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.

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