场子上那轮金色的圆：帮外婆晒谷子的三天

10月6日 星期二 晴。国庆第二天，外婆一早就把谷子从屋里往场上拖。我跟着去帮忙。谷袋沉，两个人一人一头抬，场院是水泥的，谷袋拖过去留下一道浅印。外婆把谷子倒在场子中间，堆成一个小丘，然后拿木耙从丘顶往四周推，推成一轮大大的圆，薄薄的，刚好盖住水泥地。她说摊得薄，日头才咬得动。

我学着摊谷，耙子在我手里不听话，一会儿推厚了，一会儿刮到地上。外婆的耙子过去，谷子就平平一层，像用尺子抹过的。摊完谷，日头上来了，场子烫脚，我穿拖鞋都嫌热，外婆穿布鞋，在谷子上走来走去，影子短短的一条。

10月6日下午。外婆说谷子要翻，一面晒干了，底下还潮。她教我翻谷：耙子贴着地走，把谷子整层翻个身，不能抓起来摔。我翻得慢，翻过的地方一道深一道浅。外婆说不要紧，人勤地不懒。翻完，我蹲下去抓一把谷子，粒粒烫手，牙一咬，嘎嘣脆，外婆说这就叫晒透了。

10月6日傍晚。起风了，天边的云发黄。外婆赶紧拿耙子拢谷，我从两头赶谷，把散边的谷子往中间归拢，拢成一个长条。外婆装袋，我扶着袋口，谷子流进袋子，哗的一声，烫的。最后一耙收干净，场子上只剩一层浮着的碎壳。外婆扫场，扫成一堆糠，说喂鸡。场边的柿子树上停了两只麻雀，趁我们不注意落下来啄了两口，外婆扬一下扫帚，它们扑棱棱飞走了。

晚上我胳膊酸，抬不起来。吃饭时外婆说，今年三亩谷，晒得干净，能装二十多袋。我扒着饭，想起白天场子上那轮金色的圆，想起谷粒烫手的感觉，还有外婆布鞋踩出来的那一串脚印。原来一碗饭这么沉。

The Golden Circle in the Yard: Three Days Drying Grain with Grandma

October 6th, Tuesday, sunny. The second day of the national holiday. Grandmother dragged the grain from the house out to the yard before sunrise. I went along to help. The sacks were heavy, and we carried one between us, each holding an end. The yard is concrete, and the dragged sack left a faint line behind. Grandmother poured the grain in the middle of the yard into a small hill, then used the wooden rake to push it out from the top in every direction until it became a wide thin circle, just covering the concrete. Spread thin, she said, so the sun can bite into it.

I tried spreading grain too. The rake would not obey me. Now I pushed it too thick, now I scraped the ground. When the rake of Grandmother passed, the grain lay in one flat layer, as if smoothed with a ruler. After we finished, the sun climbed high. The yard burned my feet even through slippers. Grandmother wore cloth shoes and walked back and forth over the grain, her shadow a short line under her.

October 6th, afternoon. Grandmother said the grain must be turned, because one side was dry and the bottom was still damp. She taught me to turn it: keep the rake low along the ground and roll the whole layer over, without lifting and throwing. I worked slowly, and my turns left deep and shallow stripes. Never mind, she said, the land never cheats a hard worker. When we finished, I squatted and grabbed a handful. The kernels were hot in my hand. I bit one and it cracked crisply. Now you know what sun-dried means, she said.

October 6th, evening. The wind came up, and the clouds at the edge of the sky turned yellow. Grandmother hurried to gather the grain with the rake. I drove the scattered edges back toward the middle from both ends, until it formed one long ridge. She filled the sacks while I held the mouth open. The grain poured in with one hot rushing sound. The last rake stroke left only a film of loose husks floating on the yard. Grandmother swept them into a pile of chaff for the chickens. Two sparrows sat in the persimmon tree at the edge of the yard, dropped down while we were not looking and pecked a few mouthfuls, then fluttered away when Grandmother flicked her broom at them.

At night my arms ached too much to lift. Over supper Grandmother said the three mu of grain this year, dried clean, would fill more than twenty sacks. I pushed the rice around my bowl, thinking of that golden circle in the yard, the hot kernels in my hand, and the trail of footprints her cloth shoes had left. So that is why a bowl of rice weighs so much.

外婆的竹耙

十月五日，星期六，外婆打电话让我去晒谷。我到的时候，她已经在场上了。谷子摊了一场，金黄金黄，边上薄中间厚。她递给我一把竹耙，耙齿磨得圆了。她说，今天你归我管，翻谷。

头一遍翻谷我翻不动。耙子推进谷子里，走两步就堆起来，谷子堆在耙前头，像推雪。外婆示范，手腕压着点，耙贴着地皮走，走到底把谷子往回一带，整层就翻了个面。我照她说的做，第二遍顺了，翻过去的那片颜色浅一点，底下潮的那面翻上来，颜色深一点。外婆用手背试了试我翻的，说行。

中午最晒。场子上没遮没拦，日头直直砸下来。外婆不歇，坐在场边的矮凳上看着场，谁家的鸡要过来，她吆一声。我给她送水，她喝了两口，又把杯子递给我：你也喝，日头底下不喝水要中暑。我灌了一大杯，站在谷子边上，汗顺着脖子往下流，才站一会儿就受不了，外婆从早上六点站到现在。场边的狗趴在墙根的影子里，舌头伸得老长，一动不动。外婆拿草帽扇了扇风，眼睛还盯着场上的谷子。

傍晚收谷。天阴了一角，外婆动作快起来，耙子拢、簸箕推、装袋、扎口，一套一套的。我

扶袋口，她提袋抖两下，谷子落实了，再续一耙。装到第八袋，她说够了，剩下的明早接着晒。收完，场子扫得干干净净，扫出来的糠她捧起来闻了闻，说今年的谷香。我把耙子还给她，她摸了摸我的头，手心全是谷子的粗皮，糙糙的，热的。

回去的路上我两条腿打颤。晚上做梦，梦里全是谷子，抓一把，烫手。第二天我再去，她已经在翻谷了，看见我，笑：手痒了？我接过耙子。翻过去的那片，颜色浅一点。

The Bamboo Rake of Grandma

October 5th, Saturday. Grandmother phoned me to come help dry the grain. When I arrived she was already in the yard. The grain lay spread over the whole yard, gold from edge to edge, thin at the rim and thick in the middle. She handed me a bamboo rake whose teeth had been worn round. Today you work for me, she said. Your job is turning the grain.

The first pass, I could not manage it. Pushing the rake into the grain, I went two steps before it piled up in front of the rake like snow. Grandmother showed me: press the wrist down, keep the rake against the ground, walk to the end, then draw the grain back, and the whole layer rolls over. I did as she said. The second pass went smoothly. The turned side looked paler, and the damp underside that came up looked darker. She tested my work with the back of her hand and said: good.

Noon was the hottest hour. The yard had no shade at all, and the sun beat straight down. Grandmother did not rest. She sat on a low stool at the edge watching the yard, and shooed away any chicken that wandered near. I brought her water. She took two sips and passed the cup back: drink too. No water under this sun means heatstroke. I drank a full cup. Standing at the edge of the grain, sweat ran down my neck. A few minutes was more than I could stand, and she had been out there since six in the morning. The dog at the edge of the yard lay in the shade of the wall with its tongue hanging out, not moving. Grandmother fanned herself with her straw hat while her eyes stayed on the grain.

In the evening we gathered the grain. One corner of the sky clouded over, and Grandmother moved faster: rake it into a ridge, push with the dustpan, fill, tie the mouth, one move after another. I held the sack open while she lifted and shook it twice to settle the grain, then added another rake full. At the eighth sack she said enough, the rest can dry tomorrow morning. When we finished, the yard was swept clean. She scooped up the swept chaff, smelled it, and said the grain this year is fragrant. I handed her back the rake, and she ruffled my hair. Her palm was rough with the coarse skin of grain, and warm.

On the way home my legs kept trembling. That night I dreamed of grain, and in the

dream I grabbed a handful and it burned my hand. The next morning I went back, and she was already turning the grain. Seeing me, she laughed: itchy hands? I took the rake. The turned side looked paler.

抽屉里的谷粒

收谷那天傍晚，我蹲在谷堆边上，抓了一把谷子塞进口袋。现在它在我书桌抽屉里，一粒一粒的，壳上还有一道晒过的裂口。我常想，这把谷子是从哪片场子上来的。

那是十月初，外婆的谷子刚开镰就运上场。头一天我帮她摊谷。谷子从袋里倒出来，堆成小丘，木耙从顶上往四周推，推成一轮薄薄的圆，刚好盖住水泥地。外婆说摊得薄，日头才咬得动。我抢着推了几耙，推得坑坑洼洼，她跟在后头重新抹平，一句话没说。

隔天翻谷。耙子贴地走，整层翻身，翻过的地方颜色浅一道深一道。日头毒，场子上没有一棵树，外婆的布鞋在谷子上走出一串脚印，又很快被谷子填平。我给她送水，她只喝两口就给我。我站在边上不到十分钟，汗就把后背湿透了。她从天不亮就在场上。中午我给她送饭，她蹲在场边的矮凳上吃，眼睛不离谷子，扒得飞快，像赶农时的牛。一只麻雀落下来，她扔了半块馒头皮把它吓走，自己又笑：跟鸟抢饭吃。

再隔一天傍晚起风，收谷。拢成长条，装袋，我扶袋口，谷子哗地流进来，烫的。八袋，扎好口，一袋一袋立在场边，像一排站好的兵。外婆扫场，把糠扫成一堆，捧起来闻，说今年的谷香。

那天夜里我胳膊酸得抬不起来，梦里全是谷子。现在抽屉里这把谷子，就是收谷那晚我偷偷抓的。它晒透过，牙一咬嘎嘣脆，是太阳晒出来的脆。外婆说，人勤地不懒。我写作业写累了，拉开抽屉看一眼，就想起场子上那轮金色的圆，想起她从天不亮站到日落的身影，想起她摸我头时那只糙糙的、热的手。我把谷粒放回抽屉，接着写我的作业。

Grain Kernels in the Drawer

On the evening we gathered the grain, I squatted by the pile, grabbed a handful, and stuffed it into my pocket. It is in my desk drawer now, kernel by kernel, each husk marked with a crack made by the sun. I often wonder which yard this handful came from.

It was early October. The grain of Grandmother had barely been harvested when it went out to the yard. The first day I helped her spread it. Poured from the sacks, it rose in a small hill, and the wooden rake pushed it from the top outward into a wide thin circle, just covering the concrete. Spread thin, she said, so the sun can bite

into it. I pushed a few rakes of my own and left the surface full of hollows. She followed behind smoothing it flat again, without a word.

The second day we turned the grain. The rake walked along the ground, rolling the whole layer over, leaving stripes of pale and dark. The sun was fierce, and there was not one tree in the yard. The cloth shoes of Grandmother left a trail of footprints across the grain, and the grain filled them in again almost at once. I brought her water; she took two sips and handed the cup to me. I stood at the edge for less than ten minutes, and my back was soaked through with sweat. She had been out there since before dawn. At noon I brought her lunch. She squatted on the low stool at the edge of the yard and ate without taking her eyes off the grain, shoveling it in fast like an ox working against the season. A sparrow dropped down; she threw half a bun crust to scare it off, then laughed at herself: fighting birds for food.

On the third evening the wind rose, and we gathered the grain. It was raked into one long ridge, then bagged. I held the sack open while the grain poured in with a hot rushing sound. Eight sacks, mouths tied, standing one by one along the edge of the yard like soldiers at attention. Grandmother swept the yard and piled the chaff, lifted a handful to smell it, and said the grain this year is fragrant.

That night my arms ached too much to lift, and my dreams were full of grain. The handful in my drawer is the one I secretly took that evening. It was fully sun-dried: bite one and it cracks crisply. The land never cheats a hard worker, Grandmother says. When I grow tired of homework, I open the drawer and take one look, and I see that golden circle in the yard again, and her standing there from before dawn until sunset, and that rough warm hand ruffling my hair. I put the kernels back in the drawer and go on with my homework.