

拉链终于坏掉的那一天

十月十八日 星期六 阴。

昨晚写作业的时候，旧文具盒的拉链终于彻底坏了。拉锁的金属齿这两年断断续续掉了好几颗，最后只剩末尾一颗还咬着。我把文具全倒在桌上，试着修了一会儿，放弃了。盒面的蓝色图案早磨成了灰白色，两个角起了边，以前贴的一张篮球运动员贴纸撕掉了，在盖上留下一块浅色的方块。内侧的凹槽里嵌着铅笔灰和橡皮屑，怎么擦都还剩一点淡淡的黑印。

这个文具盒是我上初中第一天买的，跟了我三年。它从课桌上摔下来过十几次，有一次在走廊被人踩过，提手是妈妈用针线重新缝上去的。初一到初二的每一次期末考、每一次周考，它装的笔和涂卡铅笔被拿出来用掉再放回去，它一天都没缺过勤。

周六上午，妈妈带我去文具店挑新的。货架上的文具盒多得让人眼花。塑料的硬邦邦，可是掉在地上会哐当一声，全班都会回头看；自动的有按钮有暗格，我怕上课忍不住摆弄，分了心。我拿起一个深蓝色帆布的：软，落地没声音，两层，一层放笔，一层放尺子和圆规。妈妈说它太素了，我摇头，坚持要它。用的人是我，我最清楚自己要什么。

回到家，妈妈拿起旧文具盒就要扔进垃圾桶。我拦住了她。我用湿巾把旧文具盒擦了一遍，把凹槽里的黑印尽量擦掉，把它装进一个干净的布袋，放进书桌第二个抽屉，紧挨着那摞旧试卷。妈妈笑我：不扔还擦这么干净干什么。我答不上来，只说，它像个退役的兵，不能脏着送走。

今晚打开新文具盒，帆布有一点新东西的气味。笔在里面站得整整齐齐，盖合得很顺。我想，旧文具盒替我保管了三年的文具，往后这件事归新的了。旧的在抽屉里安顿，我升入初三。抽屉像一间休息室，而我还得往前走。

The Day the Zipper Finally Gave Up

October 18, Saturday, cloudy.

Last night while I was doing homework, the zipper of my old pencil case finally gave out. The metal teeth of the slider had been snapping off one by one for the past two years, and in the end only the last tooth was holding on. I poured all the stationery onto the desk, tried to fix it for a while, then gave up. The blue pattern on its surface had long been rubbed to a whitish gray, both corners were frayed, and the basketball-player sticker I used to paste on had peeled off, leaving a pale rectangle on the lid. The grooves inside were packed with pencil lead marks and eraser shavings, and no matter how hard I wiped, faint black marks remained.

This pencil case has been with me since my first day of junior high, three years now. It was knocked off the desk more than ten times; once it was stepped on in the corridor, and its strap was sewn back by my mother with needle and thread. During

every final exam in Grade 7 and Grade 8 and every weekly quiz, the pens and 2B pencils it carried were taken out, used, and put back; it never missed a single day.

On Saturday morning my mother took me to the stationery store to pick a new one. There were so many pencil cases on the shelves that my eyes went dizzy. The plastic ones were hard, but when they fell they went clang and drew the eyes of the whole class; the automatic ones had buttons and hidden compartments, and I was afraid I would play with them in class. I picked up a dark blue canvas one: soft, quiet when it falls, with two layers, one for pens and one for rulers and compasses. My mother said it was too plain, but I insisted. I would be the one using it, and I knew best what I needed.

When we got home, my mother picked up the old pencil case to throw it into the trash can. I stopped her. I wiped the old one clean with a wet wipe, cleaned the black marks in the grooves as much as I could, put it into a clean cloth bag, and placed it in the second drawer of my desk, right beside the pile of old exam papers. My mother laughed and asked why I washed it so clean if I was not throwing it away. I could not answer well, so I just said: it is like a retired soldier; you cannot send him off dirty.

Tonight when I opened the new pencil case, the canvas smelled faintly new. The pens stood straight inside, and the lid closed smoothly. I thought: the old one held my stationery for three years, and from now on this job belongs to the new one. The old one rests in the drawer, and I am moving up to Grade 9. The drawer is like a retirement room, and I am still on the road.

抽屉里的旧文具盒

十一月二日 星期日 晴。

今天我做了一件在别人看来可能有点怪的事：把用了两年多的旧文具盒收进了抽屉，而不是扔进垃圾桶。

旧文具盒是铁皮的，军绿色，是我表哥上高中时用剩的，传给了我。传到我手里的时候它就不新了：盒盖上的绿漆在两个角上磕掉了，露出银白的铁皮底；合页松了，打开的时候盖子会歪一下才立稳；盒底的漆磨薄了一小块，摸上去比别处光滑。里面靠盖那一侧印着一行小字，是生产厂的地址，漆磨得只剩一半，我闭着眼都能背出来。这两年它替我挡过不少事：同桌的笔袋拉链崩开过，弹飞的圆珠笔砸在它身上，砸出一个浅浅的坑。

换新的念头是上周起的。它的合页彻底松了，盖子耷拉着，笔在课上滚出来两次，一次滚到前排女生脚边，我红着脸钻下去捡。周五放学，爸爸带我去超市文具区。我没挑花哨的，选了一

个灰色的布文具盒，拉链顺滑，内部分格清楚。付款的时候爸爸问我，旧的怎么办，扔了吧。我说，不扔。

回家后我找了块旧毛巾，把铁皮盒里外擦了一遍，磕掉漆的地方擦不出颜色，但灰擦干净了。我把它立在书桌抽屉里，让它靠着台灯底座，像靠在墙边休息。抽屉里还有上学期用完的半盒笔芯、一沓折角的草稿纸。它们是一类东西，都干完活了。

躺下以后我想了很久，为什么舍不得扔。这个盒子不是我妈买的，是表哥传下来的，他考上了大学，人在外地。盒子上的坑和掉漆，一格一格都有出处。扔掉它，好像把一段传下来的东西随手丢掉了。收进抽屉不一样，它还在，只是不再干活。

新文具盒在书桌上待命，旧的在抽屉里待着。我想，往后每打开一次抽屉，我都会想起它替我挡过的那一记圆珠笔。

The Old Pencil Case in the Drawer

November 2, Sunday, sunny.

Today I did something that others might find a little strange: I put my pencil case of more than two years into a drawer instead of throwing it into the trash can.

The old one is made of tin, army green, handed down to me by my cousin after he finished high school. It was already not new when it reached me: the green paint on both corners of the lid had been knocked off, showing the silvery metal underneath; the hinge was loose, so the lid tilted once before standing steady when opened; a patch of paint on the bottom had worn thin and felt smoother than the rest. On the lid side inside there was a line of small print, the factory address, half of it worn away, and I could recite it with my eyes closed. Over these two years it shielded me from many things: my deskmate's pen bag once burst open, and a ballpoint pen flew out and hit it, leaving a shallow dent.

The idea of replacing it came last week. Its hinge went completely loose, the lid hung down, and pens rolled out twice in class; once a pen rolled to the feet of the girl in front, and I climbed down to fetch it with a red face. After school on Friday, my father took me to the stationery section of the supermarket. I did not pick a fancy one; I chose a gray cloth pencil case with a smooth zipper and clear inner compartments. At the checkout my father asked what to do with the old one, and suggested throwing it away. I said: no.

After we got home I found an old towel and wiped the tin case inside and out. The knocked-off paint did not come back, but the dust came off. I stood it upright in the desk drawer, leaning against the base of the desk lamp, like resting against a wall. The drawer also holds a half box of refills from last term and a stack of draft

papers with folded corners. They are the same kind of things, all off duty.

After lying down I thought for a long time about why I could not bear to throw it away. My mother did not buy this case; my cousin passed it to me. He got into a university and is far away now. Every dent and every flake of paint on it has its own story. Throwing it away would be like tossing away something that had been handed down. Keeping it in the drawer is different: it is still there, just no longer on duty.

The new pencil case stands ready on the desk, and the old one stays in the drawer. I think that every time I open the drawer from now on, I will remember that ballpoint pen it once blocked for me.

新盒子到货那天，我给旧盒子写了张纸条

八月二十六日 星期六 晴。

新文具盒是今天到的，快递盒不大，我拆得很快。深灰色，三层，我挑了两个星期才定下来的那个。拆开的时候我心里有个声音说：该给旧的办交接了。

旧文具盒是我七年级开学前自己在校门口文具摊挑的，十几块钱，紫色，硬塑料。一年下来它旧得比我想象中快。提手从根上断过，我用透明胶缠了三圈，缠的地方发黄发硬；盒盖的卡扣松了，按一下弹不开，得用指甲抠；内衬那层薄绒磨秃了两块，笔槽的隔断断了一根，铅笔和尺子从此混在一起，每天早晨翻找都要搅一遍。暑假末我整理书包，把它倒出来清点，才发现它身上大大小小七八处伤，没有一处是意外，全是每天用出来的。

挑新盒子的过程很长。我在手机购物软件上收藏了四个，一个带密码锁，一个印着球队队徽，一个多功能带卷笔刀，还有现在这个，最普通。妈妈建议我买带队徽那个，说我天天想球队的事。我犹豫过，最后还是选了普通的。我清楚自己的毛病：花哨的东西头两个星期新鲜，之后上课就忍不住拆着玩。普通的盒子不会给我这个口子。

我把旧盒子从书包里拿出来，用纸巾把里面的笔灰擦干净，断了的提手没有修。我在一张小纸条上写：七年级，辛苦你了。把纸条塞进盒子里，盖好，放进书桌最下面一层的抽屉，和七年级用剩的半沓演算纸放在一起。抽屉推进去的时候声音很轻，像替谁把门关好。

新盒子摆在桌上，笔按槽放好，卡扣一按就开，很利索。后天开学，我就是八年级的学生了。我对新盒子只有一个要求：希望一年后它交接的时候，伤都用在正地方，而不是被我摔的、拆的。旧盒子在抽屉里替我记着七年级，新盒子要替我记八年级。我这一页翻过去了，它跟着我翻。

The Day the New Case Arrived, I Left a Note for the Old One

August 26, Saturday, sunny.

The new pencil case arrived today. The courier box was small, and I opened it quickly. Dark gray, three layers, the one I had spent two weeks deciding on. As I unwrapped it, a voice inside me said: time to hold the handover with the old one.

The old pencil case was one I picked myself at a stationery stall by the school gate before Grade 7 started, a hard plastic purple one that cost a dozen yuan. In one year it aged faster than I expected. Its handle broke off at the root, and I wrapped it three rounds with clear tape, the tape now yellow and stiff; the clasp of the lid went loose, so pressing it would not pop it open and I had to pry with my fingernail; two patches of the thin lining were worn bald, and one divider of the pen groove snapped, so pencils and rulers mixed together and I had to stir them every morning. At the end of summer vacation I emptied my schoolbag to take inventory, and only then noticed the seven or eight wounds on it. Not one was an accident; every one came from daily use.

Choosing the new case took a long time. I favorited four in a shopping app: one with a combination lock, one printed with a team emblem, one multi-function with a built-in sharpener, and this current one, the plainest. My mother suggested the emblem one, saying my head was always in the team's business. I hesitated, but in the end chose the plain one. I know my own flaw: with something fancy I stay excited for two weeks, then I cannot resist taking it apart in class. A plain case will not give me that opening.

I took the old case out of my bag and wiped the pencil dust inside with a tissue. I did not fix the broken handle. On a small slip of paper I wrote: Grade 7, thank you for your hard work. I tucked the note into the case, closed the lid, and put it in the bottom drawer of my desk, together with the leftover half stack of exercise paper from Grade 7. The drawer slid shut with a soft sound, like closing a door gently for someone.

The new case sits on the desk, pens placed in their slots, the clasp popping open at one press, crisp and clean. School starts the day after tomorrow, and I will be a Grade 8 student. I have only one demand of the new case: when it hands over a year from now, I hope its wounds were earned in the right places, not from my throwing it or taking it apart. The old case keeps Grade 7 for me in the drawer; the new one will keep Grade 8 for me. I am turning this page, and it turns with me.

