田野醒着动

那个周六下午没有作业，我蹲在外婆家门前的田埂上，看了整整一个下午的田野。看完我认定了一件事：田野不是静止的，它从早到晚都在动，只是平时没人停下来看。

最先动的是风。风还没到，田那头先起了浪。一道波纹从远处升起，稻子齐齐弯腰，露出底下深一层的黄，那道黄推着往前滚，越滚越近，到我跟前哗啦啦一片响。浪过去了，稻子直起身，穗子还在晃，晃得轻，像说完一句话之后的余音。一个下午，这样的浪过了不知多少遍，每一遍路线都不一样，有时从西边来，有时斜着从西南来，田像被人一遍遍抚平又一遍遍揉皱。

麻雀跟着浪动。浪一起，它们从田里腾起，贴着浪尖飞，忽高忽低，绕个圈又落下，落回原处继续蹦着找落谷。有一只胆大的，落在离我三步的茬口上，歪头看我，蹦两下，又低头啄。我动了一下手指，它扑棱飞了，叫声尖尖地扎进风里。

割稻的人也在动。远处父亲那一行人排开，镰刀起落，稻子一排排伏下去。割倒的稻子被码成人字形靠在埂边，一把一把，像排队。挑担的人走在田埂上，两捆稻子晃在扁担两头，人的步子稳，稻捆的步子不稳，一前一后地颠。云影比人动得更快，一大片灰影从田上跑过去，跑过的地方稻浪变成暗金色，云影过去，又亮回来。

连看着最老实的东西也在动。草垛的影子在晒垫上一寸一寸挪，挪得慢，但一下午挪出去老长一条。场边的塑料布被风掀起一角，啪啪地抽打垛顶，压着的砖头都跟着颤。外婆的蓝头巾一颤一颤，她弯腰翻谷，起身、弯腰，像田里最慢的一株稻子。

日头落到山后，田野的动换了样子。浪还在过，只是声音哑了；麻雀不蹦了，草垛顶上挤挤挨挨落满，像开了一堆灰花。最后一缕云影从田上跑掉，田彻底暗下来，只剩稻穗碰稻穗的沙沙，很轻，像说梦话。

外婆喊我回家吃饭，我站起来，腿蹲麻了，一步一晃。我回头看那片田，它还在动，只是黑夜里看不见。我想，明天太阳一出来，浪还会一遍一遍地过，麻雀还会起落，田野醒着，从秋天一直动到冬天门口。

The Field Stays Awake and Moves

That Saturday afternoon I had no homework, and I squatted on the field ridge in front of Grandma’s house, watching the field for a whole afternoon. When I finished, I was certain of one thing: the field is not still. It moves from dawn to dusk; people simply never stop to look.

The wind moved first. Before it arrived, waves rose at the far end of the field. A ripple lifted up in the distance; the rice bent all at once, baring a deeper yellow beneath, and that yellow rolled toward me, nearer and nearer, until at my feet it burst into rustling. When the wave passed, the rice straightened, its ears still swaying, swaying lightly, like the echo after a sentence ends. All afternoon those waves crossed the field who knows how many times, each on a different path, sometimes

from the west, sometimes slanting from the southwest, the field smoothed and rumpled again and again by unseen hands.

The sparrows moved with the waves. When a wave rose, they sprang from the field, flying low along the crests, rising and dipping, circling once, settling back to their old spots to go on hopping for fallen grain. One bold bird landed on a stubble three steps from me, tilted its head at me, hopped twice, and pecked again. I moved a finger; it whirred off, its cry a sharp needle in the wind.

The reapers moved too. In the distance father's line of men spread out, sickles rising and falling, rice going down row after row. Cut bundles were propped in leaning pairs against the ridge, handful after handful, like a queue. A man with a shoulder pole walked the ridge, two bundles swinging at its ends: his steps steady, the bundles' steps not, bobbing one behind the other. Cloud shadows moved faster still, great gray sheets running over the field; where they passed the waves turned dark gold, and brightened back after. Even the most sedate things moved. The straw stacks' shadows crept inch by inch across the drying mats, slow but far by afternoon's end. At the yard's edge a plastic sheet flipped up and slapped the stack top, crack-crack, making the bricks laid on it tremble. Grandma's blue headscarf bobbed as she turned the grain, bend, rise, bend, like the slowest rice plant in the field.

When the sun fell behind the mountains, the field's moving changed shape. The waves still crossed, only hoarse now; the sparrows stopped hopping and huddled thick on the stack tops, like a bloom of gray flowers. The last wisp of cloud shadow ran off the field, and it darkened completely, leaving only ear brushing ear, sha-sha, faint as sleep-talking.

Grandma called me home to supper. I stood up, my legs numb from squatting, staggering a step at a time. I looked back at the field: it was still moving, just invisible in the dark. I thought, tomorrow when the sun comes up, the waves will cross again and again, the sparrows will rise and settle. The field stays awake, moving from autumn all the way to winter's door.