画得最丑的那张画

我画画不行，这是全班公认的事。美术课上别人画花像花，我画花像一团毛线。时间久了我也习惯了，美术课就低头玩铅笔刀，一节课混过去。

那节田野写生课，我本来打算照旧混。老师把队伍带到村南的稻田边，让每人领一块画板、一副小画架。那画架是木头折叠的，我支了三回才支起来，腿还一长一短，垫了块土坷垃才不晃。别人都面朝大田找位置，我专挑田角上人少的地方，心想离老师远一点，混得踏实。

画题是稻浪。我朝田里看了两眼就低下头，笔在纸上划。我不会画浪，就把稻子画成一根一根直挺挺的竖线，绿绳子似的，排得整整齐齐，穗子用黄点点上去，点得跟排队做操一样。画到一半，风来了，我抬头，整片田哗地朝一个方向弯腰，我手里那排绿绳子却站得笔直。我愣了一下，又低头接着画我的直稻子。我想，反正我也不会画弯的。

收画的时候我把画往后压，想混在中间。老师偏偏一张一张看。她看到我的，抽出来，我脸一下就烧了，等着那句大家都说过的话，画得不太像啊。结果老师把那张画举起来，问，你们看出来这张的稻子有什么不一样吗？大家七嘴八舌，有的说太直了，有的说像栅栏。老师说，直有什么不好？你们看这一排排稻子，根根立着，像不像站岗的兵？再看他的天，天上一朵云都没有，安安静静的，配得上这一田站岗的稻子。画得直，是他看见的稻子；画得弯，是你们看见的稻子。眼睛不一样，画就不一样。

教室里安静了一下。我耳朵嗡嗡的，头一回有人把我的丑画当回事讲。老师把那张画钉在教室后墙正中间，说这张挂中间，让大家都看看另一种眼睛。

回教室的路上我走在最后，心里乱乱的。路过稻田我又看了一眼，稻子其实不是全直的，靠田边的让风吹歪了，地当中间的还立着。原来我画的是地当中间的稻子，我坐的那个田角，正好看得见它们。

第二天放学，我回家翻出颜料盒，在旧作业本背面画了一张稻子，还是直的，这回穗子点得大小不一样。我妈路过看了一眼，说这张有精神。我把它夹进课本里。我想等下回田野写生，我还画直的稻子，不过要让其中几根，稍微弯那么一点点。

The Ugliest Painting of the Day

I am bad at drawing, and the whole class agrees on it. In art class other kids draw flowers that look like flowers, and my flowers look like a ball of yarn. After a while I got used to it too. In art class I would play with the pencil sharpener with my head down, and get through the period.

For that sketching lesson in the fields, I planned to coast as usual. The teacher led the class to the rice fields at the south edge of the village, and everyone took a drawing board and a small easel. The easel was wooden and folding. I set it up three times before it stood, its legs one long and one short, propped with a lump of dirt to stop the wobble. While everyone faced the big field to find a spot, I picked

the quiet corner of the field, thinking the farther from the teacher, the more peacefully I could coast.

The subject was rice waves. I glanced at the field twice and lowered my head to the paper. I cannot paint waves, so I drew the rice as straight stiff vertical lines, like green ropes, lined up neat, with the panicles dotted on in yellow, dotted like a class doing morning exercises in formation. Halfway through, the wind came. I looked up and the whole field bowed one way with a roar, while my row of green ropes stood ramrod straight on my paper. I froze for a second, then bent my head again to my straight rice. Anyway, I thought, I cannot draw them bent.

At collection time I pushed my drawing to the back, hoping to hide in the middle. The teacher looked at them one by one anyway. When she reached mine and pulled it out, my face burned, waiting for the line everyone always says, this does not look quite like it. Instead the teacher held my drawing up and asked, can you see what is different about the rice in this one? Everyone chimed in. Some said too straight, some said like a fence. The teacher said, what is wrong with straight? Look at this row after row of rice, every stalk standing, like soldiers on guard? And look at his sky, not one cloud in it, quiet, matching a whole field of rice on duty. Straight is the rice he saw; bent is the rice you saw. Different eyes, different drawings.

The room went quiet for a moment. My ears buzzed. It was the first time anyone took my ugly drawing seriously enough to talk about it. The teacher pinned that drawing in the very middle of the back wall, saying this one hangs in the center, so everyone can see another pair of eyes.

On the way back to the classroom I walked at the rear of the line, my heart in a turmoil. Passing the rice field I looked again. The rice was not all straight after all. The plants by the field edge were bent by the wind, while those in the middle of the plot still stood. So I had drawn the rice in the middle of the field. The corner where I sat happened to look right at them.

After school the next day I dug out my paint box and drew rice on the back of an old exercise book. Still straight, but this time the panicle dots were different sizes. My mom passed by, took one look, and said this one has spirit. I tucked it into my textbook. I am thinking, next time we sketch in the fields, I will still draw straight rice, only let a few of them bend just a tiny bit.