放映机的心事

我是一台放映机，住在影厅最后的小黑屋。屋子不大，只装得下我一个，和满肚子的心事。我的心事都是一束一束的光，亮亮的，攒着，等灯灭。

灯一灭，我就开口。我把光吐出去，拉得又细又长，跨过一排排脑袋，扑在银幕上。银幕接住我，把我的心事一朵一朵摊开：山，海，会飞的地毯，迷路的小鹿。

故事是我肚子里养大的。它们排着队，一个挨一个，等我把它们放出来。有的故事调皮，一出门就往银幕边上跑；有的故事害羞，躲在银幕角上，要孩子们凑近了看。

我最喜欢的，是放故事放到一半。银幕上小猴子踩进泥坑，噗嗤。我的光抖了一下。我知道，笑声起来了。笑声从膝盖上弹起来，从帽子上弹起来，在前排秃顶叔叔的头顶上转了个圈，又落回我心里。

笑声是有重量的。信不信由你，它有。满厅的笑声压在我的光上，我的光就走得又轻又快。银幕上的小船因此跑得快极了，浪都追不上。

也有我难过的时刻。故事里的人丢了妈妈，影厅静下来，静得能听见我的齿轮，咔，咔。我想替他们说一句，可我是一台放映机，我只能把光放得更亮一点，让雪落得慢一点。

孩子们不知道我在最后面。他们盯着银幕，银幕替我受着所有的眼睛。我不吃醋。银幕是我的朋友，它把故事留住，我把故事送出，笑声归孩子们，我们三个，谁也不亏。

灯亮了，孩子们涌出去，笑声撒了一地，像爆米花渣。我等厅空了，用绒布擦擦镜头，把没放完的故事收回肚子。明天，我还有一场。银幕在等我，笑声也在等我。

嘘，灯又要灭了。我要开口了。你坐好，把眼睛睁大，我的心事，这就一束一束，全倒在你的膝盖上。

What the Projector Keeps to Itself

I am a projector, living in the small dark room at the back of the hall. The room is not big; it holds only me and a belly full of secrets. My secrets are all beams of light, bright and stored up, waiting for the lights to go out.

The moment the lights go out, I open my mouth. I spit out the light, pulling it thin and long, over row after row of heads, onto the screen. The screen catches me and spreads my secrets out flower by flower: mountains, seas, a flying carpet, a lost little deer.

The stories were raised inside my belly. They stand in line, one against the next, waiting for me to let them out. Some stories are mischievous and run to the edge of the screen the moment they are out; some are shy and hide in the corner of the screen, asking the children to come close to look.

What I like best is the middle of a story. On the screen the little monkey steps into a mud pit, splash. My light trembles once. I know the laughter has risen. It bounces up from knees, from hats, circles once over the bald head of the uncle in the front row, and falls back into my heart.

Laughter has weight. Believe it or not, it does. A hall full of laughter presses down on my light, and my light walks lighter and faster. The little boat on the screen therefore runs so fast that even the waves cannot catch it.

There are moments I grieve too. A person in the story loses his mother, and the hall goes quiet, quiet enough to hear my gears, click, click. I want to say a word for him, but I am only a projector. All I can do is make the light a little brighter, and let the snow fall a little slower.

The children do not know I am at the back. They stare at the screen, and the screen takes all their eyes in my place. I am not jealous. The screen is my friend: it keeps the stories, I send the stories out, the laughter belongs to the children. The three of us owe each other nothing.

The lights come on, the children pour out, scattering laughter all over the floor like popcorn crumbs. I wait until the hall is empty, wipe my lens with a soft cloth, and gather the unfinished stories back into my belly. Tomorrow I have another show. The screen is waiting for me, and the laughter is waiting too.

Hush, the lights are going out again. I am about to speak. Sit up straight, open your eyes wide, and my secrets, beam by beam, will pour all onto your knees.