10月28日 爷爷拍拍老犁

10月28日 晴。今天爷爷不让我下地，说我手心磨出了水泡，让我歇着。上午我提着饭桶走到田边去。

站在田埂上，我头一回从外头看犁地这件事，不是从犁把后头，是从田埂上。

爷爷牵牛下地。他不像我那样把缰绳攥得死紧，缰绳松松地搭在他手里，垂成一个圈。大黄自己认路，走到地头，不用爷爷开口，爷爷只把缰绳换到另一边，喉咙里轻轻一声，大黄那么大的身子就慢慢原地转过来，后腿一步一步踩进刚才的沟里，一点不乱。

爷爷扶犁。他扶犁的样子跟我不一样：他不攥，两只手搭在犁把上，像在听什么。地硬的地方，他的手往下按一点；地软的地方，又往上抬一点。犁铧在土里时深时浅，翻出来的沟却一直是直的。

翻起的土在太阳底下堆成一道道浪。有几只乌鸦落到新土边上啄蚯蚓，大黄的尾巴一甩，它们就飞起来，绕一圈又落下。

我把饭提到田边。爷爷在沟里洗了手，坐到田埂上。他伸手拍了拍犁铧，说：这犁在咱家二十多年了，你爸当年就是扶着这犁学会扶犁的，也是你这个年纪。接着他又拍了拍大黄的脖子：这个九岁了，它犁过的这块地，比我还多。

我问：爷爷，大黄怎么不听我的？爷爷说：它听你的。昨天你牵它，老回头看沟，它怕你摔跟头，才走那么慢。它不是不听话，是照顾你。

我没说话。风从翻过的地里刮过来，土腥味浓得可以靠上去。

吃完饭回家，我在日记里写：我以为扶犁是靠自己使劲，今天才明白，扶犁是两只手在听——听地的软硬，听牛的步子。爷爷和大黄不用说话，那才是扶犁的样子。我手心的水泡，明天大概就不疼了。

October 28 Grandpa Patted the Old Plow

October 28, clear. Grandpa did not let me go to the field today, because my palm had a blister. In the morning I carried the lunch pail to the edge of the field.

Standing on the ridge, I saw the work of plowing from the outside for the first time, not from behind the plow handles but from the ridge.

Grandpa led the ox down. He did not grip the reins tight the way I do; the reins lay loose in his hand in a hanging loop. Da Huang knew the road by itself. At the end of the field, without one word, Grandpa only moved the reins to the other side and made a soft sound in his throat, and the big body of Da Huang turned slowly on the spot, its hind legs stepping into the last furrow one by one, without a single wrong step.

Grandpa held the plow differently from me. He did not grip it; his two hands rested on the handles, as if listening. Where the ground was hard, his hands pressed down a little; where it was soft, they rose a little. The plowshare went deep and shallow in the soil, yet the furrow it opened was always straight.

The turned soil lay ridge after ridge in the sun, like waves. A few crows landed at the edge of the new soil to peck at earthworms, and when the tail of Da Huang swished once, they flew up, circled, and landed again.

I carried the meal to the field. Grandpa washed his hands in the ditch water and sat down on the ridge. He patted the plowshare and said: this plow has been in our family for over twenty years. Your father learned to hold the plow behind this very plow, at the age of you. Then he patted the neck of Da Huang: this one is nine years old, and it has plowed more of this field than I have.

I asked: Grandpa, why does Da Huang not listen to me? He said: it does listen. Yesterday when you led it, you kept looking back at the furrow, and it was afraid you would fall, so it walked slowly. It was not disobeying you; it was taking care of you.

I said nothing. The wind came across the turned field, and the smell of earth was thick enough to lean against.

After the meal I went home and wrote in my diary: I used to think holding the plow was pushing with my own strength. Today I understand that holding the plow is listening with both hands — the hardness and softness of the ground, the steps of the ox. Grandpa and Da Huang need no words, and that is what holding the plow truly looks like. The blister on my palm will probably stop hurting tomorrow.

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