that I would wash, cut, and juice the oranges. My mother handed me the knife. I cut them in half, juice running down my wrist as I worked. The juicer buzzed, juice poured into the pitcher, white foam rising. I scooped a taste and my whole face puckered from the sourness. I found the honey, added a spoon, tasted again, perfect. My father came home from work, took a big swallow, and said this juice had class. Outwardly I stayed calm; inside I was blooming.

In the afternoon I carried the pitcher to the balcony and saved a cup for grandpa. He tasted it and asked if I had picked them by pinching the peel and smelling. I said yes. He nodded and said his craft had been passed down, more smoothly than family heirlooms travel.

Every weekend after that I went to pick oranges, from six to a whole bag. I have long forgotten the amount of that ten-yuan mission. What I cannot forget is the fragrance the instant an orange peel was pinched open, and that pitcher of juice so sour it made me squint, perfect only after the honey. Growing up, it turns out, is going from ten yuan slapped on the table by your mother to gripping your own money and going out to pick a bag of sweetness.

At our class meeting each student had to bring one kind of fruit. Others brought apples or bananas; I hugged a bag of oranges to school and pinched the peel for my classmates to smell on the spot. One classmate said supermarket oranges are the same. I shook my head and said nobody smells the oranges for you at the supermarket; only the ones you smelled yourself count. Our teacher tasted a segment and asked how I picked them. I recited the looking at the skin, the weighing in two hands, the pinching of a ring and the smelling, more fluently than any textbook passage. That bag of oranges was shared out completely that same day.