

多年以后，我还认得它的声音

多年以后，我在老屋的抽屉里重新听见那个声音：迟钝的一声沙沙，要停一停、对一对才咬得上。不用看我也知道，是那只灰布笔袋。我举着它站在窗前，像撞见一个多年没联系、却记得你所有小事的老同学。

那时候我嫌它旧。初二下学期，同桌换了硬壳的新文具盒，磁吸扣啪的一声，干脆利落。我的笔袋拉链钝了，齿牙对不齐，每天早读前都要在桌肚里跟它较劲，拉环磨得圆滚滚，指头一滑就脱手。我回家说过一次：换个新的吧。我妈翻过笔袋，看了看磨圆的拉环，没接话，只从缝纫机抽屉里翻出搭扣，趴在小灯下缝。针脚歪歪扭扭，她缝完拉了两下，递还给我：还能用。我接过来，心里那点嫌弃，当时说不出口，后来也没机会说。

它旧得很有来历。夹层里那颗带白纹的玻璃珠，是三年级校门口五毛钱的货，滚进去就再没出来，像替我保管着一段更早的日子。折成三角的纸条我早忘了内容，只记得那天数学考完，同桌冲我比了个手势。半块橡皮短得捏不住，上面全是铅笔戳的小坑。这些东西不值钱，可它们只认得那只笔袋，换了新盒子，它们就什么都不是了。

我妈缝的搭扣陪我到中考结束。那天晚自习散场，我把笔袋塞进书包，拉链照例沙沙地咬上。窗外的蝉不知什么时候停了，十三岁的我以为那只是普通的一天。多年以后我才知道，普通的日子过完就是过完了，只有磨损替人记着。

我把笔袋带回现在住的地方，放进书桌最上面一格，没装东西。偶尔拉开一下，听那声迟钝的沙沙。它一响，台灯下的晚自习、歪针脚的搭扣、白纹朝上的玻璃珠，全都站在光里，一步没走远。

Years Later, I Still Know Its Sound

Years later, in a drawer of the old house, I heard that sound again: a blunt rasp, needing a pause, a lining-up, before it would catch. No need to look. It was the grey cloth pencil pouch. I stood by the window holding it, like running into an old classmate out of touch for years who still remembers every small thing about you.

Back then I was ashamed of how old it was. In the second half of eighth grade, my deskmate switched to a hard-shell case with a magnetic clasp, snap, clean and quick. My pouch had a dull zipper, its teeth misaligned; every morning before reading class I wrestled with it in the desk cubby, its pull worn round, slipping from my fingers. Once I mentioned it at home: get a new one. My mother turned the pouch over, looked at the worn pull, said nothing, took a snap button from her sewing box, and bent over the small lamp to stitch it on. The stitches were crooked. She pulled it twice to test and handed it back: still good. I took it. The little bit of disdain I felt then could not be said out loud, and later there was never a chance.

Its age had a history. The glass marble with a white thread in the inner pocket

was a five-cent treasure from the school gate in third grade; it rolled in and never came out, like a keeper for an earlier stretch of my life. I long forgot what the triangle-folded note said; I only remember my deskmate making a gesture at me after that math exam. Half an eraser, too short to grip, covered in tiny pencil dents. None of it was worth money, but these things recognized only that pouch. Move them to a new case and they become nothing at all.

The snap my mother sewed stayed with me until the entrance exam ended. That evening, study hall dismissed, I pushed the pouch into my bag, and the zipper rasped shut as usual. The cicadas outside had stopped at some point without my noticing. Thirteen-year-old me thought it was just an ordinary day. Only years later did I learn that ordinary days, once spent, are simply spent, and only the wear keeps the record for us.

I brought the pouch to where I live now and put it on the top shelf of my desk, empty. Now and then I open it and listen to that blunt rasp. When it sounds, the evening study hall under the lamp, the crooked-stitch snap, the marble with its white thread facing up, all stand there in the light, never having gone far.