校门口的那个小摊

《草房子》里杜小康这一段，我是一口气读完的。读完我在沙发上坐了很久，我妈喊我三遍吃饭我都没听见。她以为我睡着了，其实我在想杜小康，也在想我家客厅里那台落了灰的钢琴。

杜小康家以前是油麻地最阔的一户，院门漆着一扇红门，门一开，吱呀一声又深又长。他爸把最好的东西都往他手里塞，最好的学校、最好的皮袄，全校的孩子都眼巴巴地看着他。他走路下巴抬得高高的，那是红门少爷的派头。

后来他家的货船翻了，红门里的家底一夜之间空了。他爸带着他去芦苇荡放鸭，去看望那片没有人的地方。风一来，芦苇浪一层压一层，鸭子受惊飞进荡里，他一个人追，脚在泥里裂了口子，夜里睡在芦席搭的窝棚里。书里写他后来回到村里，谁也不认识他了，他站在操场边上，看油麻地的孩子们上学放学。

最让我鼻子发酸的是结尾：杜小康在校门口摆了一个小摊，卖些零碎东西。他失学了，可他还想认字、还想念书。他把货摆得整整齐齐，以前的同学来买东西，他笑着多抓一小把。全校人背地里指点他，他头不低，手不停。

我想起我自己。三年级我吵着要学钢琴，爸妈咬咬牙买了琴。学了半年，曲子一难起来，我每天练琴都哭，后来干脆耍赖不练。爸妈没逼我，琴盖从此没再打开过。现在琴就立在我房间角落，盖子上落了一层灰，像一扇关上的红门。

杜小康是什么都没有了，才去放鸭、去摆摊，一样一样把日子撑起来；我不过是练琴难一点，就半路跑了。他让我明白，坚强不是不疼，是疼着还接着干。我缺的不是天赋，是那股疼着还接着干的劲。

这个学期我把琴盖打开了，每周练一首以前不敢碰的曲子，弹错就重来。弹不下去的时候，我就想芦苇荡里那个追鸭子的杜小康，想校门口那个把货摆得整整齐齐的杜小康。书合上了，可那个小摊好像支到了我的琴盖上，天天提醒我：别跑。

The Little Stall Before the School Gate

I read the chapters about Du Xiaokang in Grass House in one sitting. Afterward I sat on the sofa a long time, and my mother called me to dinner three times without an answer. She thought I had fallen asleep. Actually I was thinking of Du Xiaokang, and also of the dusty piano standing in our living room.

The family of Du Xiaokang used to be the wealthiest in Youma Village, with a red-painted gate in their yard. When the gate opened, its creak was deep and long. His father pushed the best of everything into his hands: the best school, the best fur coat, while the children of the whole school watched with envious eyes. He walked with his chin held high, the bearing of the young master behind the red gate.

Then the cargo boat of his family capsized, and the fortune behind the red gate

emptied overnight. His father took him to the reed marsh to herd ducks, to watch over that place without people. When the wind came, wave after wave of reeds bent down upon each other, the startled ducks flew into the marsh, and he chased them alone, his feet cracked and bleeding in the mud, sleeping at night in a hut of reed mats. The book writes that when he later returned to the village, nobody recognized him, and he stood at the edge of the playground watching the children of Youma Village go to school and home.

What stung my nose most was the ending: Du Xiaokang set up a little stall before the school gate, selling odds and ends. He had lost his schooling, yet he still wanted to know characters, still wanted to study. He arranged his goods in neat rows, and when former classmates came to buy, he smiled and slipped them an extra handful. The whole school whispered about him behind his back; his head did not lower, his hands did not stop.

I thought of myself. In Grade Three I clamored to learn piano, and my parents, tightening their belts, bought one. After half a year, as the pieces grew harder, I cried every day at practice, and finally threw a tantrum and refused. My parents did not force me, and the piano lid never opened again. The instrument still stands in the corner of my room, a layer of dust on the lid, like a red gate closed for good.

Du Xiaokang had lost everything before he herded ducks and kept a stall, propping up his day by day; I only found practice a little hard and ran off halfway. He taught me that strength is not feeling no pain, but going on working through the pain. What I lacked was not talent but that stubborn force that keeps working through pain.

This term I opened the piano lid and practice one piece a week that I used to be afraid of, starting over whenever I slip. When I want to quit, I picture Du Xiaokang chasing ducks in the reed marsh, and Du Xiaokang arranging his goods in neat rows before the school gate. The book is closed, yet that little stall seems set upon my piano lid, reminding me every day: do not run.