

搬桌子时，我从床底下推出一个铁皮盒

昨天家里换书桌。旧书桌抬出去的时候，卡在桌腿和墙缝之间的东西哗啦掉了一地：弹珠、断尺、图钉。最后从床底下慢慢推出来的，是一只铁皮文具盒，积的灰像下过一场小雪。

我把它拿到水龙头底下冲。铁皮的盒子，本来印着卡通猫，可盒盖上大半被一张贴画盖住了。那不是买的贴画，是我自己画的：蜡笔涂的一个太阳，加一只歪腿的风筝，剪下来，用米汤糊上去的。贴画湿透了，泡得发软，我把它小心揭下来，晾在窗台上。盒子露出原来的卡通猫，猫的一只眼睛磨没了，倒像在冲我眨眼。

这只盒子是一年级用的。那时每天上学，爸爸送我。我们那条路穿过老菜场，卖鱼的摊子把地面冲得湿亮，我总绕着走；再经过一家修车铺，打气筒哐当哐当响，我数着声音走，数到七就到巷口。冬天早上黑，爸爸的手大，我的手小，他牵着我，我另一只手挎着书包，书包里的铁皮盒一步一响。到了校门口，他总蹲下来替我拉拉链，说拉好了，别丢。后来三年级我就不让送了，他站在巷口看我去，我假装不看回头。

铁皮盒在床底下待了四年。它装过我的第一支钢笔，那支笔漏水，把盒底染了一小片蓝，冲不掉。我把它擦干，摆在书桌抽屉的第一层。窗台上那张蜡笔贴画干了，颜色淡了些，太阳还是那个太阳，风筝还是那条歪腿。

我把贴画重新糊回盒盖上，用的是胶水，比米汤牢。糊好我忽然明白了一件事：盒子还是那个盒子，可我已经不用数打气筒的声音走到巷口了，也不用等谁蹲下来替我拉拉链。岁月不是悄悄走的，它把东西留在床底下，等你搬桌子的时候，它再哗啦一声，全部倒给你看。

Moving the Desk, I Rolled a Tin Case Out from Under the Bed

Yesterday our family replaced the study desk. When the old one was carried out, everything wedged between its legs and the wall came tumbling down: marbles, a broken ruler, thumbtacks. Last of all, rolled slowly out from under the bed, came a tin pencil case, its dust like a light snowfall.

I took it under the tap. It was a tin case, printed with a cartoon cat, but most of the lid was covered by a sticker. It was not a bought sticker; I had drawn it myself: a sun in crayon plus a kite with a crooked leg, cut out and pasted on with rice water. Soaked through and soft, the sticker came off carefully in my hands, and I set it on the windowsill to dry. The case showed its cartoon cat again, one of the cat's eyes rubbed away, as if winking at me.

I used this case in Grade 1. Every school morning my father walked me. Our road cut through the old vegetable market; the fish stalls washed the ground shiny wet, and I always walked around it. Then came a bicycle repair shop whose pump went clang-clang; I counted the clangs as I walked, and at seven I reached the mouth of the

lane. Winter mornings were dark. My father's hand was big and mine was small; he held my hand while my other arm carried the schoolbag, and the tin case inside it rang one step at a time. At the school gate he always crouched to zip my bag for me and said: zipped tight, don't lose anything. By Grade 3 I would not let him come; he stood at the lane's mouth watching me go, and I pretended not to look back.

The tin case had stayed under the bed for four years. It once held my first fountain pen, which leaked and dyed a small patch of the bottom blue; it would not wash off. I dried the case and placed it in the first layer of my desk drawer. On the windowsill the crayon sticker had dried, its colors a little paler, but the sun was still that sun and the kite still had its crooked leg.

I pasted the sticker back onto the lid, with glue this time, stronger than rice water. When it was done, I suddenly understood something: the case is still the same case, but I no longer count pump clangs to reach the lane's mouth, nor wait for anyone to crouch and zip me up. The years do not leave quietly. They leave things under the bed, and when you move a desk, they tumble out with a crash and show you everything at once.