

灯火里的年味

每到腊月，家乡的空气里就开始弥漫着一种特别的香气，那是糯米蒸熟的甜香，也是过年的味道。街头巷尾都在忙碌着，男人在修剪门前的竹子，女人在晾晒腊肉，小孩则追逐着冬日的阳光。整个村庄，仿佛被一层红色的喜气笼罩。

除夕前几天，家家户户都开始贴春联。爷爷总是最讲究的一个，他会用毛笔写上“春回大地，福满人间”，红纸上的墨迹浓重有力，像是把整个冬天都染成了春天。夜幕降临，村头的灯笼一盏盏亮起，红光映在雪地上，像流动的火焰。那一刻，我总觉得家乡比任何地方都温暖。

年三十这天，母亲会早早起床准备祭祖。她会煮好的鸡、鱼、豆腐一一摆上供桌，点上三炷香。香烟缭绕中，父亲带着我们跪拜，嘴里念叨着祖辈的名字。那一刻，我第一次体会到什么是“根”。原来我们之所以庆祝，不只是为了新年，更是为了让家族的记忆延续下去。

到了晚上，全家人围坐在一起吃年夜饭。桌上摆满了佳肴——白斩鸡、清蒸鱼、糯米圆子，还有那盘象征团圆的红烧狮子头。电视里传来春晚的笑声，窗外鞭炮声此起彼伏。爷爷举起酒杯，说：“又是一年团圆夜。”那一句话，让我心里一阵温热。

初一清晨，家家户户门前都插着青竹，竹叶上挂着鞭炮。第一声“噼啪”响起，整个村子被唤醒。孩子们穿着新衣，挨家挨户拜年。老人们笑着发红包，嘴里还念叨着“新年好，长大啦”。到下午，村头的广场上会举行舞龙舞狮表演，锣鼓震天，舞者翻腾。人群欢笑着、鼓掌着，那一刻，我总觉得那不仅是节日，更是一场心灵的欢腾。

如今我远在他乡，每到春节，总会想起那一盏盏灯火下的笑脸。那是家的方向，也是年味的归宿。无论我走到哪里，心中那份对家乡的热爱与牵挂，永远不会熄灭。

The Taste of the New Year in the Glow of Lanterns

Every year when the twelfth lunar month arrives, the air in my hometown fills with a sweet scent—the smell of steamed glutinous rice and the fragrance of the New Year. Everyone is busy: men trim the bamboo at their doors, women hang cured meats to dry, and children chase each other under the winter sun. The whole village is wrapped in red joy.

Days before New Year's Eve, every family starts pasting Spring Festival couplets. My grandfather, always the most traditional, writes them himself: "Spring returns to the earth, blessings fill the world." The heavy black ink on the red paper seems to paint winter into spring. When night falls, lanterns light up one by one at the village entrance, glowing warmly against the snow. At that moment, I always feel that no place is warmer than home.

On New Year's Eve morning, my mother prepares offerings for our ancestors. She sets boiled chicken, fish, and tofu on the table and lights three sticks of incense. As the smoke curls upward, my father leads us in kneeling and reciting the

ancestors' names. It's then I understand the meaning of "roots." Our celebration is not only for the new year but to keep the family's memory alive.

At night, the whole family gathers for the reunion dinner. The table is filled with dishes—white-cut chicken, steamed fish, glutinous rice balls, and braised meatballs symbolizing unity. The Spring Festival Gala plays on TV, and firecrackers burst outside. My grandfather raises his glass and says, "Another year of reunion." Those words warm my heart.

On the morning of the first day of the new year, bamboo poles with firecrackers stand before every door. As the first crackle echoes, the whole village awakens. Children dressed in new clothes go door to door wishing happy new year, receiving red envelopes from smiling elders. By afternoon, the square hosts a dragon and lion dance, drums shaking the air, people cheering and clapping. It's not just celebration—it's joy of the soul.

Now that I live far from home, every Spring Festival I think of those smiling faces under lantern light. That's the direction of home, the flavor of the New Year. No matter where I go, my love and longing for my hometown will never fade.