草房子在风里立起来的那天

《草房子》里我最忘不掉的一场，是那个暴风雨的晚上。大风把油麻地的草屋顶一片一片卷上天，孩子们追着屋顶跑，杜小康追得最凶。书里写，风过后，孩子们把屋顶重新压好，草房子又立起来了。我第一次读到这里就停住了：原来所谓成长，就是房子被掀掉之后，还有力气把它压回去。

油麻地里最先被掀掉屋顶的是秃鹤。他什么都没有做错，只因为一颗光头，笑声就跟了他六年。他试过反抗，把头发留长又剃光，故意在队列里出丑，换来的只是更多的笑。孤独这个东西，不砸出声，却天天往下压。可是汇操那天，他把自己那颗头跳成了全校最亮的一颗星，压住了所有笑声。他没有战胜谁，他只是没有让那颗头一直低着。

杜小康的屋顶是一夜之间没的。前一天他还是班里唯一穿皮裤的少爷，第二天他家船翻了，债主堵门，他连学都上不起。书里最狠的一笔是：他退学之后没有消失，而是每天蹲在校门口摆小摊，听里面上课。换一个人可能早就躲起来了。他把日子重新压回屋顶的形状，一根冰棍一分钱地攒。

桑桑的屋顶是病。脖子上那肿块一天天大起来，母亲夜里哭，父亲背着他走遍全镇。火针扎下去的那一声，我在书页外都跟着发抖。可他最后自己从床上坐起来了。书里没写他怎么熬的，只写他好了。熬的过程藏在没有写出来的那些夜里。

去年冬天，我爷爷脑溢血住院，家里一下子安静得可怕。爸妈轮流守夜，我负责给奶奶送饭。有一晚我端着粥走过医院走廊，忽然想起蹲在校门口的杜小康。原来大人世界的破产和病人的床，跟书里写的是一回事。我没有哭，把粥热了第三遍端进去。奶奶喝完说，粥好。那一刻我觉得自己也把什么东西压回去了。

合上书我早就明白，油麻地的风不会只刮一次，我生活里的也不会。但草房子立起来的样子我记住了：不是没被掀过，是掀过之后，一根草一根草再压上去。

The Day the Thatched House Stood Up in the Wind

The scene from The Straw House I can never forget is the stormy night. The great wind rolled the thatched roofs of Oil Grain Village up into the sky piece by piece, and the children chased their roofs, with Du Xiaokang running hardest. After the storm, the book says, the children pressed the roofs back down, and the thatched houses stood up again. I stopped reading the first time I reached this line: so this is what growth means — after the roof is torn off, you still have the strength to press it back.

The first roof torn away in the village belonged to Touhe. He had done nothing wrong, yet laughter followed him for six years because of his bald head. He tried fighting back: growing his hair long and shaving it off again, acting out in the ranks on purpose, and earning only more laughter. Loneliness makes no crashing sound,

yet it presses down every day. But on the day of the gymnastics show, he made his own head the brightest star in the whole school and silenced all the laughter. He defeated no one; he simply refused to keep that head lowered.

Du Xiaokang lost his roof overnight. The day before, he was the only young master in class wearing leather trousers; the next day his family boat sank, creditors blocked the door, and he could not even stay in school. The cruelest stroke in the book: after dropping out, he did not vanish. He squatted at the school gate every day keeping a small stall, listening to the lessons from inside. Another boy might have hidden long ago. He pressed his days back into the shape of a roof, saving coins one popsicle at a time.

Sangsang's roof was illness. The lump on his neck grew larger day by day; his mother cried at night, his father carried him on his back across the whole town. The sound of the burning needle going in made me tremble outside the pages. Yet in the end he sat up from his bed by himself. The book never writes how he endured it; it only writes that he recovered. The endurance hides in the nights the book did not write.

Last winter, my grandfather was hospitalized with a brain hemorrhage, and our house fell terrifyingly quiet. My parents took turns keeping night vigil at the hospital while I delivered meals to my grandmother. One evening, carrying a bowl of porridge down the hospital corridor, I suddenly thought of Du Xiaokang squatting at the school gate. It turned out that bankruptcy in the adult world and a sickbed are the same thing as what the book describes. I did not cry. I reheated the porridge a third time and carried it in. When my grandmother finished it, she said: the porridge is good. In that moment I felt I had pressed something back into place too.

Long before closing the book I understood that the wind over Oil Grain Village will not blow only once, and neither will the wind in my own life. But I have memorized the way the thatched house stands up: not never having been torn open, but pressing grass back onto grass after it was torn.

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