# 田埂上的小雅

秋游的大巴停在水库边的公路旁，一下车，全班都愣住了。公路对面是一整片稻田，黄得发亮，一直铺到山脚下。老师喊别跑远，话音还没落，同学们已经散开，像一把撒出去的豆子。

小雅没有跟着跑。她蹲在田边，盯着一株稻穗看。那稻穗弯着腰，穗头沉甸甸地垂下来，谷粒一颗挤一颗，绿黄相间的地方还留着一道边。她数了数，一串上有三十多颗。风过来的时候，稻穗晃两下，又垂回去，像点了个头。她忽然想起科学课上说的，果实成熟就会低头。原来稻子真的会低头。

田那头轰隆隆响起来，一台收割机开进了田，铁轮子碾过稻子，稻子成片地倒，吞进去，吐出来，地上多了一行整齐的稻茬。几个男生嗷嗷叫着往前凑，被老师喊回来。小雅也站起来看，机器走过之后，空气里全是青草和谷壳混在一起的味道，呛人，但是好闻。

收割机走远了，剩下的稻子还在风里弯腰。小雅踩上田埂试了一步，埂面只有两只脚宽，左边是稻子，右边也是稻子。同桌在埂子那头冲她喊：来比一场！她张开胳膊，小跑起来，稻叶扫着手背，稻茬从鞋底一下一下顶上来。她跑得歪歪扭扭，鞋帮上沾满了泥点子，先到的是同桌，先到的是谁不重要，整条田埂都是她们的喊声。

集合前，老师把大家拢到田边，指着稻田说，我们每天吃的米饭就是从这里来的。同学们叽叽喳喳，有人说稻子比她高，有人说谷壳扎手。胖墩从地上捡起一把掉落的稻穗，举起来要交给老师，老师说捡的就自己留着吧。他把稻穗塞进书包侧兜，稻芒支棱在外面，像插了一撮金色的羽毛。

回大巴的路上，小雅摊开手心，掌心里躺着两粒捡来的谷子。她把谷子夹进语文书的最后一页。汽车开动，那片金黄的稻田往后退，退成一大块，退成一小块，最后退进山后面。她隔着车窗挥了挥手，像跟一整片弯腰的稻穗告别。

# Xiao Ya on the Field Ridge

The field-trip bus stopped by the road along the reservoir. The moment the class stepped off, everyone froze. Across the road lay a whole field of rice, shining gold, spreading all the way to the foot of the hills. The teacher called out not to run far, but before her voice ended the class had already scattered, like beans thrown from a hand.

Xiao Ya did not run with them. She squatted at the edge of the field and stared at a single rice ear. It bowed, its head hanging heavy, the grains crowding shoulder to shoulder, a rim of green-yellow still along the seam. She counted more than thirty grains on one strand. When the wind came, the ear swayed twice and hung down again, like a nod. She suddenly remembered what the science class had said: a ripe fruit lowers its head. So the rice really does bow.

A rumble rose from the far end of the field. A harvester drove in; its iron

wheels rolled over the rice, whole sheets of it falling, swallowed in, spat out, leaving a neat line of stubble behind. Several boys whooped and edged closer until the teacher called them back. Xiao Ya stood up to watch too. After the machine passed, the air was thick with the smell of crushed green stalks mixed with rice husk, sharp but pleasant.

The harvester moved off, and the remaining rice kept bowing in the wind. Xiao Ya stepped onto the field ridge and tried one step. The ridge was only two feet wide, rice on the left, rice on the right. Her deskmate shouted to her from the far end: race me! She spread her arms and ran, rice leaves brushing the backs of her hands, stubble poking up through her soles again and again. She ran all wobbly, her shoe sides spattered with mud. Her deskmate got in first; who got in first did not matter, the whole ridge was filled with their shouting.

Before gathering, the teacher brought everyone to the edge of the field and pointed at the rice, saying that the rice we eat every day comes from places like this. The class chattered away: someone said the rice was taller than her, someone said the husks pricked the hand. Fatty picked up a handful of fallen rice ears from the ground and held them up to give to the teacher, who said whatever he picked up he could keep. He stuffed the ears into the side pocket of his backpack, their awns sticking out like a tuft of golden feathers.

On the way back to the bus, Xiao Ya opened her palm. Two grains she had picked up lay in it. She pressed them between the last page of her Chinese textbook. The bus started, and the golden rice field moved backward, shrinking from a big patch to a small one, until it slipped behind the hills. She waved through the window, saying goodbye to a whole field of bowing rice ears.