一碗饭要走多远的路：读《活着》想到的

昨天吃晚饭，我把碗里的饭剩下小半碗。妈妈没说什么，把碗端走了。晚上我读《活着》的片段，读到福贵蹲在田边看稻子，忽然脸上一热。我想起那小半碗白米饭，想起它跟福贵那片田，原来是同一条路走来的。

片段里写福贵重新种地，一年到头没有闲天。三月修水利，四月育秧，五月插秧，六月薅草打虫，八月守水，九月收割，十月晒谷进仓。老师让我们把这些月份抄在积累本上，抄的时候我的手是酸的。我过的是衣来伸手的日子，他过的是把骨头别在庄稼里日子。可书里一点苦腔都没有，福贵干这些的时候心里是稳的，因为他知道，地里的收成就是他一家的命根。

书里有一处写收成写得最好。稻子灌浆那阵，福贵天天傍晚去田边走一圈，捏一捏稻穗，看浆灌得饱不饱。稻子熟了以后，他打谷打到半夜，谷粒打在拌桶上噼噼啪啪，像下了一场响雨。他直起腰听这个声音，笑得露出缺了的牙。我读着读着也笑了。原来收成的声音是这样的，原来人最高兴的声音，是自己汗水变成的声音。

我开始想土地这件事。土地真奇怪，它不挑人。福贵败过家，土地照样长稻子；爷爷话少，土地照样给他好收成。它只看你弯不弯腰。它也不哄人，你偷一天懒，秋天它就少给你一把谷。我们课本上说民以食为天，我以前背句子，现在我有点信了：人头顶的天，有一半是从脚下的土里长出来的。

今天中午，我把剩饭的事跟妈妈说了，说以后不剩了。妈妈问我怎么突然懂事了。我说，我读了一个叫福贵的人，他让我看见一碗饭要走多远的路，从春天的水，走到秋天的镰刀，再走到我的碗里。

How Far a Bowl of Rice Travels: Thoughts on To Live

Yesterday at dinner I left a small half bowl of rice in my bowl. My mother said nothing and carried the bowl away. That night I read the excerpt from To Live, and when Fugui squatted by the field looking at the rice, my face suddenly grew hot. I thought of that small half bowl of white rice, and of how it had traveled the same long road as the field of Fugui.

The excerpt shows Fugui farming again with no idle day in the whole year. In March he mends the water channels, in April he raises seedlings, in May he plants rice, in June he pulls weeds and catches worms, in August he guards the water, in September he harvests, in October he dries the grain and carries it to the barn. Our teacher asked us to copy these months into our notebook of accumulations, and my hand grew sore while copying. I live a life where clothes and food arrive by themselves; he lived a life with his bones wedged into the crops. Yet the book has no tone of bitterness at all. Fugui did these things with a steady heart, because he knew the harvest of the field was the root of life for his family.

The best writing in the excerpt is about the harvest. When the rice was filling with milk, Fugui walked around the field every evening, pinched an ear, and watched whether the grain was plump. After the rice ripened, he threshed it until midnight, and the grains striking the threshing tub sounded like a rain of noise. He straightened his back to listen to that sound and smiled with his missing teeth showing. I smiled too while reading. So this is the sound of a harvest. The happiest sound a person can hear is the sound his own sweat turns into.

I began to think about the land. The land is strange. It does not choose people. Fugui once ruined his family, and the land grew rice for him all the same; my grandfather is a man of few words, and the land gives him a good harvest all the same. It only watches whether you bend your back. It does not cheat you either. Steal one day of laziness, and in autumn it gives you one handful less of grain. Our textbook says that food is the heaven of the people. Before, I only recited the sentence. Now I partly believe it: half of the heaven over a person grows up from the soil under his feet.

At noon today I told my mother about the leftover rice and said I would not waste it again. She asked what made me mature all at once. I said: I read about a man named Fugui, and through him I saw how far a bowl of rice has to travel, from the water of spring, to the sickle of autumn, and then into my bowl.