爷爷用脚量田的那一天

割最后一丘田那天，爷爷带周小羽下田。出门前他把水葫芦灌满，塞一条旧毛巾在裤腰上。周小羽扛着小锄头，锄头对她太大，她非要扛。

太阳还没晒热田，稻茬头上挂着露水。爷爷走到田中间，用脚量田，脚跟顶脚尖，走一趟，报一个数给收割机手。周小羽知道爷爷量田从来不用尺子，她问过，爷爷说这丘田他走了五十年，脚比尺子准。

收割机开起来，前头吞稻子，后头吐稻草，稻草被切成短节，均匀撒在地上。爷爷站在田边看，机器过去一丘，他就走进那一丘，弯腰把掉落的稻穗一根根捡进布袋。周小羽跟着捡，捡得比爷爷快。爷爷不说什么，过一会儿自己也加快了。

中午两人在田边的草棚底下歇。爷爷灌了三口水，把水葫芦递给她，她喝一口就还回去，说水是热的，有股铁味。爷爷笑，说水葫芦就是这样，明天灌点茶水。他们吃带来的馒头，吃完爷爷躺在草棚的影子里，手在后腰上捶了两下，又爬起来说，走，日头不毒。

装稻草的时候，周小羽抱了一小捆稻草往车上送，草捆比她宽，她侧着身子过板桥。车斗里爷爷把稻草踩实，一层稻秆一层绳。有个过路人问这一车稻草留做什么，爷爷说垫牛棚，剩下的沤到开春做田肥。周小羽听见田肥两个字，想起草棚底下那堆去年沤过的黑泥，捏过，是软的。

傍晚过秤。过秤的报了数，爷爷重复一遍，把钱塞进衬衫口袋，扣上扣子，再去装稻草。回家的三轮车上，稻子堆得比爷爷的头高，爷爷坐在稻堆上，一只手按着口袋。

晚上奶奶用新打的米焖饭，揭锅盖的时候白汽很厚，香味扑满整个灶间。爷爷吃了两碗，吃得很慢。周小羽吃了一碗，想起爷爷在田里是站着吃掉两个馒头的。她放下碗朝窗外看，田黑了，只有田埂隐隐的一条白。

The Day Grandfather Measured the Field with His Feet

On the day the last paddy was cut, Grandfather took Zhou Xiaoyu into the field. Before leaving he filled the water gourd, rinsed it, and tucked an old towel into the waistband of his trousers. Zhou Xiaoyu carried the small hoe; it was too big for her, and she insisted on carrying it.

The sun had not yet warmed the field, and dew still hung on the tips of the stubble. Grandfather walked to the middle of the field and measured it with his feet, heel against toe, walked one line, and called the number to the man on the harvester. Zhou Xiaoyu knew that Grandfather never used a ruler to measure a field. She had asked him once, and he said he had walked this field for fifty years, and his feet were more accurate than a ruler.

The harvester started, swallowing rice at its front and spitting straw out at its back, the straw cut into short pieces and scattered evenly on the ground. Grandfather

stood at the edge and watched, and when the machine had finished a paddy he walked into it, bent down, and picked up the fallen rice ears one by one into the cloth bag he had brought. Zhou Xiaoyu picked up with him, faster than Grandfather. Grandfather said nothing, but after a while he too sped up.

At noon the two rested under the straw shed on the ridge. Grandfather drank three mouthfuls of water and passed the gourd to her; she took one mouthful and handed it back, saying the water was warm and tasted of iron. Grandfather laughed and said a water gourd is always like that, and tomorrow he would brew some tea in it. They ate the buns they had brought. When they finished, Grandfather lay down in the shade of the shed, knocked his lower back twice with his hand, then got up and said, come on, the sun is not fierce.

While the straw was being loaded, Zhou Xiaoyu carried a small bundle of straw up to the cart. The bundle was wider than she was, and she turned sideways to cross the plank bridge. In the cart bed Grandfather stamped the straw firm, layer of stalk, layer of rope. A passerby asked what the load of straw was kept for, and Grandfather said bedding for the cow shed, and the rest would be composted for field fertilizer before spring planting. When Zhou Xiaoyu heard the word fertilizer, she remembered the pile of black mud composted last year under the straw shed. She had pinched it once, and it was soft.

At dusk the grain went on the scale. The weighman called out the number, Grandfather repeated it once, put the money into his shirt pocket, buttoned it, and went back to load the straw. On the tricycle home, the grain was piled higher than Grandfather head, and he sat on top of it with one hand pressed on his pocket.

That evening Grandmother cooked rice from the grain that had just been milled. When the lid came off the pot, the steam was thick and white, and the smell filled the whole kitchen. Grandfather ate two bowls, very slowly. Zhou Xiaoyu ate one, and remembered that in the field Grandfather had eaten two buns standing up. She put down her bowl and looked out of the window. The field was black, and only the ridge showed as a faint white line.