

昨晚我和妈妈聊到很晚

10月22日 星期四 多云

昨晚，我和妈妈聊到很晚。聊的是《草房子》里的杜小康。

那天晚上我读到杜小康家破产：杂货铺抵了债，两扇红漆门板也让人卸走了，杜小康半夜站在空荡荡的铺子前，一句话不说。第二天他还背着书包去了学校，走到校门口才想起来，自己已经不是学生了。读到这里我胸口像堵了块棉花，书都拿不稳。我拿着书走到厨房，从背后递给正在洗碗的妈妈：妈，你等我一下，我有话跟你说。

我坐在厨房的小凳上，把杜小康的事讲给妈妈听，讲着讲着声音低了下去。妈妈关掉水龙头，在围裙上擦干了手，坐到我对面。她没有先安慰我，倒是讲起她自己的事：她上初中那年，家里也穷过一学期，书包是姥姥用旧化肥袋缝的，白花花的印子遮不掉，她每天把袋口翻进去折好，生怕别人看见。她说：那学期她走得最早、回得最晚，因为家里远，也因为不想让人注意她的书包。我听得愣住：原来妈妈小时候也当过一回杜小康。

妈妈问我：书里的事远，咱们家的事近，你想到什么了？我想了半天，小声说：想到我昨天把半盒牛奶倒掉，就因为有点凉。妈妈没批评我，只说：倒掉的不是牛奶，是你不知道它从哪儿来。那天晚上我们聊了很久，从杜小康聊到姥姥的化肥袋书包，又聊到我家阳台上那盆没人管的绿萝——它其实是我去年说要天天浇水的。

今天早上，我盯着饭盒里剩下的几口米饭，眼前晃过的却是芦苇荡里那个晒得黢黑的背影。我把饭吃得干干净净，连米粒都没剩。饭盒盖上那一刻，我心里特别踏实。

我在日记里写：有些道理，听一百遍是耳朵里的，聊一遍就进心里了。杜小康没跟我说过一句话，可他教会我的东西，比谁教的都多。

Last Night Mother and I Talked Very Late

October 22, Thursday, Cloudy

Last night Mother and I talked very late. We talked about Du Xiaokang from The Straw House.

That evening I read the part where Du Xiaokang's family goes bankrupt: the grocery shop went to pay the debt, the two red-lacquered door panels were carried off by the creditor, and Du Xiaokang stood at midnight in the empty shop, saying nothing. The next day he still walked to school with his schoolbag, only remembering at the school gate that he was no longer a student. Reading this, my chest felt stuffed with cotton, and the book trembled in my hands. I took the book into the kitchen and held it out behind my mother as she washed dishes: Mom, wait a moment, I have something to tell you.

I sat on the little kitchen stool and told her Du Xiaokang's story, my voice

dropping lower as I went. Mother turned off the tap, dried her hands on the apron, and sat down across from me. She did not comfort me first; instead she told me about herself. The year she was in middle school, her family too was poor for one term. Her schoolbag was sewn by her own mother from an old fertilizer sack, its white printed marks impossible to hide, and every morning she folded the mouth of the sack inward so no one would see. She said she left home earliest and came back latest that term, partly because the walk was long, and partly because she did not want anyone to notice her bag. I froze: so my mother, too, had once been a Du Xiaokang.

Mother asked me: the book is far away, our family is near—what did you think of? I thought a long while and said quietly: I thought of how I poured away half a carton of milk yesterday just because it was a little cold. Mother did not scold me. She only said: what you poured away was not milk; it was your not knowing where it comes from. That night we talked for a long time—from Du Xiaokang to grandma's fertilizer-sack schoolbag, and then to the pot of pothos on our balcony that nobody waters: I was the one who promised last year to water it every day.

This morning, staring at the last few bites of rice in my lunch box, what floated before my eyes was that sun-darkened figure in the reed marsh. I ate everything clean, not a grain left. The moment I snapped the lid shut, my heart felt very steady.

I wrote in my diary: some truths pass through the ears however many times you hear them, but once you truly talk them through, they enter the heart. Du Xiaokang never said a word to me, yet what he taught me is more than anyone taught me.