

一个旧文具盒的自述

我是一个铁文具盒，蓝色，盖子上印着白鲸。我在这个小主人的书包里住了三年。现在我的右边两个角掉了漆，露出银白的铁皮，像磕掉的两颗门牙。她不嫌弃我，她的手指天天来摸那两块铁皮。

我身上的漆不是一天掉光的。第一次摔是在三年级下学期的数学课上，她从桌边捞我没捞住，我侧着身子砸在地上，右边第一个角就是这么磕的。后来我熟了一套本事：从桌角滑下去要侧着落，别肚皮朝下，肚皮朝下白鲸会磕出坑。她后来也熟了，看我摔下去，只抬一下眼皮。

我肚子里的事，比她笔袋里任何一支笔知道得都多。我装过她写坏折成团的纸，装过半块断掉的橡皮，还装过一张纸条。那张纸条是五年级上学期一个晚上塞进来的，那天她回家哭过一场，哭的是好朋友转学走了。第二天有个女孩在她文具盒里塞了张折成小方块的纸条，她上课不敢看，下课看了三行，又把它按回我盒底的缝里。这一按，就是两年多。纸条的字我看不清，可我替她保管得严严实实，连铅笔灰都没让它进缝里。

这个星期，她妈妈带她去了文具店。回来那天，桌上多了一个灰色的新盒子，带拉链，能翻成笔筒，皮面亮得能照出人影。新盒子躺在我旁边，小声问我：「你身上怎么这么多坑？」我没答话。它没摔过，没装过纸条，没听过半夜的哭声，它当然亮。

换不换，其实她说了算。那天晚上她把新盒子打开，又合上，打开，又合上。然后她把我盒底的缝抠开，把纸条抽出来看了看，又放回去。她把我擦了一遍，把我放进新书包的侧兜，新盒子留在了书桌上。

现在我还在她侧兜里，每天跟着她走两站路。我的角还是掉漆的角，我的白鲸让擦得发白。她上六年级了，明年就要毕业。她跟她妈妈说过，毕业那天带我一起回家。我肚子里那张纸条还没旧，我也还不能旧。

Confessions of an Old Pencil Case

I am a tin pencil case, blue, with a white whale on my lid. I have lived in this girl's schoolbag for three years. Now the two corners on my right have lost their paint, showing silver tin underneath, like two front teeth chipped off. She does not mind. Her fingers come to rub those two bare patches every day.

My paint did not chip off in one day. The first fall happened in a math class in the second term of third grade. She tried to catch me as I slid off the desk edge and missed. I hit the floor on my side, and that is how the first right corner got dented. Later I learned a craft of my own: when sliding off a desk corner, land on the side, never belly-down - belly-down puts a dent in the whale. She learned too. When I fall now, she only lifts her eyelids.

What I hold inside, I know better than any pen in her pouch. I have kept crumpled paper she wrote badly, half a snapped eraser, and a note. The note was stuffed in one

evening in the first term of fifth grade. That day she came home crying, over a best friend moving away. The next day another girl slipped a small folded square of paper into my case. She dared not read it in class, read three lines after class, and pressed it back into the crack at my bottom. That press has held for over two years. I cannot make out the writing clearly, but I have guarded it for her tightly, keeping even the pencil dust out of the crack.

This week her mother took her to a stationery shop. When they came back, a new gray box with a zipper sat on the desk, one that folds into a pen holder, its surface bright enough to show a reflection. The new box lay beside me and whispered: "How did you get so many dents?" I did not answer. It has never fallen, never held a note, never heard crying in the middle of the night. Of course it shines.

Whether to switch is really her call. That evening she opened the new box and closed it, opened and closed it again. Then she picked open the crack at my bottom, drew out the note, looked at it, and put it back. She wiped me clean, put me in the side pocket of her new schoolbag, and left the new box on the desk.

Now I am still in her side pocket, walking two bus stops with her every day. My corners are still the chipped ones, my whale rubbed pale from wiping. She is in sixth grade now, graduating next year. She told her mother that on graduation day she will take me home. The note inside me is not old yet, and so I cannot be old yet either.