手抖着，也要往前站

星期六下午，爸爸把我带进电影院，银幕上放一部我很陌生的老动画。故事里有个小裁缝，个子还没有缝衣针高多少，听说山那边有两个巨人，就揣着四根针出门了。影厅里前排的小弟弟嚷嚷着要看别的，我攥着扶手，心想，这也太胆大了。

小裁缝一路上并不威风。他听见巨人的脚步声，整片叶子都在抖，他自己也抖，腿抖得像风里的草。可是他没往回走。他把四根针一根一根插进巨人的鞋带里，巨人摔倒了，他站在巨人的鼻尖上，声音还在打颤，却把话说完了一句。我听见自己心里咯噔一下：原来勇敢不是不害怕，是手抖着，还往前站。

我想起我自己。三年级以后，我上课再也没举过手。不是不会，是怕说错，怕全班安静的那几秒。老师的眼光扫过来，我就把头埋进课本，假装那道题我已经在心里答了一百遍。晚上在家，我对着镜子念课文，声音大得很；一到教室里，声音就缩进喉咙里了。

电影放到最黑的一段，两个巨人把小裁缝装进皮袋。影厅里也黑了，只有银幕上一点光。散场的时候，工作人员说放映厅到大街那段通道灯坏了，让我们贴着墙走。那段路又长又暗，爸爸在前面喊我。我站在入口，手心出汗，脑子里全是小裁缝站在巨人鼻尖上的样子。我深吸一口气，贴着墙，一步一步走过去。走到有光的地方，爸爸朝我竖起大拇指，我的手还在抖，可是我在笑。

星期一，语文课。老师问谁来讲讲昨天写的周末事。我的手举起来了，举到一半又想放下，手指头自己攥紧了。我想起那四根针。我站起来，声音有点颤，把通道里的事讲了一遍。讲完，教室里安静了两秒，然后啪啪啪，掌声响起来。那两秒没有我想象的可怕。

后来我把那张电影票根压在文具盒里。每次想缩回去的时候，我就看一眼。它提醒我一件很小的事：害怕是腿上的抖，勇敢是脚往前走。世界上没有不抖的勇敢，只有抖着也往前站的普通人。我现在举手还是会脸红，声音还是会颤，但我已经站到巨人鼻尖上了，哪怕只有一小步。

前几天，班里决定元旦谁来讲故事，我在纸条上写下了自己的名字。写完，手心的汗把纸条洇湿了一小块。我把纸条投进讲台前的盒子，走回座位，窗外的梧桐树正在掉叶子，一片一片，落得很稳。我想，小裁缝走在去巨人家的那条路上，大概也是这样的步子：不快，但是不停。

Even With Shaking Hands, I Stand Forward

On Saturday afternoon, Dad took me into the cinema, and an old cartoon I did not know played on the screen. In the story there was a little tailor, barely taller than a sewing needle, who heard that two giants lived beyond the mountain, so he set out with four needles in his pocket. A little boy in the front row shouted that he wanted another movie, and I gripped the armrest, thinking: how reckless can you get.

The little tailor was not impressive on his way. When he heard the footsteps of the giants, the whole leaf he stood on was shaking, and he himself shook, his legs shaking like grass in the wind. But he did not turn back. He pushed his four needles one by one into the shoelaces of the giants, the giants fell over, and he stood on

the tip of a giant's nose. His voice was still trembling, yet he finished every sentence. Inside my heart something clicked: courage is not being unafraid; it is standing forward even with shaking hands.

I thought of myself. Since Grade Three, I had never raised my hand in class again. Not because I did not know the answers, but because I feared saying them wrong, feared the few seconds when the whole class went silent. When the teacher's eyes swept over, I buried my head in the textbook, pretending I had already answered that question a hundred times in my heart. At night at home, I read the text aloud to the mirror, my voice loud and sure; the moment I was in the classroom, my voice shrank back into my throat.

The darkest part of the movie came, when the two giants put the little tailor into a leather bag. The hall went dark too, with only a point of light on the screen. When it ended, an attendant said the lamps in the passage from the hall to the street were broken, and asked us to walk along the wall. The passage was long and dark, and Dad called me from ahead. I stood at the entrance, my palms sweating, my head full of the little tailor standing on the tip of the giant's nose. I took a deep breath, kept to the wall, and walked step by step. When I reached the light, Dad gave me a thumbs-up. My hands were still shaking, but I was smiling.

On Monday, in Chinese class, the teacher asked who would like to tell about yesterday's weekend story. My hand went up; halfway up I wanted to pull it down, and my fingers clenched by themselves. I thought of the four needles. I stood up, my voice a little unsteady, and told the story of the dark passage. When I finished, the room was quiet for two seconds, and then clap, clap, clap, the applause came. Those two seconds were not as scary as I had imagined.

Later I pressed the ticket stub inside my pencil case. Every time I wanted to shrink back, I took a look at it. It reminds me of one very small thing: fear is the shaking in your legs, courage is your foot moving forward. There is no courage that does not shake, only ordinary people who stand forward while shaking. My face still turns red and my voice still trembles when I raise my hand now, but I have already stood on the tip of the giant's nose, even if only for one small step.

A few days ago, our class decided who would tell stories at the New Year party, and I wrote my own name on a slip of paper. After writing, the sweat in my palm dampened a small corner of it. I dropped the slip into the box in front of the podium and walked back to my seat. Outside the window the plane trees were dropping their leaves, one by one, landing very steadily. I thought the little tailor walking toward the giants' home must have taken steps like these: not fast, but never stopping.