

门口那丛小黄花

周敏下班绕到学校门口接儿子，远远看见她儿子蹲在路牙子边上，背对着她，一动不动。她按了两声喇叭，儿子没听见。她走过去，看见他正盯着一丛小黄花，鼻尖离花快贴上去了。

她本想喊他上车，话到嘴边又咽回去了。她看见儿子伸手碰了碰这朵，又碰了碰那朵，嘴里念念有词，像在跟谁商量事情。后来他把三朵花并排放在手心里，歪着头看，看完一朵摇摇头，又看另一朵。周敏站在电动车旁边等，忽然觉得这个下午慢下来了。

儿子终于站起来，手里捏着一朵最高的，茎上还带着两片叶子。他跑过来，把花往书包侧兜里一插，说：妈，快走。周敏问：你蹲那儿干什么？儿子说：保密。风把他的话说得飘起来，周敏没再问。

第二天是周日。周敏在厨房洗碗，儿子一直磨磨蹭蹭在她身边转，一会儿摸摸冰箱，一会儿动动椅子，就是不出声。周敏说：有事就说。儿子说：你先闭上眼睛。周敏笑了，还是闭上了。

她感觉手里被塞进来一个东西，凉凉的，有点毛茸茸。睁眼，是一小束野花，一朵高的黄的，两朵小的白的，用她儿子的橡皮筋捆着，橡皮筋上还系了张纸条。纸条上是儿子那种歪歪扭扭的字：妈妈，这朵是我挑的，最好的一朵。路边有一大丛，我比了好久。

周敏拿着那束花，站在厨房的水声里，笑出了眼泪。她赶紧扭过头去擦，儿子没看见。她想起自己小时候，也这样给外婆摘过花，后来她忙读书、忙上班、忙孩子，再没有谁给她摘过路边的花，她自己也再没想过路边的花。

晚上儿子睡了，周敏把那束花插进罐头瓶，摆在儿子书桌上。儿子第二天醒来看见了，高兴得早饭多吃了一个鸡蛋。

再后来，那束花蔫了，周敏把花瓣收进一个铁盒。儿子长大以后翻到这个铁盒，问这是哪来的。周敏说：你小学二年级的时候，在路边挑了最好的一朵给我。儿子想了半天没想起来，周敏也没提醒他。她记得就行了。

The Little Yellow Flowers by the Gate

After work on Friday, Zhou Min rode her electric scooter to the school gate to pick up her son. From far off she saw him squatting by the curb, back to her, perfectly still. She honked twice. He did not hear. She walked over and found him staring at a patch of little yellow flowers, his nose almost touching them.

She was about to call him to the scooter, then swallowed the words. She watched him touch one flower lightly, then another, muttering to himself as if negotiating with someone. Then he laid three flowers side by side on his palm, tilted his head, shook it at one, and studied the next. Zhou Min waited beside the scooter, and suddenly the whole afternoon seemed to slow down.

At last her son stood up, holding one tall flower, two leaves still on its stem.

He ran over, stuck it into the side pocket of his schoolbag, and said: Mom, let us go. Zhou Min asked what he had been squatting there for. He said: secret. The wind blew his words away, and she did not ask again.

The next day was Sunday. Zhou Min was washing dishes when her son kept drifting around her, touching the refrigerator, moving a chair, making no sound. She said: if you have something to say, say it. He said: close your eyes first. She laughed, but closed them anyway.

She felt something pressed into her hands, cool and slightly fuzzy. She opened her eyes. It was a small bouquet of wildflowers, one tall yellow one and two small white ones, tied with his hair elastic, a note tied to the elastic. The note read, in his crooked handwriting: Mom, this flower is the one I chose, the best one. There was a whole patch by the road. I compared them for a long time.

Zhou Min held the bouquet standing in the sound of the kitchen water, and laughed until tears came. She turned her head quickly to wipe them. Her son did not see. She remembered picking flowers for her own grandmother at that age. After that she had been busy with school, with work, with her child, and no one had ever picked her roadside flowers again, and she had never even thought of them herself.

At night, after her son fell asleep, she stood the bouquet in a jar can and put it on his desk. When he woke up and saw it the next morning, he was so happy he ate one extra egg at breakfast.

Later the flowers wilted, and Zhou Min kept the petals in a tin box. Years afterward, her grown son found the box and asked where they came from. She said: when you were in second grade, you picked the best flower by the road and gave it to me. He thought for a long time and could not remember. She did not remind him. It was enough that she remembered.