

路边的小花不着急

初春的早晨天还暗着，我背着书包走河堤那条路上学，路灯把影子拉长又缩短。走到第三个路灯底下，我踩到一小片凉，低头看，是露水打湿的白花，米粒大，贴着地开，一开就是一小片。我不知道它的名字，后来查了书才知道叫婆婆纳。

过了几天，蒲公英的黄花开出来了，也是沿着河堤，一小簇一小簇。又过了几天，婆婆纳谢了，花瓣掉在原来的位置上。我忽然意识到，它们没有一起开过。婆婆纳开的时候，蒲公英还顶着绿色的花苞；蒲公英开的时候，婆婆纳已经在结小小的果。谁也没有抢谁的日子。

那段时间我心情不好。月考数学砸了，卷子上红色的叉像一排栅栏。我总觉得自己慢了，同学已经开始预习下学期的内容，我还卡在上一章。那天早晨我又走到河堤，蹲下来看那些花。墙根的砖缝里钻出一株紫花，细得像一根线挑着，它开得那么小，那么稳，好像它根本不怀疑自己该不该开、该什么时候开。

我想起外婆家后园。园里的花是有排场的：迎春先开，开完桃花接上，桃花落了梨花才敢露面，满园从没有一起热闹过，可从没有空过。外婆说，花比人老实，时候到了就开，时候不到，憋着也不开。小时候我觉得这话没意思，那天早晨，我在河堤边上站了很久，觉得这话重得很。

我把书包放下，沿着河堤走了一趟。蒲公英的花苞顶开绿萼的过程我看得清清楚楚，一层一层，不急，也不停。它不看看旁边开没开，它只管把自己打开。

后来我在错题本的第一页写了一句话：花开不语，自有时节。写的时候我想起砖缝里那株紫花。它没有名字被人叫过，没有人为它停下来，可它到日子就开了，开得完完整整。

再后来数学单元测，我考得不算好，但比上次好。放学的路上我又去看婆婆纳结的果，一小粒一小粒，比花还不起眼。我知道它们在攒下一个春天的劲儿。我也在攒。路边的小花都不着急，我为什么要着急。

The Little Flowers by the Road Are in No Hurry

In early spring the mornings were still dark. I walked along the river embankment to school with my backpack on, the streetlights stretching my shadow long and then short. By the third lamp I stepped into a patch of cold. I looked down: tiny white flowers wet with dew, the size of a grain of rice, hugging the ground, blooming in little sheets. I did not know its name then. I looked it up in a book later and learned it was called speedwell.

A few days later the dandelions came out yellow, also along the embankment, cluster by small cluster. A few days after that, the speedwell faded, its petals falling right where they had grown. It struck me suddenly that they had never bloomed together. When the speedwell was out, the dandelion was still holding green buds; when the dandelion opened, the speedwell was already setting its tiny fruit. None of them stole another's day.

My mood was bad those weeks. I had bombed the math exam, and the red crosses on the paper looked like a row of fence rails. I kept feeling I was slow, that my classmates were already previewing next term while I was still stuck in the previous chapter. That morning I squatted down by the embankment and looked at the flowers. In a crack of the brick wall a purple sprout had pushed through, thin as a thread holding up a bead, blooming so small and so steady, as if it never once doubted whether it should bloom, or when.

I thought of the backyard at my grandmother's house. The flowers there kept an order: winter jasmine first, then peach blossoms took over, and pear blossoms only dared appear after the peach had fallen. The garden was never loud all at once, and it was never empty either. Grandma used to say flowers are more honest than people: when the time comes they open, and when it has not come, they stay closed no matter how hard they strain. As a child I found that saying dull. That morning, standing a long time on the embankment, I found it heavy.

I set down my backpack and walked the length of the embankment once. I watched a dandelion bud push its green calyx apart, layer by layer, unhurried and unstoppable. It did not check whether its neighbors had opened. It only saw to opening itself.

Later I wrote one line on the first page of my mistake notebook: flowers bloom without speaking, each keeping its own season. As I wrote it, I saw the purple sprout in the brick crack again. No one had ever called its name, no one had ever stopped for it, yet when its day came it opened, whole and complete.

In the next unit test my math score was not great, but better than before. On the way home I went back to look at the speedwell's seeds, grain by grain, even less noticeable than its flowers. I knew they were saving up strength for the next spring. So was I. The little flowers by the road are in no hurry. Why should I be.