

那把小伞，斜了六年

三年级下过大雨。放学的时候，雨把操场浇成一面湖，我站在校门口，看别人的家长一把一把撑开大伞，黑伞花伞格子伞，一朵一朵开走。我没有伞，妈妈在上班，爸爸出差，我打算把书包顶在头上冲回家。

就在我系鞋带准备冲的时候，雨里跑来一个人。是妈妈。她跑得很急，伞在她手里被风吹得往后翻，她一只手攥着伞柄，一只手拎着我的雨鞋，鞋带在她手腕上甩来甩去。她到了跟前，喘得话都说不成句：等、等久了吧。

我看了一眼她手里的伞，心凉了半截。那伞小得可怜，伞面撑开也就够盖住一个人的头顶，还是那种旧式的布伞，边上一圈线脚都磨白了。我嘟囔了一句：这伞也太小了。妈妈没接话，把伞举过来，罩住我，说走吧走吧。

走到半路我就发现了不对。伞明明在我头顶上，妈妈的半边肩膀却是湿的。校服肩上一片深色，越洇越大。我把伞往她那边推，她又推回来：我衣服厚，不怕淋。雨点打在伞面上，噼噼啪啪，她空着的那只手帮我拎着书包，手指头都泡白了。

到家我才看清，她湿的不止肩膀。半边袖子、半个后背全是水，头发贴在额头上，鞋里能倒出水来。她倒完鞋里的水，先去拧我的裤脚，说：没湿就好，没湿就好。

那时候我嫌伞小，觉得妈妈来接我，还接得这么寒酸。这句话说出口已经六年了，我一直没跟任何人说过。

上个月收拾柜子，我从柜子顶上翻出那把旧布伞。撑开一看，我愣住了。伞面有一圈补丁，针脚细密的，是妈妈自己缝的；伞骨有一根用细铁丝缠过。原来这伞不是小，是旧，是坏了又修、修了又用。这六年，她每次接我，举的都是这把伞，伞每次都在我头顶上，她的肩膀每次都是湿的。

我把伞撑开放在腿上，坐在柜子前头，半天没动。伞罩在腿上，干的；我的眼睛却是湿的。

那天晚上妈妈回来，我看见她挂衣服，肩膀上还是那块老地方容易洇湿。我叫了她一声，她回头问怎么了。我说没什么，就是想说，以后下雨，我带伞，我去接你。

她愣了一下，笑了，笑完去厨房，锅铲的声音响了很久。

有些东西小时候看不见，嫌它小，嫌它旧。长大一点才发现，小的是伞，不小的是举伞的人。她把伞斜过来六年，一句都没说过。

That Little Umbrella, Tilted for Six Years

In third grade there was a great rain. At dismissal, the rain had flooded the playground into a lake. I stood at the school gate watching other people's parents open umbrella after umbrella, black ones, colorful ones, plaid ones, blooming one by

one and carrying their children away. I had no umbrella. Mother was at work and Father was on a business trip, so I planned to hold my schoolbag over my head and dash home.

Just as I tied my shoelaces to run, a person came running through the rain. It was Mother. She ran so fast that the wind flipped her umbrella backwards. She gripped the handle with one hand and carried my rain boots in the other, their laces swinging on her wrist. When she reached me, she was too out of breath to finish a sentence: Did you, did you wait long?

I glanced at the umbrella in her hand and my heart went cold. The umbrella was pitifully small, open no wider than one child's head, one of those old cloth umbrellas with its edge frayed white. I muttered: This umbrella is too small. Mother did not answer. She lifted it over me, covering my head, and said: Let's go, let's go.

Halfway home I noticed something wrong. The umbrella was clearly over my head, yet Mother's shoulder was wet on one side. A dark patch spread across her uniform shoulder, growing larger. I pushed the umbrella toward her; she pushed it back: My coat is thick, I don't mind the rain. Raindrops cracked on the umbrella, and her free hand carried my schoolbag for me, her fingers soaked white.

Only at home did I see clearly that it was not just her shoulder. Half her sleeve, half her back were covered with water, her hair clung to her forehead, and her shoes could pour out water. After emptying her shoes, she went first to wring my trouser cuffs, saying: Good that you stayed dry, good that you stayed dry.

Back then I resented the umbrella for being small, thought it shabby that Mother came for me like this. That muttered sentence has been out for six years now, and I have never told anyone.

Last month, cleaning the cupboard, I found the old cloth umbrella on top of it. I opened it and froze. The canopy wore a ring of patches, stitched with tiny dense stitches by Mother herself; one rib was bound with thin wire. So the umbrella was not small by nature, it was old, broken and mended and used again. For six years, every time she fetched me, she carried this umbrella; every time it hovered over my head, and every time her shoulder got wet.

I sat in front of the cupboard with the open umbrella across my lap, motionless for a long while. The umbrella kept my lap dry; my eyes were not dry at all.

That evening when Mother came home, I watched her hang her clothes, and the same old spot on her shoulder still darkened first. I called to her. She turned and asked what was wrong. I said nothing, only that I wanted to tell her: from now on, when it rains, I will bring the umbrella, and I will come fetch you.

She froze for a moment, then laughed, and after laughing went to the kitchen, where the spatula kept sounding for a long time.

When we are small we cannot see certain things; we think them too small, too shabby. Only growing a little taller do we find that the small thing was the umbrella, and the not-small thing was the one holding it. She tilted it toward me for six years and never said a word.

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，淋的那个人从来没见过冷。

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.

今天，伞斜向她

今天放学，天说黑就黑了。我在文具店门口躲雨，摸到书包侧袋里那把折叠布伞——家里那把旧的，妈妈今早塞给我的，说中午有雨。伞确实小，我平时不太爱带它，今天它救了我。

雨小一点的时候，我忽然想起妈妈没带伞。她单位离学校四站路，她肯定又是头顶公文包跑回来。我翻出口袋里的两块钱，坐公交往她单位去。

在校门口等车的时候我有点紧张。我从来没一个人坐过这条线，更别说去她单位。车来了，我投币，报了她单位那站，售票员阿姨看了我一眼，没多问。

妈妈单位门口已经有人在接大人了，都是孩子。妈妈从楼里出来，看见我，愣在雨里。她跑过来，我把手里的伞举给她，她第一句话是：你带伞了？那你怎么办？我说我带了，这是伞。她看看我，又看看伞，笑了，眼角有点亮。

回家的路上，我把伞举在她头顶。伞小的问题，我今天才第一次真正明白。伞往她那边罩，我的右肩就露在外面，雨点落在上面，先是凉，后来衣服洇湿了，贴在肩胛骨上，一片一片地沉。

我把伞往自己这边拉了半寸，又想起什么，推回去。原来这就是妈妈那六年的肩膀。原来她不是不怕淋，她只是把凉让给了自己。

走到一半，她的袖子还是湿了。她伸手想把伞推给我，我攥紧伞柄不挪。我说妈，你别动，我力气大。她就不动了。雨打在伞面上，噼噼啪啪，这个声音我在伞底下听了六年，今天在伞柄这一头听，原来撑伞的人听雨，跟躲雨的人听雨，不是一个声音。撑伞的人听见的雨，一半落在伞上，一半落在自己肩上。

到楼下，她头发上挂着水珠，我的右肩从肩头湿到袖口。我们俩都没说话，一起上楼。她掏钥匙的时候，我看见她偷偷看我那截湿袖子，看了一遍，又看一遍。

进了门，她先去拧我的袖子，嘴里说：叫你伞打正，不听。我说：伞打正了，你就湿了。她拿着我的袖子，停住了。

那天晚上她给我煮了一碗姜汤，放在我桌上，什么也没说。我喝完了，辣得直吸气。她在门口听见我吸气，笑了一声。

心得体会老师要求写四百字，我写了很长。我在结尾写：有些道理，听讲是听不会的。伞要斜向一个人，另一个人就得淋着。这个知识写在纸上是一行字，走在雨里才知道它有多长——刚好是一双肩膀到另一双肩膀的距离。

现在那把伞在门后钉子上挂着，伞骨上新缠的铁丝亮亮的。下雨天出门，我抢过它撑开，斜向妈妈。她嘴上说我举得歪，肩膀却一次比一次干。

Today, the Umbrella Tilted Toward Her

Today at dismissal, the sky went dark the moment it decided to. I sheltered from the rain at a stationery shop and felt, in the side pocket of my schoolbag, the folding cloth umbrella, the old one from home. Mother had slipped it to me this morning, saying rain was coming at noon. It truly is a small umbrella; I do not much like carrying it. Today it saved me.

When the rain softened, it struck me that Mother had no umbrella. Her office is four bus stops from school; she would surely hold her briefcase over her head and run home. I dug two coins out of my pocket and took the bus toward her office.

Waiting at the stop I was a little nervous. I had never ridden this line alone, let alone gone to her office. The bus came, I dropped my coins, said her stop, and the conductor glanced at me without asking more.

At her office gate some children were already fetching grown-ups. Mother came out of the building, saw me, and froze in the rain. She ran over. I raised the umbrella I was holding toward her. Her first words: You brought an umbrella? Then what about you? I said I brought it, here it is. She looked at me, then at the umbrella, and

smiled, the corners of her eyes bright.

On the way home I held the umbrella over her head. The problem of the small umbrella, I only truly understood today. Cover her, and my right shoulder stands outside; raindrops land on it, first cool, then the cloth darkens and clings to my shoulder blade, patch by patch, growing heavy. I pulled the umbrella half an inch toward myself, remembered something, and pushed it back. So this was Mother's shoulder for those six years. So it was not that she did not mind the rain; she simply kept the cold for herself.

Halfway home, her sleeve got wet anyway. She reached up to push the umbrella to me; I gripped the handle and would not move. I said: Mom, don't move, I am strong. So she stopped. Rain cracked on the umbrella, plop plop, a sound I had listened to from under the umbrella for six years. Listening from the handle side today, I found it is not the same sound. What the one holding the umbrella hears, half falls on the canopy and half falls on her own shoulder.

At our building, water beads hung in her hair, and my right shoulder was wet from shoulder to cuff. Neither of us spoke as we climbed. While she took out her keys, I caught her stealing glances at my soaked sleeve, once, then again.

Inside, she went first to wring my sleeve, saying: I told you to hold the umbrella straight, you would not listen. I said: If I held it straight, you would get wet. She, holding my sleeve, stopped.

That night she cooked me a bowl of ginger soup and set it on my desk without a word. I finished it, hissing at the heat. From the doorway she heard my hissing and laughed.

The teacher asked for four hundred characters on this reflection; I wrote a great deal. I ended it like this: Some lessons cannot be learned by hearing. If an umbrella tilts to one person, another must stand in the rain. Written on paper, that knowledge is one line; walking in the rain you learn how long it is, exactly the distance from one pair of shoulders to another.

Now the umbrella hangs on the hook behind the door, its newly wired rib shining. On rainy days I snatch it and open it, tilted toward Mother. She says I hold it crooked, yet her shoulder grows drier each time.