

那只磨圆的笔袋

开学搬新书，书桌清空到最后一格，我的手碰到一只软塌塌的布口袋。是那只笔袋，藏了两年，灰布面上落了一层细绒。我把它拿到灯下，拉链头的金属片磨得发亮，边缘的棱角早没了，摸上去圆滚滚的，像一枚被河水冲了很久的石子。

拉链还能拉。齿牙钝了，拉起来不再顺滑，要停一停、对一对，才能咬上。我记得它刚来时不是这样。那时拉环一拨，拉链应声而开，声音脆得像新自行车的铃。初一那年我一天要拉开它几十次：早读前掏笔，课间换科目，晚自习拧开台灯。一天几十次，一年两万个日夜，再硬的金属也会磨平脾气。

夹层里掉出几样东西。一张折成三角的纸条，展开来是同桌的字：最后一道数学题选C，别问为什么。纸条边角都软了。还有一颗玻璃珠，透明的，中间一缕白纹，是三年级在校门口五毛钱买的，不知什么时候滚进了笔袋最里面，就一直待着。半块橡皮，短得捏不住，上面有铅笔戳的坑，一个挨一个，像谁无聊时数过的心事。

我妈说过给我换个新的。我捏着那只笔袋，没点头也没摇头。新的笔袋我见过，硬壳，磁吸扣，拉开利索得很。可它不会记得我。这只笔袋的布面被手心的汗浸出一块深色，放得下我从小学到初中所有的慌慌张张。它替我收过传错的纸条、藏过考砸的卷子，拉链坏过一次，我妈用缝纫机给它缝了个搭扣，针脚歪歪扭扭，我至今没舍得拆。

那天我把新文具一样一样装进旧笔袋。钝了的拉链拉了两下才咬上，发出迟钝的一声。我忽然不太着急换新的了。东西陪人久了，磨损不是它的伤，是它把时间一层一层交到了你手上。那颗玻璃珠回到夹层里，白纹朝上，像一小截没化完的雪。

The Pouch Worn Round by Time

Back to school, moving books, the desk emptied down to the last drawer, my hand touched a soft cloth pouch. It was the old pencil pouch, hidden away for two years, a fine layer of dust on its grey cloth. I carried it under the lamp. The metal pull of the zipper had been rubbed bright, its edges long gone round, smooth as a stone tumbled in a river for years.

The zipper still works. The teeth are dull; it no longer slides smoothly. You have to stop, line it up, and then it catches. I remember it was not like this when it first came. Then, one flick of the pull and it opened, the sound crisp as a new bicycle bell. In seventh grade I opened it dozens of times a day: taking out a pen before morning reading, switching subjects at break, turning on the desk lamp at evening study. Dozens of times a day, twenty thousand days a year, and even hard metal loses its temper.

A few things fell out of the inner pocket. A note folded into a triangle, unfolded in my deskmate's handwriting: the last math problem is C, do not ask why.

The corners had gone soft. There was also a glass marble, clear, with a thread of white inside, bought for five cents at the school gate in third grade, which had rolled into the deepest seam of the pouch at some point and stayed there ever since. Half an eraser, too short to grip, covered with pencil dents, one beside another, like worries someone counted out of boredom.

My mother said she would buy me a new one. I held the old pouch and neither nodded nor shook my head. I had seen new pouches, hard shell, magnetic clasp, opening slick and quick. But it would not remember me. The cloth of this one had been darkened by the sweat of my palm; it had held all my flustered years from primary school through junior high. It kept misdelivered notes, hid failed test papers. Its zipper broke once, and my mother sewed a snap button onto it with her machine, the stitches crooked, and I have never had the heart to remove it.

That day I put my new stationery into the old pouch, one by one. The dull zipper took two tries to close, with a blunt sound. I suddenly was not in a hurry for a new one. When a thing has stayed with a person long, its wear is not its wound; it is the time it has handed to you, layer by layer. The glass marble is back in its pocket, white thread facing up, like a small piece of snow that has not finished melting.