今晚，我想转学去油麻地

11月14日 星期六 晴。今晚我把《草房子》读完了。躺在床上一时睡不着，我做了个没出息的梦：我想转学去油麻地小学。

我想象自己插班进桑桑的班。第一节课间，桑桑就凑过来看我的文具盒，看完倒背着手走了，没两天他准会想出个新花样来——比如把碗柜改成鸽子笼那种事。可纸月被高年级欺负那天，冲上去挨打的也是他。我想象自己跟在他后头喊：桑桑，你头上流血了。他抹一把，说没事，疼是过会儿的事，先打完再说。

我想象坐秃鹤后排。夏天他的棉帽换成了草帽，后脑勺在太阳底下白得晃眼。前排的人回头学他，我想象自己把书往桌上一放，说：看什么看，他有名字，叫陆鹤。说完教室里安静下来，他从帽子底下抬起眼睛看我一眼，什么也没说。就这一眼，我觉得够本了，这个朋友我交定了。

我想象放学顺路去帮细马赶羊。他不怎么说话，羊钻了庄稼地，他就把羊抱出来，拍拍土，给被踩倒的苗重新扶直。我想象我跟他坐在河边，一人一根草棍，半天说不出一句话，谁也不觉得尴尬。他养父的坟在屋后坡上，我想象我陪他去，把供果摆好，他看我一眼，还是不怎么说话，但递给我半块饼。

梦做到这儿，我睁了眼，天花板是白的，台灯是暖的，窗外有汽车声。油麻地没有汽车，没有台灯，一场洪水就能把学校搬走。我的童年有空调、有课外班、有扔了不心疼的文具，可我摔了跤会先看看有没有人，他们摔了跤直接爬起来。这就是我和他们的分别。

我在日记本上写：其实用不着转学。桑桑的胆气、陆鹤的挺直腰、细马的闷头扛，书读完了，它们就搬进我心里住了。油麻地不在远方，往后我遇到难处，就是回油麻地。

Tonight I Want to Transfer to Youmadi

November 14, Saturday, clear. Tonight I finished reading Grass House. Lying in bed unable to sleep, I had a foolish little dream: I wanted to transfer into Youmadi Primary School.

I imagined enrolling in Sangsang's class. At the first break he would come over to inspect my pencil case, then walk off with his hands clasped behind his back, and within two days he would surely think up some new stunt—the kind of thing like turning a cupboard into a dove cage. But on the day older boys bullied Paper Moon, the one who charged in and got beaten was him too. I imagined running after him shouting: Sangsang, your head is bleeding. He would wipe it with his hand and say it is nothing—pain is something for later; finish the fight first.

I imagined sitting behind Bald Crane. In summer his cotton cap would give way to a straw hat, the back of his head white and dazzling under the sun. When the boy in front turned around to mimic him, I imagined putting my book down on the desk and saying: what are you looking at, he has a name, it is Lu He. The classroom would go

quiet, and he would lift his eyes from under the hat to look at me once, saying nothing. That one look would be enough—I would have made a friend for life.

I imagined stopping to help Xima drive his sheep home after school. He hardly spoke. When the sheep got into the crops, he carried them out, patted off the dirt, and straightened the trampled seedlings. I imagined sitting with him by the river, each of us with a stalk of grass, saying nothing for half an hour, neither of us feeling awkward. His adoptive father's grave was on the slope behind the house; I imagined going there with him, setting out the offering fruit, and him glancing at me, still saying little, but handing me half a flatbread.

The dream ended there, and I opened my eyes. The ceiling was white, the lamp was warm, cars passed outside the window. Youmadi has no cars and no lamps; one flood could carry the school away. My childhood has air conditioning, after-school classes, stationery I throw away without a pang, yet when I fall I first check whether anyone is watching, and they fall and simply get up. That is the difference between us.

I wrote in my diary: actually, there is no need to transfer. Sangsang's courage, Lu He's straight back, Xima's silent endurance—now that the book is finished, they have moved into my heart and taken up residence. Youmadi is not far away. Whenever I meet hardship from now on, I am going back to Youmadi.

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