合上书的那晚，黑暗里浮起三张脸

星期六，阴。今晚，我把《草房子》读完了最后一页。

合上书，我没有马上开台灯。黑暗里浮起三张脸。第一张是桑桑。他骑着父亲的自行车穿过油麻地的街道，把鸽子卖掉换零钱，生病时忍着火针扎进皮肉的疼，一声没哭，还反过来安慰父亲。读到他的头发因为药一撮一撮往下掉，我用手捂住那一页，不忍看，可也没有把书合上。我想知道他后来怎么样了。他好了。他又坐到了学校台阶上，人瘦了一圈，眼睛还是那么亮。

第二张脸是陆鹤，大家都叫他秃鹤。整整一个冬天他都戴着那顶棉帽，春天文艺汇演的日子，他亲手把自己的头剃得精光，演那个光头士兵，演到台下全站起来鼓掌。可在那之前，孩子们学他的光头，追着他一直撵到河堤上。我想起我们班有个同学，因为眉毛浓总被人起外号，座位换了三回。我没笑过他，可也从没替他说过一句话。我欠他一句对不起，就像油麻地的孩子们欠秃鹤一句。

第三张是细马。他听不懂本地的话，留在异乡照顾养父母，撑船去学校搬砖，话不多，做每一件事都扎扎实实。洪水冲垮了房子，他出门卖羊，回来又把新屋的屋脊垒得比原来还高。他把养父埋在了屋后的坡上，从那天起，这个家就他一个人撑着。我上初二，还在拿妈妈的钱买零食，还嫌学校食堂的饭难吃，摔一跤先看看有没有人看见，才决定哭不哭。

油麻地的孩子们都早熟。苦日子推着他们往前走，他们没时间磨蹭。我的童年是平的，没有洪水，没有大病，可我也没有他们那种把腰一挺、把事扛起来的姿势。我把这些写进日记。合上书以后我明白了一件事：长大不是等天晴，是学会自己在雨里走。

Three Faces in the Dark After I Closed the Book

Saturday, cloudy. Tonight I read the last page of the novel Grass House.

After closing the book, I did not turn on the desk lamp. Three faces rose in the dark. The first was Sangsang. He rode his father's bicycle through the streets of Youmadi, sold his doves for pocket money, and when illness came he bore the fire needle pressed into his skin without a cry, then comforted his father instead. When I read the part where his hair fell out in clumps because of the medicine, I covered the page with my hand, too pained to look, yet I did not close the book. I wanted to know how he turned out. He got well. He sat on the school steps again, a ring thinner, his eyes as bright as ever.

The second face was Lu He, the boy everyone called Bald Crane. He wore a cotton cap through the whole winter, and on the day of the school play he shaved his own head bright and played the bald soldier, so that the whole audience stood and applauded. Before that, the children had copied his bald head and chased him all the way to the river bank. I thought of a classmate of mine, teased for his thick eyebrows, who changed seats three times. I never laughed at him, but I never stood up

for him either. I owe him an apology, just like the children of Youmadi owe Bald Crane one.

The third was Xima. He could not understand the local words, stayed behind in a strange place to care for his adoptive parents, and ferried bricks on a boat for the new school. He spoke little, and everything he did was solid. When the flood took the house down, he went away to sell the sheep, then came back and raised the ridge of the new house higher than before. He buried his adoptive father on the slope behind the house, and from that day on he was the only one holding the family up. I am in my second year of middle school, and I still spend my mother's money on snacks and complain that the canteen food tastes bad; when I fall, I first check whether anyone is watching before deciding whether to cry.

The children of Youmadi all grew up too early. Hard days pushed them forward, and they had no time to dawdle. My childhood is flat, with no flood and no great illness, yet I never learned their way of straightening my back and shouldering things. I wrote these lines in my diary. After closing the book I understood one thing. Growing up is not waiting for the weather to clear; it is learning to walk in the rain yourself.