会呼吸的白布

灯灭了，星星出来了，一块白布挂在影厅中央。它不是窗帘，不是手帕，它是一朵等风的云。放映机清了清嗓子，一束光拉得很长很长，白布开始呼吸。

银幕亮了。山在跑，水在跑，小船跑进了大海里。鱼跳起来，尾巴敲了敲银幕，笃，笃，像在敲一扇窗户。我屏住呼吸，怕把鱼吓跑，眼睛都不敢眨一下。

故事从银幕里走出来。它爬上我的座位，坐在我膝盖上，凑在我耳朵边说：看呀看呀，我要去冒险了。我使劲点头，心口像揣了一只小鼓，咚咚，咚咚。

故事遇到了危险。我的手攥紧扶手，脚趾攥紧鞋底。大坏蛋靠近了，近了，更近了。我想喊，声音却躲进了口袋，连一颗小铃铛都没摇响。银幕上的小船翻了个身，又站起来了。我松了一口气，松得像一根泄了气的皮球。

笑声出来了，一个接一个。小猴子一脚踩进泥坑，噗嗤。我的笑声先飞出去，爸爸的笑声跟着飞，妈妈的笑声最后落地，落在我的头顶上。笑声在影厅里弹来弹去，像一颗没人收走的皮球，弹到幕布上，又弹回我心里。

也有安静的时刻。小鹿丢了妈妈，银幕上落雪，一片，一片。影厅里没有人笑，我听见斜后方有个小姐姐吸鼻子。我把围巾往上拉了拉，好像这样就能替小鹿挡一点雪。

灯亮了，银幕闭上眼睛。白布又挂在那里，白白的，静静的，好像什么也没发生。可我知道，山还在它里面跑，小船还在它里面摇，小猴子噗嗤一声的泥坑，还热热地留在它里面。

我走出影厅，太阳很亮。我回头看那扇门，银幕在里面睡觉。我小声说：晚安，银幕，明天，我还来领一个故事，再赔你一路笑声。

The White Cloth That Breathes

The lights go out, the stars come out, and a white cloth hangs in the middle of the hall. It is not a curtain, it is not a handkerchief; it is a piece of cloud waiting for the wind. The projector clears its throat, a beam of light stretches out long, long, and the white cloth begins to breathe.

The screen lights up. Mountains run, waters run, a little boat runs into the sea. A fish leaps up and taps its tail on the screen, knock, knock, as if knocking on a window. I hold my breath, afraid of scaring the fish away, and I do not even dare to blink.

The story walks out of the screen. It climbs onto my seat, sits on my knees, and whispers beside my ear: look, look, I am going on an adventure. I nod hard, and my heart is a little drum inside my chest, boom, boom.

The story meets danger. My hands grip the armrest, my toes grip the soles of my shoes. The big villain comes closer, nearer, nearest. I want to shout, but my voice hides in my pocket and does not ring even a tiny bell. The little boat on the screen rolls over and stands up again. I let out a breath, loose as a ball with the air let out.

The laughter comes out, one after another. The little monkey steps into a mud pit, splash. My laughter flies out first, the laughter of Dad flies after, and the laughter of Mom lands last, on top of my head. The laughter bounces around the hall like a ball nobody puts away; it bounces onto the curtain and bounces back into my heart.

There are quiet moments too. The little deer loses its mother, and snow falls on the screen, flake, flake. Nobody laughs in the hall, and from behind on the diagonal I hear an older girl sniffle. I pull my scarf up a little, as if that could shelter the little deer from some of the snow.

The lights come on, and the screen closes its eyes. The white cloth hangs there again, white and still, as if nothing happened. But I know the mountains are still running inside it, the little boat is still rocking inside it, and the warm mud pit with the splash of the little monkey is still warm inside it.

I walk out of the hall, and the sun is bright. I look back at the door; the screen is asleep inside. I say softly: good night, screen. Tomorrow I will come again to collect a story, and I will pay you back with a road full of laughter.

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.

银幕里的小猴子下工了

我是银幕里的小猴子。灯一灭，我就上班。我从银幕左边跳出来，翻一个跟头，再翻一个，跟头翻到第三排，惊起一片哎呀。哎呀也是我的工资，我收下了。

我的活儿是逗笑。我往泥坑里踩，噗嗤，泥巴溅到耳朵上。我装作没听见，其实我听见了，笑声轰的一下，像有人往我口袋里塞糖，塞得满满。

也有不好干的活儿。演到我想妈妈，我得忍住不笑。前排一个小弟弟冲我喊：别哭呀。我偏要哭，还得哭得轻，让那个吸鼻子的小姐姐觉得，哭没什么丢人。

放映的光穿过我，我浑身发亮，连尾巴尖都是亮的。那一刻我不只是猴子，我是一团会翻跟头的光，落在你们脸上，也落在我自己身上。放映机叔叔把镜头擦得亮亮的，光一稳，我就跳得更高。这份力气，我记在他账上。

灯一亮，我就下工。我拍拍屁股上的泥，朝前排挥手。别走呀，我还没演完呢。可你们穿外套、找水壶，呼啦啦涌出门。我站在银幕上，看你们的后脑勺，一个一个，消失在门口。

下工的时光很安静。银幕上只剩白，白得像冬天。我坐在银幕角上，等下一场。等爆米花味儿飘进来，等灯啪地灭掉，等一个小孩仰着脸说：妈，就是这只猴子！

人少的时候我也演。笑声薄薄的，像口袋底剩的几颗糖。糖少，也是糖。我还是翻跟头，还是踩泥坑。万一只有一个孩子在看呢，那这一个，看的就是我。

告诉你一个秘密。散场以后，我们银幕里的伙伴都出来透气。小船在银幕上轻轻摇，小鹿出来舔雪，我把笑声一颗一颗捡起来，收进口袋。一颗记给第三排的小弟弟，一颗记给吸鼻子的小姐姐。明天晚上，连本带利还给你们。

下一场开演，我要多翻三个跟头。对啦，故事还没有讲完。小猴子还没有找到妈妈，小船还没有绕过那座山。所以我盼着你再来，记得挑第三排的位子，我够得着。灯一灭，我就站在银幕

上等你，举着两只手，冲你挥手。

The Little Monkey on the Screen Clocks Off

I am the little monkey on the screen. When the lamp goes out, I go to work. I jump from the left edge of the screen, turn one somersault, then another, and the somersault lands in the third row, waking up a field of gasps. The gasps are part of my salary, and I take them home. My job is to wake up laughter. I stomp into the mud puddle, splash, and mud flies onto my ears. I pretend not to hear, but I do hear it. The laughter arrives all at once, like someone stuffing candy into my pockets, until they are full. Some parts of the job are hard. When the story reaches the part where I miss my mother, I must hold back a smile. A little boy in the front row shouts at me: do not cry. I choose to cry, but softly, so that the big sister with the sniffles learns that crying is nothing to be ashamed of. The light of the projector passes through me, and my whole body glows, even the tip of my tail. In that moment I am more than a monkey. I am a ball of light that knows how to tumble, falling on your faces and on my own. The uncle who runs the projector polishes the lens until the beam is steady, and then I can jump higher. I keep that favor on his account. When the house lamp comes on, my shift ends. I dust the mud off my bottom and wave to the front rows. Do not go, I have not finished. But you put on coats, find water bottles, and pour out through the door. I stand on the screen and watch the backs of your heads, one by one, vanish at the gate. The hours after work are quiet. The screen holds only white, white like winter. I sit in the corner of the screen and wait for the next show. Wait for the smell of popcorn, wait for the lamp to snap off, wait for a child to lift a face and say: Mom, it is this monkey! On thin days I still perform. When the laughter is as thin as the last candies at the bottom of a pocket, candy or few, it is still candy. I still tumble and still stomp. If only one child is watching, then that one child is watching me. Here is a secret. After the show, my friends on the screen come out for fresh air. The little boat rocks on the screen, the little deer comes out to lick the snow, and I pick up the laughter one by one and store it in my pocket. One for the little boy in the third row, one for the big sister with the sniffles. Tomorrow night I return them with interest. At the next show I will turn three extra somersaults. The story is not finished. The little monkey has not found his mother, and the little boat has not passed the mountain. So I hope you come back, and pick a seat in the third row, where I can reach you. When the lamp goes out, I will be standing on the screen, waiting for you, with both hands raised, waving.