我和小军比捡稻穗

十月七日 星期四 晴转多云

昨天我跟着奶奶捡了一篮稻穗，今天小军一早就来找我，脖子一梗：“我奶奶也下田捡了！咱俩比一场，看谁捡得多！”我回家拎上我的小篮子，他提着他家的小簸箕，两人一前一后往田里跑，一路上还在比谁跑得快。

田里的稻穗比昨天少了，昨天我们捡过一轮。小军眼尖，指着田角喊：“那边有！”我们猫下腰，沿着田埂一寸一寸地找。稻穗有的压在稻茬底下，有的半埋在泥里，得拨开稻茬才能看见。我弯下腰，捏住穗头轻轻一抽，穗子就到手了，再抖掉根上的泥，放进篮子里。

比赛开始了。小军捡得快，像装了小马达在田里窜来窜去。我不慌，专挑穗粒大的捡，一颗一颗捋干净再装篮。他回头笑我：“你这是捡金子呢？”我说：“奶奶教的，粒粒都要留。”他愣了愣，也学着慢慢捋起来。

捡到一半，小军的簸箕边挂住一根稻茬，他往前一栽，一屁股坐进稻茬地里，半天没爬起来。我跑过去拉他，他手里还攥着两穗稻子，咧嘴笑：“我这是给田磕了个头，田得多给我点稻穗。”我们坐在田埂上笑得肚子疼，笑完拍拍屁股接着捡。

捡到日头偏西，两个人的篮子都装了大半。小军的簸箕大，看着多；我的小篮子满得快，其实也不差。我们俩把篮子往田埂上一放，对着数了十穗，正好打平。小军不服气，非拉着我再各捡十穗，数得清清楚楚，还是打平，谁也说不清谁赢。

回家我问奶奶这算谁赢。奶奶把两篮稻穗倒在一起堆在院子里，说：“你看，全到一处了，谁赢？田里一颗金珠子都没少，就是你们都赢了。”奶奶还往我们每人兜里塞了一把炒米，奖励给两个捡金珠子的娃娃。我想了想，笑了。明天小军还来，我们比谁捋得干净。

Picking Rice Ears with Xiaojun

October 7th, Thursday, sunny then cloudy. Yesterday I picked a basket of rice ears with Grandma; today Xiaojun came to me early, chin up, declaring his grandma was picking too, so let us have a contest of who picks more. I fetched my little basket, he brought his family’s small winnowing tray, and we raced each other all the way to the field.

Fewer ears remained since we had already picked a round the day before. Xiaojun spotted some at the corner of the field, and we crouched and searched inch by inch along the ridge. Some ears lay pressed under the stubble, some half buried in mud; you had to part the stubble to see them. I bent down, pinched an ear, pulled it free, shook off the mud, and placed it in my basket.

The contest began. Xiaojun picked like a little motor zooming up and down the field. I took my time, choosing only the biggest ears and cleaning each grain before

putting it in. He laughed at me: picking gold, are you? I said Grandma taught me that every grain must be kept. He paused, then slowed down to stroke his ears clean too.

Halfway through, the rim of his tray caught a stubble and he plopped down into the field, sitting there a good while. I ran to pull him up; he was still clutching two ears and grinned that he had kowtowed to the field, so the field owed him more ears. We sat on the ridge laughing until our bellies hurt, then dusted off and kept picking.

By late afternoon both baskets were most of the way full. His tray was bigger and looked like more; my little basket filled fast and was not behind either. We set the baskets on the ridge and counted ten ears each, a perfect tie. Xiaojun refused to accept it, so we picked and counted another ten, still a tie, and nobody could say who won.

At home I asked Grandma who won. She poured both baskets into one pile in the yard: look, it all comes to one place, so who won? Not a single golden bead was lost in the field, which means you both won. She pressed a handful of popped rice into each of our pockets, a prize for the two golden-bead pickers. I thought about it and smiled. Xiaojun is coming again tomorrow, and this time we will contest who cleans the grains better.