

菜市场里我看见了一群鸭子

10月26日 星期六 阴

今天跟妈妈去菜市场，我在一个卖鸭子的摊前站住了，挪不动脚。摊子上七八只鸭子，脖子一伸一伸，叫得吵吵的。我盯着它们看，心里想的却是芦苇荡，是杜小康。

前几天读《草房子》，杜小康破产失学，跟着父亲去芦苇荡放鸭。书里写芦苇荡大得吓人，风一吹，芦花像雪一样翻，鸭子是杜小康唯一的同伴。暴风雨夜里鸭子跑散了，他一个人在芦荡里追，边追边喊，嗓子都喊劈了。读那一章的时候我就难受，可难受像隔着一层玻璃。今天在菜市场，玻璃忽然碎了：鸭子就是这样的鸭子，会叫，会躲，会趁人不注意钻出篱笆。芦苇荡里那个追着它们跑的孩子，一下子变得特别真。

回家的路上我闷闷的。妈妈问我怎么了，我说：我在想，杜小康那么喜欢上学，他在校门口站过吧？他看见别人背书包，心里得多疼。我又想起我的文具：抽屉里躺着五六个只用了几页的本子，笔袋里半盒笔没水了我也懒得换芯，昨天还嫌校服丑，把外套扔在沙发上踩了一脚。杜小康想上学上不了，我穿着校服还糟蹋它。想到这儿，菜市场那股吵声好像都安静了，就剩我心里咯噔咯噔的。

到家我做了几件事。我把抽屉里那几个旧本子全摆上书桌，在第一个本子扉页写上：从这一页起，用完为止。我把没水的笔灌了温水泡着，据说这样还能出水。我把校服外套抖干净挂好，第二天穿着它上学，看着其实挺周正。

晚上我躺在被窝里，又想起杜小康。书里他后来回到学校门口，站了很久很久，谁也没赶他。我在日记里写：下次在校门口遇见他，我要装作刚好路过，跟他并肩走进去，什么也不问。我知道他进不了我们的教室，可这句话我在心里说了好多遍，说着说着，眼睛就湿了。

今天这个星期六，我在鸭叫声里上了一课。

At the Market I Saw a Flock of Ducks

October 26, Saturday, Overcast

Today I went to the market with my mother, and I stopped in front of a duck stall, unable to move. The stall had seven or eight ducks, stretching their necks, quacking noisily. I stared at them, but what filled my mind was the reed marsh, and Du Xiaokang.

A few days ago, reading *The Straw House*, I reached the part where Du Xiaokang, bankrupt, drops out of school and follows his father to the reed marsh to herd ducks. The book describes the marsh as frighteningly vast: when the wind blows, the reed blossoms roll like snow, and the ducks are Du Xiaokang's only companions. On a stormy night the ducks scattered, and he alone chased them through the reeds, shouting as he ran until his voice cracked. I felt bad reading that chapter, but the pain felt

separated from me by a pane of glass. Today at the market, the glass suddenly shattered: ducks are exactly these ducks—they quack, they hide, they slip through the fence when nobody looks. The boy chasing them through the reed marsh suddenly became terribly real.

I was silent on the way home. Mother asked what was wrong. I said: I was thinking—Du Xiaokang loves school so much; he must have stood at our school gate. How much must it hurt him to watch other children carry schoolbags. Then I thought of my own stationery: five or six notebooks in my drawer with only a few pages used, a half-box of dried-out pens in my pencil case I am too lazy to refill, and yesterday I called my school uniform ugly, threw the jacket on the sofa and stepped on it. Du Xiaokang cannot go to school though he longs to; I wear a uniform and mistreat it. At this thought, the noise of the market seemed to fall silent, leaving only the thumping in my chest.

When we got home I did several things. I placed all the old notebooks from the drawer on my desk, and on the first page of the first one I wrote: from this page on, use me up. I soaked the dried-out pens in warm water—people say they can still write afterward. I shook my uniform jacket clean and hung it up, and wore it to school the next day; honestly, it looks quite smart.

At night, under the quilt, I thought of Du Xiaokang again. In the book he later returns to the school gate and stands there a long, long time, and nobody drives him away. I wrote in my diary: next time I meet him at the school gate, I will pretend to be just passing by, walk in side by side with him, and ask nothing. I know he cannot enter our classroom, but I have said this sentence to myself so many times that my eyes grew wet.

This Saturday, I learned a lesson amid the quacking of ducks.