爷爷带孙子看秋收的那天

儿子儿媳出差，把五岁的小满送回老屋住一周。爷爷老周头从田里回来的头一个早上，就把孙子叫醒了：走，爷爷带你去看秋收。小满问秋收是什么。老周头说不清，只说，去了就看见了。

到了田头，老周头把最小的一把镰刀递到孙子手里，自己的大手包着小手。割稻就这样，左手把住稻秆，右手带镰。小满第一下把稻子割歪了，第二下找到了感觉。老周头说，比你爸小时候割得好。小满不知道爸爸小时候是什么样，只管一下一下地割。

割完稻，爷孙俩弯腰拾谷穗。小满拾一把掉一把，可篮子见了半底，眼睛就亮了。老周头说，拾满一篮，场屋婶给糖。小满越跑越快，晌午就把篮子拾满了。夜里他把篮里的谷穗倒在灯下数，数到三十七根，抱着睡着了。

晌午坐在田头树下，老周头去老井打水，拿葫芦瓢舀了半瓢井水递给孙子。小满喝一口，整张脸皱起来，说凉。老周头自己灌了一大口，说，你们城里的冰水，是冰箱的味，这水是井的味。小满听不懂，又喝了瓢。

那篮谷穗拿去场屋换了糖，婶子过秤，说二两四。小满攥着糖不撒手，老周头给他拌上热饭，他吃了两碗。老周头看他吃，自己倒没吃几口，碗见了底，又给他盛了一碗。

晌午歇晌，田埂上摆开饭。老周头给孙子夹菜，自己蹲在田埂边吃。小满指着远处的收割机问，那个大个子是谁家的。老周头说，是村里承包大户的，一天收的稻，够爷孙俩割一个月。小满问那爷爷为什么还用手割。老周头想了半天，说，手割的稻，穗子完整，拾穗的孩子才有的拾。

回家的路上，孙子趴在老周头背上睡着了。老周头走得很慢，对着睡熟的孩子说，你爸小时候，我没带他看过田，是我错了。到家把他放到炕上，把孩子手上的谷壳一根一根擦干净。

几天后小满被接回城里。车发动前他在村口又喝了一瓢井水，这回没皱脸。上车睡着，手里还攥着那根最饱满的谷穗。老周头站在村口看车走远，回头去看他的田。

The Day Grandfather Took His Grandson to See the Autumn Harvest

The son and daughter-in-law were away on a business trip, and five-year-old Xiaoman was sent back to the old house for a week. On the first morning after Grandfather Lao Zhoutou came back from the fields, he woke the boy: come, grandpa will take you to see the autumn harvest. Xiaoman asked what the autumn harvest was. Lao Zhoutou could not explain it clearly, and only said, go there and you will see.

At the edge of the field, Lao Zhoutou put the smallest sickle into the hand of his grandson, his big hand wrapping the small one. This is how you cut rice: the left hand holds the stalks, the right hand leads the sickle. The first swing of the boy cut the rice crooked; the second found the feel. Lao Zhoutou said, better than your father did at your age. Xiaoman did not know what his father was like as a child, and

only kept swinging, one stroke after another.

After the cutting, the two bent down to glean the fallen ears of grain. The boy picked up one and dropped one, but when the basket was half full his eyes lit up. Lao Zhoutou said, fill the basket and the auntie at the threshing house gives candy. The boy ran faster and faster, and by noon the basket was full. At night he poured the ears under the lamp and counted them, thirty-seven in all, then fell asleep holding them.

At noon they sat under the tree by the field. Lao Zhoutou went to the old well for water and ladled half a gourd dipper of well water for the boy. Xiaoman took one sip and his whole face scrunched up, saying it was cold. Lao Zhoutou took a big drink himself and said, the iced water in your city tastes of the fridge; this water tastes of the well. The boy did not understand, and drank the dipper again.

At the midday rest, the meal was laid out on the ridge. Lao Zhoutou served food for the boy and squatted at the edge of the ridge to eat. Xiaoman pointed at the harvester in the distance and asked whose big machine that was. Lao Zhoutou said it belonged to the big contractor of the village; what it reaps in one day would take the two of them a month to cut by hand. The boy asked why grandpa still cut by hand. The old man thought a long while and said, cutting by hand keeps the ears whole, so the children who glean have something to pick up.

The basket of ears went to the threshing house for candy. The auntie weighed it: two liang and four qian. The boy would not let go of the candy. Lao Zhoutou mixed it into hot rice for him, and he ate two bowls. The old man watched him eat and barely touched his own; when the bowl was empty he filled another for the boy.

On the way home the boy fell asleep on the back of his grandfather. Lao Zhoutou walked very slowly, saying to the sleeping child, when your father was small, I never took him to see the fields. That was my mistake. At home he laid him on the kang and wiped the rice husks off the small hands, one by one.

A few days later Xiaoman was taken back to the city. Before the car started he drank another dipper of well water at the village entrance, and this time his face did not scrunch. He fell asleep in the car still holding the fullest ear of grain. Lao Zhoutou stood at the village entrance watching the car go away, then turned back to look at his fields.