散场后的路灯一盏盏亮了

电影散场，影厅的灯亮了，我发现我们谁都没动过似的：爸爸把手机扣在腿上，妈妈把最后一粒爆米花送进嘴里。

片子讲的是一只走丢的小鸭子。它想看海，自己上路，走了三天三夜，被雨水冲进沟里，被大狗追上坡，最后到了海边。海就是普通的海，上头漂着几条货船，可小鸭子坐在沙滩上看了好久好久。

走出影院，我先开口：这鸭子真傻，待在原地不动多好，受这份罪。爸爸马上摇头：不傻，它就是想看看海，想看海不算错。妈妈谁也不帮，她把围巾紧了紧说：咱们边走边聊，看能聊到哪儿。卖爆米花的小伙子在门口喊最后一桶半价，我们谁也没回头。

我们边走边聊。我说小鸭子出发前该留个信儿，家里人就不用急。爸爸说他自己小时候也偷偷跑去河里游泳，回来时他爸拎着柳条在村口等他，他吓得哭，比挨那顿抽哭得还凶。妈妈忽然不说话了。路灯啪地亮了一盏，她说：我八岁那年去车站接你姥姥，走丢过两个钟头，谁也没告诉。

我从没听妈妈讲过这个。在我心里，妈妈什么都懂，什么都会，连自行车都会修。我问她：那你当时怕不怕？妈妈说：怕得腿肚子转筋，可看见你姥姥的自行车进来，我没哭，跑过去一把抓住后座。

聊到小区门口，我们才发现多坐了一站地。爸爸笑着说往回走，妈妈说好。我往前跑，又倒着走冲他们挥手。路灯在我们身后一盏一盏亮起来，影子一会儿长一会儿短。

那天夜里我在日记本上写：原来妈妈也当过小孩子，爸爸也当过调皮鬼。电影散场了，可我们的话说了好久好久。下礼拜要是再看一场，我想走更远一点，多说一点。

The Streetlights Came On One by One

The show ended and the lights came on in the hall, and I noticed that we had all sat through it as if frozen: Dad had his phone face down on his knee, and Mom put the last kernel of popcorn into her mouth.

The film was about a little duckling that wandered off. It wanted to see the sea and set out alone, walking three days and three nights. The rain swept it into a ditch, a big dog chased it up a slope, and at last it reached the shore. The sea was just an ordinary sea with a few cargo ships floating on it, yet the duckling sat on the sand and stared at it for a long, long time.

Walking out of the cinema I spoke first: this duckling is stupid, it would have been better to stay put instead of suffering like that. Dad shook his head at once: not stupid, it only wanted to see the sea, and wanting to see the sea is not a mistake. Mom took neither side. She tightened her scarf and said: let us talk as we

walk, and see how far the talk takes us. The young man selling popcorn at the door shouted that the last bucket was half price, and none of us turned around.

We walked and talked. I said the duckling should leave word before setting out, so the family would not worry. Dad said that when he was small he also slipped away to swim in the river, and when he came back his father waited at the village entrance with a willow switch, and he cried from fear harder than he cried from the beating. Mom fell silent for a moment. A streetlight popped on, and she said: the year I was eight, I got lost for two hours on my way to meet your grandma at the station, and I told no one.

I had never heard this from Mom. In my mind Mom knew everything and could do anything, and could even mend a bicycle. I asked her: were you frightened then. Mom said: frightened until my legs turned to water, but when I saw the bicycle of your grandma coming in, I did not cry, I ran over and grabbed the back seat with one hand.

We talked until we reached the gate of our compound, and only then noticed we had ridden one stop too far. Dad laughed and said let us walk back, and Mom said all right. I ran ahead, then walked backwards waving at them. The streetlights came on one by one behind us, and our shadows grew long and short.

That night I wrote in my diary: so Mom was once a little girl too, and Dad was once a naughty boy too. The film was over, but our talk went on for a long, long time. If we see another show next week, I want to walk a little farther and talk a little more.