稻田变黄了：一份秋天的观察日记

8月31日 星期一 晴。放学路过东边的稻田，我停下来看了一会儿。稻子还是青的，可稻穗的头低下来了，颜色也有点不对：青里透着一点浅黄，像旧衬衫洗过许多回以后透出来的那种白。奶奶说，稻子要黄了，先从穗头上黄。我在田埂上站了一会儿才回家。

9月8日 星期一 晴。早上出门，天阴着。跑到田边一看，黄了一大片，从田那头一直铺到这边来。我蹲下去看一个稻穗，穗子上的谷粒一颗挨一颗，挤得满满的。我用尺子量了量，这个穗有二十多厘米长。风一吹，整片田都朝一个方向弯腰，沙沙响。

9月16日 星期二 晴。整片田黄透了，黄得发亮。田里的味道也变了，凑近了闻，有一股甜甜的青草味。爷爷蹲在田埂上，捏开一个稻穗，看了看谷粒，说：再等半个月，就可以开镰了。回家路上，我老回头看那片田。

9月23日 星期二 晴。今天田里热闹，收割机开进田了。它前面转着一个大轮子，一圈一圈把稻子卷进去，吞进去，再从侧面吐出一股谷子，金黄的，落进袋子里。割过的地方留下一排排短稻桩，齐齐的。我在后面捡掉下来的稻穗，一会儿就捡了一小把，交给奶奶，她夸我手勤。

10月1日 星期四 晴。今天正式开镰。爷爷和奶奶天不亮就下田了，我跟着去，坐在田埂上看。镰刀贴着稻根斜过去，唰的一声，一排稻子就倒了。爷爷从这头走到那头，身后留下一条弯弯的路。傍晚装袋，爷爷过秤，直起腰说：今年一亩多打了四十一袋。回家的路上，车斗里的谷子散着一股香。稻子黄了，稻子收了，这片田的事，我都记下来了。

The Rice Field Turns Yellow: An Autumn Observation Diary

August 31st, Monday, sunny. On the way home from school I stopped by the rice field to the east. The rice was still green, but the heads had begun to hang down, and the colour looked a little strange: a pale yellow showing through the green, like the faded white of a shirt washed too many times. Grandma said the rice would turn yellow first at the tips of the heads. I stood on the ridge for a while before going home.

September 8th, Monday, cloudy in the morning. When I ran to the field, a large patch had turned yellow, spreading all the way from the far end to this end. I squatted down to look at one head. The grains were packed tight against one another. I measured it with my ruler: more than twenty centimetres long. When the wind blew, the whole field bent the same way and rustled.

September 16th, Tuesday, sunny. The whole field had ripened to a shining gold. The smell had changed too. Lean close and you can smell a sweet grassy scent. Grandpa squatted on the ridge, cracked open a head, looked at the grains and said: half a month more, then we can start the harvest. On the way home I kept looking back at

that field.

September 23rd, Tuesday, sunny. The field was busy today. The combine harvester drove in. A big wheel at the front turned round and round, reeling the rice in, swallowing it, then spitting out a stream of golden grain into a sack. The cut part was left with rows of short stubble, all even. I followed behind picking up fallen heads, and soon held a small armful.

October 1st, Thursday, sunny. The harvest began in earnest. Grandpa and Grandma went down to the field before dawn, and I followed and sat on the ridge watching. The sickle slanted in close to the roots, and with one swish a row of rice fell. Grandpa walked from this end to that, leaving a curved path behind him. In the evening they filled the sacks. Grandpa weighed them, straightened his back and said: forty-one sacks from one mu this year. On the way home the grain in the cart filled the air with fragrance. The rice turned yellow, the rice was harvested, and I wrote down everything about this field.

爷爷田里的秋天

八月底，奶奶让我给爷爷送水。我提着水壶走到田埂上，爷爷正背对着我看田。稻子还青着，可细看就不一样了：向阳的坡先黄，背阴的沟边还青，一片田里两种颜色，像一块洗旧了的蓝布被太阳晒脱了色。爷爷接过水壶，不喝，先举到鼻子底下闻了闻，说：快了，穗子沉了。

九月中，我放学就往后山跑。整片田黄透了。风从西边来，黄就跟着风走，从田那头卷过来，先到脚边，又退回去，露出底下直立的稻秆。我站在田埂上，听见田里有声音，不是虫叫，是稻穗互相碰的沙沙声，比虫叫还轻。爷爷蹲下来捏开一个稻穗，一颗一颗数粒数，说这一穗有八十多粒，今年是个好年成。田边的水沟里水浅了，沟沿上的草黄了一半，一只小螃蟹横着爬进石头缝里。

开镰那天是个晴天。爷爷先割出一小排，留出走路的地方。镰刀从稻子根部斜过去，唰的一声，一排稻子朝同一个方向倒下。爷爷弯着腰从这头走到那头，身后留下一条弯弯的路。奶奶和叔叔把割下的稻子抱到拌桶前，抓住稻把往桶壁上摔，谷粒脱下来，噼里啪啦溅进桶里。我帮忙扶桶，谷粒打在胳膊上，不疼，就是痒。叔叔把拌桶边的稻草抱到田那头堆成一个小垛，说冬天可以垫牛圈。我在草垛边翻找掉下的稻穗，翻出两只蚂蚱，都让它跳走了。

傍晚装袋。爷爷过秤，一袋有七十多公斤。他拍拍袋子说，回去晒三天，就能吃新米了。晒谷的场上，奶奶拿木耙把谷子摊开，一层薄薄的，在夕阳里像撒了一地碎金。晚上桌上有一碗新米饭，我没吃出什么不一样，可爷爷吃得慢，一粒一粒的，像把一整年的日子都嚼了一遍。

Autumn in the Field of Grandpa

Late in August, Grandma sent me to bring water to Grandpa. Carrying the kettle, I walked up to the ridge. He stood with his back to me, looking over the field. The rice was still green, but look closely and it was already different: the sunny slope had yellowed first, while the shaded ditch side stayed green, two colours in one field, like an old blue cloth faded by the sun. Grandpa took the kettle, did not drink, and first lifted it to his nose to smell the air, then said: soon. The heads have grown heavy.

Mid-September, I ran to the hill after school. The whole field had ripened to gold. The wind came from the west, and the yellow followed it, rolling in from the far end, reaching my feet, then pulling back to show the upright stalks underneath. Standing on the ridge, I heard a sound in the field. It was not insects. It was the soft rustle of grain heads knocking against one another, lighter than any insect song. Grandpa squatted down, cracked open a head, and counted the grains one by one. This head has more than eighty grains, he said. It is a good year. The water in the ditch by the field had grown shallow, half the grass along its bank had turned yellow, and a small crab scuttled sideways into a crack between the stones.

The first day of harvest was clear. Grandpa cut a short row first, leaving room to walk. The sickle slanted in at the roots, and with one swish a row of rice fell the same way. He bent low and walked from one end to the other, leaving a curved path behind. Grandma and my uncle carried the cut rice to the threshing tub, gripped a bundle and beat it against the tub wall. The grains came loose and splashed into the tub with a crackle. I helped hold the tub. Kernels struck my arms. They did not hurt. They only itched. Uncle carried the straw from the edge of the tub to the far end of the field and piled it into a small stack. It can line the cow shed in winter, he said. By the stack I searched for fallen heads and turned up two grasshoppers, and let both of them jump away.

At dusk they filled the sacks. Grandpa weighed them: over seventy kilos each. He patted a sack and said: three days of sun, and we can eat the new rice. On the drying ground, Grandma spread the grain thin with a wooden rake, a delicate layer that looked like scattered gold flakes in the setting sun. That evening there was a bowl of new rice on the table. I could not taste anything different, but Grandpa ate slowly, grain by grain, as if he were chewing over the whole year.

稻桩田里的回忆

十月末，稻子收完了，我踩进田里。脚底下扎扎的，田里只剩下齐膝的稻桩，黄白的，一排排立着。远处拖拉机在犁田，翻出来的土是湿的，颜色比表面的土深。我蹲下来看稻桩，每个桩口都是斜的，像被谁一刀削过。我在稻桩里找到一粒掉下的谷子，壳上的芒还翘着，剥开，里面的米是饱满的，我把它装进口袋。

两个月前，这里还是另一副样子。八月底我来看过一回，稻子刚要黄，穗头先弯下来，颜色从青里透出一点浅黄，像旧衬衫洗多了透出来的白。奶奶说，再等一个月。那时我站在田边，觉得一个月好长。

九月中我再来，整片田黄透了。风一来，黄从田那头卷过来，先到脚边，又退回去。爷爷站在田埂上捏开稻穗数粒，说这一穗八十多粒，是个好年成。我还记得那股味道，凑近了闻，甜甜的青草味，混着一点土腥。

十月初开镰。爷爷头天晚上磨镰刀，磨石的声音在院子里响了一晚上。早上天麻麻亮他就下田了。我睡醒跑到田边，田里已经割开了一条路，爷爷弯着腰从这头走到那头，镰刀唰唰地响，稻子一排排朝同一个方向倒下去。奶奶和叔叔把稻子摔在拌桶上，谷粒噼里啪啦溅进桶里。我扶桶，谷粒打在胳膊上，痒。田埂上放着一排装好的谷袋，鼓鼓的，袋口扎得紧紧的，像一队站好了的队伍。

那天傍晚，最后一袋谷子过了秤，爷爷直起腰，回头看了一眼田，什么也没说。现在那片田犁过了，土翻过来，稻桩埋了进去。我有点想它。才两个月，它已经变成另一副样子了。等明年五月，这里插上新秧，青苗站成一排，它又会变回来的。

Memories in the Stubble Field

Late in October, the harvest was over, and I stepped into the field. The ground pricked through my shoes. Only knee-high stubble was left, pale yellow, standing row after row. In the distance a tractor was plowing, and the turned-up soil was wet and darker than the surface. I squatted down to look at the stubble. Every cut was slanted, as if someone had sliced it with one clean stroke. Among the stubble I found one fallen grain, its awns still sticking up. I shelled it open: the rice inside was plump. I put it in my pocket.

Two months earlier this place had looked completely different. I had come once in late August. The rice was about to turn. The heads bent down first, and a pale yellow showed through the green, like the white of a shirt washed too many times. Grandma said: wait one more month. Standing at the edge of the field then, I thought a month was very long.

I came back in mid-September. The whole field had ripened to gold. When the wind

came, the yellow rolled in from the far end, reached my feet, then pulled back. Grandpa stood on the ridge, cracked open a head and counted the grains: more than eighty on this one. It is a good year, he said. I still remember the smell. Lean close and it is a sweet grassy scent, mixed with a little of the earth.

The harvest began in early October. The night before, Grandpa sharpened his sickle, and the sound of the whetstone went on all night in the yard. At the first light of dawn he was down in the field. When I woke and ran over, a path had already been cut through the rice. He bent low, walking from this end to that, the sickle swishing, and the rice fell row after row in the same direction. Grandma and my uncle beat the bundles against the threshing tub, and the grains crackled into it. I held the tub steady while kernels struck my arms and itched. Along the ridge stood a row of filled grain sacks, plump and tightly tied at the mouth, like a line of soldiers standing at attention.

That evening, after the last sack was weighed, Grandpa straightened his back and looked back at the field without saying anything. Now the field has been plowed. The soil is turned over, and the stubble is buried. I miss it a little. Only two months, and it has already become something else. Next May, when new seedlings are planted here and the green shoots stand up in rows, it will change back again.