散场灯亮起来之前

影院的灯暗下来，银幕上那个修自行车的父亲出场时，我并没在意。他话很少，镜头扫过他的手，指缝里嵌着洗不掉的黑油，虎口上几道裂口，用胶布胡乱缠着。儿子在柜台前拿起他缝了又缝的旧手套，愣在原地。我坐在座位上也愣了，因为我想起我爸的手。

我爸不修自行车，他在小区门口给人换锁、通下水道。每天早晨他骑电动车送我，我坐在后座，手搭在他棉袄后摆上。他的棉袄是旧的，袖口磨得发亮。我在他背后数过他的白发，数到第七根就数不下去了。天冷的时候他把手凑到嘴边哈一口气，搓两下，又拧动把手出发。我从没跟他说过一句跟这双手有关的话。

电影里，儿子终于问出口：爸，你手咋这样。父亲把手往身后藏：不咋，老样子。就这一句，影院里我听见左边有人在吸鼻子，右边的小孩仰头问他爸爸，那个叔叔为什么不说话。

散场时人流往出口挤，我在门边等我爸。他刚从修车摊赶过来，头盔都没摘，递给我一个保温杯：冷不冷。我接过杯子，顺手握住他的手。他的掌心有一层硬茧，冬天裂开的口子刚贴上新的胶布，胶布边角翘起来，他也没顾上按一按。我说：爸，你手咋这样。他愣了一下，把手藏开：不咋，老样子。这句话和电影里一模一样，我差点笑出来，可这次我没把它当玩笑过去。我说：爸，以后周末我去摊上帮你递扳手。他嘴上说去去去，你作业写去，停了两秒又改口：早上冷，你多穿点。

散场的灯光亮起来之前，我的手一直握在他手里。我第一次发现他耳朵红了。我们骑车回家，风很大，路灯一盏一盏往后退，我贴着他的后背，想起电影最后一句：有些话不是没有，是搁得太久，等有人先伸手去拿。

Before the Lights Came On

The lights in the cinema went down, and the father who repaired bicycles appeared on the screen. I did not pay much attention at first. He spoke very little. The camera passed over his hands: black grease worked into the creases of his fingers, several cracks across the web of his thumb, wrapped carelessly with tape. His son picked up an old glove at the counter, patched and re-patched by hand, and stood frozen. Frozen in my seat too, because I thought of the hands of my own father.

My father does not repair bicycles. He changes locks and clears drains near our neighborhood. Every morning he rides his electric scooter to school with me behind him, my hand resting on the hem of his padded coat. The coat is old, shiny at the cuffs. Once, behind his back, I started counting his white hairs and stopped at the seventh. I had never said one word to him about those hands.

In the film, the son finally asks: Dad, why are your hands like this. The father hides them behind him: Nothing, same as always. Only that line, yet I heard someone sniffling on my left, and a child on my right looking up to ask his father why that

uncle would not talk.

When the film ended, the crowd pushed toward the exit, and I waited by the door for my father. He had come straight from his repair stand, helmet still on, and handed me a thermos cup: Are you cold. I took the cup and held his hand. His palm was hard with callus, a fresh winter crack covered with new tape. I said: Dad, why are your hands like this. He froze for a second, then pulled his hand away: Nothing, same as always. The words matched the film exactly, and I almost laughed, but this time I did not let it pass as a joke. I said: Dad, on weekends I will come to the stand and pass you the wrench. He first waved it off, telling me to finish my homework, then two seconds later changed his mind: It is cold in the morning, wear something warm.

Before the house lights came on, my hand stayed inside his. For the first time I noticed the tips of his ears turning red. We rode home through hard wind, street lamps sliding backward one by one, my chest against his back, remembering the last line of the film: some words are not missing, only set down too long ago, waiting for someone to reach for them first.