纸月走过的那条上学路

合上《草房子》，我脑子里反反复复只有一条路：纸月上学走的那条路。

那条路在书里出现过很多次。纸月住在河那边的外婆家，每天清早出发，先走过一座窄窄的石桥，再穿过一片比人还高的芦苇荡。风一吹，芦苇沙沙地响，她的影子在雾里一闪一闪。鞋尖被露水打湿了，她不停脚；书包带子在肩上磨来磨去，她也不吭声。她就这样走了一个又一个学期，从来没有因为路远迟到过一次。

我读这段的时候，正把脚搁在椅子上跟妈妈耍赖。我家到学校只隔一条马路，绿灯亮起来走三分钟就到。可我每天早上都要妈妈催三遍，第一遍装睡，第二遍磨蹭，第三遍才拎着书包出门，嘴里还抱怨冬天太冷。纸月走的那条路，是我家的四十倍远，她却没有一句怨言。我第一次觉得，我抱怨的不是路，是我自己。

纸月的路不只是上学的路。庙会那天，她也走在去卖鸡蛋的路上：筐压在外婆的扁担上，鸡蛋一个挨一个，纸月走在旁边，两只手拢在袖子里。她的手指冻得通红，却还是凑近过路人，小声问要不要买鸡蛋。外婆的手粗糙，纸月的手红肿，那几筐鸡蛋是她们祖孙俩一整冬的指望。我忽然想起自己攒零花钱的样子：买一支新笔都要心疼半天，可我什么时候替家里守过一个这样的早晨？

就是这样一个走路不吭声、卖鸡蛋不吭声的女孩，借橡皮也不吭声。同桌的橡皮滚到桌下，她弯腰捡起，吹干净，放回桌角，整个过程没有一句话。她帮人从来不等一句谢谢，就像她走路从来不等谁夸她勤快。

第二天早上，妈妈只催了一遍，我就起来了。出门的时候天还黑着，路灯把我的影子拉得很长。我忽然想到纸月：她走那条远路的时候，心里一定是安安静静的。我走的这条短路，要是也能走得安安静静的，不抱怨、不磨蹭，那也算走在了她的路上吧。

The Road Zhiyue Walks to School

After I closed The Straw House, only one road kept running through my mind: the road Zhiyue walks to school.

That road appears again and again in the book. Zhiyue lives at her grandmother's house across the river. Every early morning she sets out, crosses a narrow stone bridge, and passes through a reed marsh taller than a person. When the wind blows, the reeds whisper, and her figure flickers in the mist. The dew wets the tips of her shoes, yet she never stops; the strap of her schoolbag rubs against her shoulder, yet she never complains. She walked that way term after term and was never once late because of the distance.

While I read this, I was lounging with my feet on a chair, throwing a tantrum at my mother. My home is one street from the school; when the green light turns on, it takes three minutes to arrive. Yet my mother has to hurry me three times every

morning: the first time I pretend to sleep, the second time I dawdle, and only at the third call do I grab my bag and leave, grumbling that winter is too cold. The road Zhiyue walks is forty times as long as mine, and she never utters a word of complaint. For the first time I felt that what I complain about is not the road, but myself.

Zhiyue's road is not only the road to school. On the day of the temple fair, she is also walking on the road to sell eggs: the baskets hang on her grandmother's carrying pole, the eggs packed side by side, and Zhiyue walks alongside with both hands tucked into her sleeves. Her fingers are red from the cold, yet she still leans close to passers-by and asks in a small voice whether they want eggs. Her grandmother's hands are rough, Zhiyue's hands are red and swollen, and those baskets of eggs are the whole winter's hope for the two of them. I suddenly thought of how I hoard my pocket money: I agonize for half a day over buying a new pen. When have I ever kept watch over a morning like that for my family?

It is this same girl who walks without a sound, sells eggs without a sound, and lends an eraser without a sound. When her deskmate's eraser rolls under the desk, she bends down, picks it up, blows it clean, and puts it back on the corner of the desk, the whole process wordless. She never helps someone while waiting for a thank you, just as she never walks while waiting for anyone to praise her diligence.

The next morning, my mother hurried me only once before I got up. When I stepped outside the sky was still dark, and the street lamp stretched my shadow long. I suddenly thought of Zhiyue: when she walked that long road, her heart must have been perfectly quiet. If I can walk my short road just as quietly, without complaining and without dawdling, then I too am walking on her road, aren't I?