

伞骨上的铁丝

巷口的修伞摊今天出摊了。我路过的时候，看见摊主撑开一把布伞检查，那圈磨白的线脚我一眼就认出来了。我站在摊前，等他把伞撑到底。伞骨上有一根缠着细铁丝，伞面有三块补丁，针脚细密。是我家那把。我心跳快了一拍：妈妈那把伞，坏了，她没扔，拿来修。

我想起四年级的那个雨夜。

那天晚自习放学，雨下得又急又密，校门口挤满了接孩子的家长。我本来让妈妈别来，她回了一条短信：马上到。我在校门右边的柱子底下等，雨帘里走出来一个人，伞举得高高的，走近了才看清是妈妈。她今天穿的那件蓝外套，第二天我见过，半边颜色深一块，是干不了的那种深。

她把伞往我这边一罩，自己往伞外让了半步。我们并排走，伞不大，她一让，雨就顺着她肩膀下。我说妈，这伞也太小了，你看你淋的。她说没事，就这伞，凑合用。我说班里同学的伞都是自动的，一大把，往肩上一扛就走。她听了没说话，把伞又往我这边挪了挪，挪到她自己半个身子都在雨里。

走到小区门口，她突然把伞收起来，拽着我跑。进了楼道，她靠着墙喘气，头发里还在滴水。她先摸我的书包拉链，拉开看作业本湿没湿。本子一页没湿。她松了口气，从兜里掏出一块干毛巾，先给我擦头发，再擦自己的，毛巾擦完，她把它拧成一团，水滴了一地。

上楼的时候她走在我后面，我听见她换鞋的时候倒吸了一口气——鞋里全是水。第二天她的蓝外套搭在椅背上，那块深色印子到中午才干。她穿着半干的衣服去上班，打了个喷嚏，也没当回事。

那时候我嫌伞小。我甚至想过，要是家里换一把大伞，妈妈就不会淋湿了。这个念头我从来没说出口，说了也没用，家里那时候紧，我知道。

此刻我站在修伞摊前，摊主把铁丝拧紧，说：这伞修修还能用，扔了可惜，你看这伞面还是好的。我摸到伞柄上缠的那圈旧胶布，边缘都被手磨得发亮了。六年，那只手握过这把伞柄多少次，我数不清。每一次，伞都在我头顶；每一次，她的半边身子在雨里。

我问摊主修伞多少钱。他说两块。我付了钱。回家的路上我拎着这把修好的伞，它在我头顶上，我的肩膀是干的，我心里却记着另一个人的肩膀淋了多少年的雨。

伞小不小，我今天才算看明白。伞撑开的直径就那么大，可有人把它举成一间房子，房子这头干着，那头淋着，淋的那个人从来没说过冷。

晚上我把伞挂到门后的钉子上，跟妈妈说：以后它归我管，下雨我带着。妈妈哦了一声，正在择菜的手没停，可是过了一会儿，她哼起歌来了。

The Wire on the Umbrella Rib

The umbrella repair stand set up at the mouth of our alley today. Passing by, I saw the vendor open a cloth umbrella to inspect it, and I recognized that ring of

frayed stitching at a glance. I stood in front of the stand and waited until he opened it all the way. One rib was bound with thin wire; the canopy held three patches with tiny dense stitches. It was ours. My heart skipped: Mother's umbrella broke, and instead of throwing it away, she brought it to be mended.

It reminded me of a rainy night in fourth grade.

That evening, after evening study, the rain came hard and thick. The school gate was packed with parents. I had told Mother not to come; she texted back: On my way. I waited under the pillar to the right of the gate. A figure walked out through the curtain of rain, holding an umbrella high. Only when she came close did I see it was Mother. She wore a blue coat that day; I saw it the next day, one shoulder a shade darker, the kind of dark that never dries.

She lifted the umbrella over me and stepped half a step outside it. We walked side by side. The umbrella was small; the moment she yielded, the rain ran down her shoulder. I said: Mom, this umbrella is too small, look, you're getting soaked. She said: It's fine, this is the umbrella we have, make do. I said everyone in my class has an automatic umbrella, big enough to shoulder and go. She heard that and said nothing, just shifted the umbrella further toward me, until half her body stood in the rain.

At the gate of our compound she suddenly folded the umbrella and pulled me into a run. In the stairwell she leaned against the wall, gasping, water still dripping from her hair. She first checked my schoolbag zipper, pulled it open, and looked at my notebooks. Not one page was wet. She exhaled, took a dry towel from her pocket, dried my hair first, then her own, and when done wrung the towel into a ball that flooded the floor.

Going upstairs she walked behind me, and I heard her catch her breath while changing shoes, her shoes full of water. The next day her blue coat hung on the chair back, and the dark patch did not dry until noon. She went to work in the half-dry coat, sneezed, and thought nothing of it.

Back then I resented the small umbrella. I even thought: if we bought a big one, Mother would not get soaked. I never said that thought out loud, and saying it would not have helped; money was tight then, and I knew it.

Now I stand before the repair stand, and the vendor twists the wire tight, saying: This umbrella is good for more years after mending, a pity to throw away, see, the canopy is still sound. I touch the old tape wound around the handle, its edges polished bright by a hand. Six years, how many times that hand has gripped this handle, I cannot count. Every time, the umbrella was over my head; every time, half her body was in the rain.

I asked the vendor how much for the repair. He said two yuan. I paid. Walking home with the mended umbrella over my head, my shoulders stayed dry, but in my heart I kept remembering another person's shoulders, rained on for years.

Whether an umbrella is small, I only understand today. Its canopy opens only so wide, yet someone held it up as a house: one side of the house stayed dry, the other side stood in the rain, and the one in the rain never once said she was cold.

At night I hung the umbrella on the hook behind the door and told Mother: From now on it is mine to look after; when it rains, I will carry it. She said okay, her hands kept snapping green beans, but after a while she began humming a song.