小田鼠的储藏洞

小田鼠灰灰住在田埂底下。秋天一到，稻子镰了，玉米秆也干了，它把鼻子从洞口探出来，闻见的全是粮食的香味。

妈妈说：该挖储藏洞了。灰灰问：储藏洞是什么？妈妈说：就是把秋天收进地底下，冬天再拿出来吃。

灰灰选了一块高坡，开始挖洞。它的爪子小小的，土一粒一粒往外扒。挖了半个下午，洞才到它的腰那么深。它抹抹脸，接着挖。

蚱蜢从洞口跳进来，说：别挖啦，太阳这么好，来玩呀。灰灰摇摇头：我的洞还空着呢。蚱蜢蹦走了，灰灰听见它在远处唱歌。

洞挖好了，三个小间，一间放谷子，一间放豆子，最大的一间留给玉米。灰灰在最大那间的地上踩得平平的，还铺了一层干草。

搬玉米才是大活儿。玉米棒子比灰灰还大，它啃下一粒，拖进洞里，再啃一粒。一粒太轻，两粒又挤。它想了个办法，把玉米棒子竖起来，抱着它滚，滚到洞口再一粒一粒往里塞。

青蛙蹲在泉眼边劝它：差不多就行了，冬天还早呢。灰灰说：冬天不早啦，等我装满这个洞，冬天就到了。

灰灰每天天不亮就出门。露水打湿了胡须，它甩一甩，继续走。它背过玉米粒、黄豆、稻米，还背过一块别人丢的南瓜，啃得满脸都是橘色的渣。

有一回它拖一粒特别大的玉米粒，半路卡在石缝里。它往前拱不动，往后拽不出，急得原地转了三圈。它绕到石头另一边，从松土那头把路挖宽，玉米粒骨碌碌滚进了洞里。

装最后一粒玉米那天，灰灰站在最大那间里转了一圈。三面墙堆得整整齐齐，顶上还留了一指高的空。它把最后一粒按在顶上，像给房子盖上了最后一块瓦。

头一场雪落下来的时候，灰灰在洞里啃着玉米粒，听见外面风呼呼地刮。玉米是甜的，还带着秋天的太阳味。它想，明年秋天，还要再挖一个大洞。

The Storage Burrow of a Vole

Little Gray the vole lived under the field ridge. When autumn came, the rice was cut and the corn stalks dried out. She poked her nose out of the burrow and smelled nothing but grain.

Mother said: time to dig a storage burrow. Little Gray asked: what is a storage burrow? Mother said: it is putting autumn underground so you can take it out and eat it in winter.

Little Gray chose a high slope and started digging. Her claws were small, and she scraped the soil out grain by grain. Half an afternoon later, the hole was only as deep as her waist. She wiped her face and kept digging.

A grasshopper hopped in and said: stop digging, the sun is wonderful, come play! Little Gray shook her head. My burrow is still empty. The grasshopper bounced away, and far off she heard him singing.

When the burrow was done it had three small rooms: one for grain, one for beans, and the biggest one for corn. Little Gray stamped the floor of the biggest room flat and spread a layer of dry grass on it.

Carrying corn was the big job. A corn cob was bigger than she was. She gnawed off one kernel, dragged it in, then gnawed off another. One kernel was too light, two did not fit. She thought of a trick: she stood the cob upright, hugged it, and rolled it to the burrow mouth, then pushed the kernels in one by one.

A frog sat by the spring and advised her: enough is enough, winter is still far away. Little Gray said: winter is not far. By the time this burrow is full, winter will be here.

Every day Little Gray set out before dawn. Dew wet her whiskers; she shook them and kept walking. She carried corn kernels, soybeans, rice grains, and once a piece of pumpkin someone had thrown away, chewing until her face was orange with pulp.

Once she dragged an unusually large kernel, and halfway home it wedged in a crack between stones. She could not push it forward and could not pull it back. She spun around three times in a panic. Then she went around to the other side of the stone and dug the path wider from the soft soil, and the kernel rolled into the burrow.

The day she placed the last kernel, Little Gray stood in the biggest room and turned around once. The three walls were stacked neat and tidy, with a space one finger high left at the top. She pressed the last kernel into that space, like laying the final tile on a roof.

When the first snow fell, Little Gray sat in the burrow nibbling a corn kernel, listening to the wind howling outside. The corn was sweet, still carrying the taste of autumn sun. She thought: next autumn, I will dig another big burrow.

一粒玉米的旅行

我是一粒玉米，长在村东头那棵玉米秆的最顶上。秋天，一个小女孩把我掰下来，装进竹筐，运到了场院。半路上我蹦了出去，落在田埂边的草棵里。

我圆滚滚、金灿灿，在草里躺了三天。第一天，一只蚂蚱绕着我看了看，走了。第二天下了点雨，我喝得饱饱的。第三天早上，一个灰灰的小东西停在我面前，用鼻子闻我。

是小田鼠。她围着我转了两圈，爪子碰了碰我，然后一口咬住我的边，拖着我走。我贴着地皮骨碌碌地滚，草叶从我脸上扫过去，凉凉的。

她拖我上坡，坡上有块石头，我卡住了。她在我前面使劲，后腿蹬着土，身子一歪一歪。我在石头缝里挤得紧紧的，听见她的心跳，咚咚咚，比兔子还快。后来她把土挖松了，我哧溜一下滚过石头。

她的洞口在田埂底下，很小，我进不去。她把我举起来，从洞顶的一个小口塞下去。我黑咕隆咚地掉了一下，落在软软的干草上。

这是她的储藏洞。我抬头看，洞里已经住了不少伙伴：一排稻米站得笔直，几颗黄豆挤在角落，还有一小块南瓜，身上插着几粒瓜子。她把我按在墙顶上最中间的位置，拍了拍，像安顿一位远道来的客人。

洞里从此有了日子。小田鼠每天回来，身上带着外面的气味：露水的味，干草的味，有一回还带着一片红叶，插在洞壁上。她给我们讲外面的事：稻子收完了，拖拉机突突突地走了，孩子们放学踩着一地落叶。

我渐渐不想念那棵玉米秆了。洞外头风越刮越硬，洞里越来越暖。稻米们说，这就是被收进秋天的感觉。

下雪那天夜里，小田鼠啃着豆子，靠在我们旁边打盹。她的胡须一动一动。我贴在墙顶上，被她的体温烘着，金灿灿的，像一小块太阳。

我想，明年春天，如果她把我忘在洞角里，我就发芽给她看。不过现在，我先好好睡，把这一整个秋天存进身体里。

The Journey of One Corn Kernel

I am a corn kernel, and I grew at the very top of a corn stalk at the east end of the village. In autumn a little girl broke the cob off, put it in a bamboo basket, and carted it to the yard. On the way I bounced out and landed in the grass by the field ridge.

I was round and golden, and I lay in the grass for three days. On the first day a grasshopper circled me, looked me over, and left. On the second day it rained a

little, and I drank my fill. On the morning of the third day, a small gray creature stopped in front of me and sniffed.

It was a vole. She circled me twice, tapped me with a claw, then bit my edge and dragged me along. I rolled over the bare ground, and grass blades swept across my face, cool as water.

She pulled me up the slope, where a stone blocked the way, and I stuck. She heaved in front of me, hind legs kicking the soil, body rocking side to side. I was squeezed tight in the crack, and I could hear her heart going thump thump thump, faster than a rabbit would. Then she loosened the soil, and I slid over the stone with a whoosh.

Her burrow mouth was under the field ridge, too small for me. She lifted me up and pushed me down through a little opening in the roof of the burrow. I fell through the dark and landed on soft dry grass.

This was her storage burrow. I looked up. Many companions already lived there: a row of rice grains standing straight, a few soybeans huddled in the corner, and a piece of pumpkin with several melon seeds stuck in it. She pressed me into the middle of the top of the wall and patted me, like settling an honored guest who had traveled far.

From then on the burrow had its days. The little vole came home every day carrying the smells of outside: dew, dry grass, once a red leaf that she tucked into the wall. She told us news: the rice was all harvested, the tractor puttered away, the children came home from school crunching leaves.

Little by little I stopped missing my corn stalk. Outside the wind grew harder; inside it grew warmer. The rice grains said: this is what it feels like to be gathered into autumn.

On the night it snowed, the little vole nibbled beans, then dozed off beside us. Her whiskers twitched. I sat on top of the wall, warmed by her body heat, golden like a little piece of the sun.

I thought: if next spring she forgets me in a corner of the burrow, I will sprout to surprise her. But for now I will sleep well, and store this whole autumn inside me.

储藏洞里的冬天来客

阿灰是个小田鼠，一整个秋天没睡过懒觉。稻子镰的时候他收稻米，豆子拔的时候他收豆子，玉米运进场院那天，他在筐子底下钻来钻去，捡漏下的玉米粒。他的储藏洞在老坟后头的坡上，三个小间装得满满当当，顶上还加了第二层。

蚂蚁路过他的洞口，进来参观了一圈，说：你这洞，够吃到明年麦子了。阿灰不客气地承认：一粒一粒攒的，数得清。

头场雪那天夜里，阿灰正啃玉米粒，洞口扑地掉进来一个东西。是只小鹌鹑，翅膀上挂着雪，抖得像风里的草叶。

小鹌鹑说不出完整的话，只会说：冷，冷。阿灰把她扒拉到干草堆里，又扒拉了两下。他自己缩在洞口，把背对着风口。

第二天雪没停。小鹌鹑的腿伤了，走不了。阿灰围着她转了三圈，然后从最大那间里抱出一捧玉米粒，放在她面前。

那是他数得清的玉米，一百二十粒，每一粒都是他自己拖回来的。小鹌鹑啄了两粒，抬头看他。阿灰把爪子摆一摆：吃吧，秋天还长，洞还深。

雪下了七天。阿灰的玉米少了三十粒，稻米少了小半捧。他有点心疼，夜里一个人爬到最大那间，借着洞口漏进来的一点光，把剩下的粮食重新码整齐，码完数一遍，还是很多。

第八天雪停了。小鹌鹑的腿好了，扑棱着翅膀在洞里飞了一圈，撞掉两根干草。她飞出洞口，在雪地上转了两圈，又飞回来，放下一把草籽。

小鹌鹑走后的日子，洞里安静。阿灰啃一粒玉米，听一会儿风。他发现草籽堆在门口，整整齐齐，像有人码过。

开春化雪，阿灰的粮食还剩一小间。不多，但够。他把最后一粒玉米种在洞口旁边，浇了一点化雪水。

夏天，洞口旁边长出一棵玉米秆，比别人的矮半头，结了一棒小小的玉米。阿灰把它收进洞的时候，数了数，正好一百二十粒。

那年秋天，储藏洞还是三个小间，只是最大那间的墙上，插着一根鹌鹑的羽毛。

A Winter Guest in the Storage Burrow

A-Hui the vole did not sleep in once the whole autumn. When the rice was cut he gathered rice grains; when the beans were pulled he gathered beans; on the day the corn was carted to the yard he darted under the baskets and picked up the kernels that fell. His storage burrow was on the slope behind the old grave, its three rooms

packed full, with a second story added on top.

An ant passed by, came in for a tour, and said: this burrow of yours will feed you until the wheat of next year. A-Hui admitted it without ceremony: saved kernel by kernel, and I can count every one.

On the night of the first snow, A-Hui was nibbling a corn kernel when something fell into the burrow with a thump. It was a little quail, snow hanging on her wings, trembling like a leaf in wind.

The little quail could not form whole sentences; she could only say: cold, cold. A-Hui nudged her into the dry grass pile, and nudged her twice more. He himself curled at the burrow mouth, back to the wind.

The next day the snow did not stop. The little quail had a hurt leg and could not walk. A-Hui circled her three times, then carried out a paw-full of corn kernels from the biggest room and set them before her.

Those were his counted corn: one hundred and twenty kernels, every one dragged home by himself. The little quail pecked two and looked up at him. A-Hui waved his paw: eat. The autumn is long, and the burrow is deep.

The snow fell for seven days. The corn of A-Hui dropped by thirty kernels, and his rice by nearly half a pawful. It pained him a little. At night he climbed alone into the biggest room, and by the faint light leaking from the mouth he restacked the grain neatly, then counted it once more. Still plenty.

On the eighth day the snow stopped. The leg of the little quail was well. She fluttered a lap around the burrow and knocked down two pieces of dry grass. She flew out, circled twice over the snow, flew back, and dropped a handful of grass seeds.

In the days after she left, the burrow was quiet. A-Hui nibbled one corn kernel and listened to the wind for a while. He noticed the grass seeds piled at the door, neat and tidy, as if someone had stacked them.

When the snow melted in spring, A-Hui had one small room of food left. Not much, but enough. He planted the last corn kernel beside the burrow mouth and watered it with a little meltwater.

In summer a corn stalk grew beside his door, half a head shorter than the others, bearing one small cob. When A-Hui carried it into the burrow, he counted: exactly one hundred and twenty kernels.

That autumn the storage burrow still had three small rooms, only on the wall of the biggest one there was a quail feather tucked.