

雨声是远方寄来的信

现在是夜里十一点，雨声把笔停在我手里。

我先想起那把伞——不对，倒过来，从头想起。

从头想起，是初二那年秋天，好友阿舟随父母搬去了很远的北方。

走的前一天是晴天。我们在他家老屋的旧窗下坐了一下午，谁也没说不舍得。

那扇旧窗很老了，木框松得能晃，玻璃把外面的树照得微微变形。

阿舟说，他最喜欢下雨天坐在旧窗底下，雨声像有人在屋顶上走，从这头走到那头。

他说以后到了北方，听见雨，就会想起这扇窗，想起窗底下的我。

我不信。远方那么远，雨怎么会记得一个人。

他走的那天还是晴天，干净得像故意不给我们一个哭的理由。

火车往北，把远方越推越远，远到信要走半个月。

信里他说北方的雨下在暖气管上、雨棚上、雪里，就是下不出老屋旧窗那个声音。

他寄来一小片旧窗的木屑——拆老屋时留下的，说替窗记着我，也替我记着窗。

我把木屑夹在字典里，夹在「雨」字那一页。

老屋翻修那年，旧窗被换下来，听人说钉在院墙边喂鸡，再后来就没了。

窗没了，我给自己找理由：看，连窗都忘了你，何况远方。

可是现在，夜里十一点，这场雨落在我宿舍的窗上，嗒，嗒嗒。

我忽然听出来了——从这头走到那头，雨在屋顶上走，和阿舟形容的一模一样。

原来雨一直记得。它穿过南方和北方，穿过旧窗和新窗，谁也不漏。

旧窗不在了，可它听过的每一场雨都还活着，落在哪儿，就在哪儿敲门。

我翻开字典，「雨」字那一页，木屑还在，细得像一小撮旧时光。

我提笔给阿舟写信，写这场雨，写它从这头走到那头。

写完才发觉，当年没说出口的话，其实一直在雨里，由每一场雨替我说。

远方是什么？远方是雨也要走一夜才到的地方。

而旧窗是什么？旧窗是走不掉的远方，替我们把雨存着。

熄灯前雨没停。我躺着听，屋顶上那个人还在走，从这头，走到那头。

走到那头，就是阿舟那里。我替他盖好被子，用一句只有雨知道的话。

The Rain Sound Is a Letter from Afar

It is eleven at night, and the rain sound stops the pen in my hand.

I think of that umbrella first — no, reverse it, think from the beginning.

From the beginning: the autumn of eighth grade, when my best friend A-Zhou moved far north with his parents.

The day before he left was clear. We sat all afternoon under the old window of his family's old house, neither of us saying we would miss each other.

That old window was ancient, its loose frame wobbly, the glass bending the trees outside just slightly.

A-Zhou said his favorite thing was sitting under the old window on rainy days, the rain sound like someone walking across the roof, from this end to that end.

He said once he reached the north, hearing rain, he would remember this window, and me under it.

I did not believe him. The faraway is so far — how could rain remember a person?

The day he left was clear again, scrubbed clean as if refusing to give us a reason to cry.

The train went north, pushing the faraway farther, so far that a letter took half a month.

In it he said the northern rain fell on radi pipes, on awnings, on snow — anything but the sound of the old house's old window.

He sent a sliver of wood from that old window, left over when the house was torn down, saying the window remembered me for him, and he remembered the window for me.

I pressed the wood shaving in my dictionary, on the page of the character for rain.

The year the old house was renovated, the old window was replaced, nailed by the yard wall to keep chickens, they say, and then it was gone.

With the window gone, I gave myself an excuse: see, even the window forgot you — how much more the faraway.

But now, at eleven at night, this rain falls on my dormitory window. Ta, ta-ta.

Suddenly I hear it — walking from this end to that end, the rain walking on the roof, exactly as A-Zhou described.

So the rain always remembered. It passes through south and north, through old windows and new, forgetting no one.

The old window is gone, but every rain it ever heard is still alive, landing anywhere, knocking anywhere.

I open the dictionary; on the page of rain, the wood shaving is still there, fine as a pinch of old times.

I write A-Zhou a letter, about this rain, about how it walks from this end to that end.

Only after finishing do I realize the words I never said back then have been living in the rain all along, each rain saying them for me.

What is the faraway? It is the place rain must walk a whole night to reach.

And what is an old window? It is the faraway that cannot leave, keeping the rain for us.

The rain had not stopped at lights-out. I lie listening; the walker on the roof is still walking, from this end toward that end.

That end is where A-Zhou is. I tuck the blanket around him with a sentence only the rain knows.