带孩子们去看田的那个下午

十月底，我带孩子们去看田。田离学校后门走路二十分钟，主人已经割了一半。我跟学校打了报告，让每家家长签了条子，星期五活动课的下午就出发了。

这些五年级的孩子，一辈子见过的稻子都在碗里和屏幕上。踩上田埂的第一句，几乎都是说地软。田埂被雨和脚踩得多，中间硬、两边松。我在几个低洼处各站一个人，让他们沿埂散开，不许下田。

孩子们散开以后，各看各的。一个女生站在稻茬边上不肯动，说稻茬扎人，怕扎穿鞋。一个男生蹲下来盯着稻茬的切口，喊我过去看，说稻茬是空的，切口是淡黄的，中间还有一个圈。几个孩子围过去，轮流看，每看完一个都发出一声惊。

我让他们停下来，闭上眼睛，听一分钟田里的声音。眼睛一闭，耳朵就尖了。他们听见收割机，听见鸟，听见风蹭稻叶的沙沙，还有一个瘦瘦的女生听见了水沟，说田底下有水在走。一分钟到了，没有人马上睁眼，我也没喊，让他们多听了一会儿。

回程经过村口，晒场上晒着一片玉米，金黄的铺了一地，一个老奶奶拿耙子在上面划格子。孩子们绕着晒场走，没人伸手。那个发现稻茬是空口的男生问老奶奶，玉米为什么要摊开晒。老奶奶头也不抬，说堆着会焐坏，摊开晒透了才收得住。男生把这句话重复了一遍，像背课文。

临走前，我允许每人捡一把掉落的稻穗。孩子们弯腰去找，捡到的高高举起来互相看。先前怕稻茬扎人的那个女生捡了三根，插进文具袋的口袋里。回去的路队很安静，孩子一边走一边回头看，步子比来时慢得多。

第二天早上，孩子们捡的稻穗被捆在一起，摆在教室后墙的植物角。黑板上多了一行他们自己写的字：田在窗外。我没有擦，一直留到月底。

The Afternoon I Took the Children to See the Field

At the end of October I took my class to see the field. The field was a twenty-minute walk from the back gate of the school, and its owner had already cut half of it. I filed a request with the school, had every parent sign a note, and we set out on the afternoon of Friday activity class.

These fifth graders had seen rice their whole lives only in a bowl or on a screen. The first thing they almost all said when they stepped onto the field ridge was that the ground was soft. The ridge had been walked on by rain and by feet, hard in the middle and loose at the sides. I stationed one adult at each low spot and let the children spread along the ridge, with orders not to step into the field.

Once scattered, each of them watched something of their own. One girl stood at the edge of the stubble and would not move, saying the stubble was sharp and might poke through her shoe. One boy squatted down and stared at the cut of a stubble, then

called me over, saying the stubble was hollow, the cut pale yellow with a ring in the middle. Several children crowded around and took turns looking, and after each look someone let out a small cry of surprise.

I had them stop, close their eyes, and listen to the field for one minute. With eyes shut the ears grow sharp. They heard the harvester, they heard birds, they heard wind rubbing the rice leaves, and one thin girl heard a ditch, saying water was running under the field. When the minute was up, nobody opened their eyes right away, and I did not call them, and let them listen a little longer.

On the way back we passed the village entrance, where a spread of corn was drying on the ground, golden all over, an old woman raking squares into it with a rake. The children walked around the drying ground, and nobody reached out a hand. The boy who had found the stubble hollow asked the old woman why the corn had to be spread out. Without raising her head she said a heap will sweat and spoil, and only corn dried through in the open can be stored. The boy repeated her sentence once, like reciting a lesson.

Before leaving, I allowed each child to pick up a few fallen rice ears. The children bent down to search, and whoever found some held them high to show the others. The girl who had feared the sharp stubble found three and put them in the pocket of her pencil case. On the way back the line was very quiet. The children walked and kept turning to look behind, and their pace was far slower than on the way out.

The next morning, the rice ears the children had picked were tied together and placed at the plant corner on the back wall of our classroom. On the blackboard stood one line written by the children themselves: the field is outside the window. I did not erase it, and it stayed until the end of the month.