卷边的那一页

我是一本《草房子》，蓝封面，原来硬硬的，角是尖的。九月四号，一个耳朵红红的男孩把我从书包里掏出来，放在讲台上。他摸了一下我的封面，像跟谁说再见。我当时还不知道，那是他最后一次把我抱得那么紧。

从那天起我开始旅行。我的路很短，从第二排到第五排，再从第五排回到讲台边，第二天再出发。我每天早上闻见不同的橡皮味，晚上在不同的书包里过夜。有个女孩把我塞进塑料袋防雨，塑料袋里有橘子皮的味道，那个味道我记了很久。有个男孩抱我的时候手心全是汗，我的封面就是从那几天开始起毛的。

我变旧的过程，我自己是不知道的。先是有人用指甲掐着我的书脊往后掰，我的背松了。然后右下角被谁的拇指蹭了一个月，翘起来了，压不平。书页的边是一点一点卷的，每卷一处，都是有人用拇指按过那里、按了很多遍。后来有个管理员每天清点我，她翻我翻得轻，我猜她喜欢我。

有人嫌我旧。一个男孩把我举起来，说我旧成这样还传。坐他前面的女孩回了他一句，说我的旧是每天被人读出来的。我在半空中听见这句话。如果书会心跳，我那天心跳得很大声。

我最宝贝的是卷边最厉害的那一页。那是杜小康说我不回家的那一页，有个男孩在那页折了个角，后来角被抚平了，纸还是留了一道白印。他还在页边空白处用铅笔写了一行小字，写得很轻，橡皮都擦不掉。我替他保管着那行字。

学期末，他们把我放在图书角最好的位置，给我包了牛皮纸新衣。我的旧衣底下，每一道折痕里都住着一个夜晚：一个哭过的女孩，一个讲台上磕巴的男孩，一个不敢看人的闹腾鬼。我是一本旧书。旧，是我身上最亮的地方。

The Page with the Curled Corner

I am a copy of The Straw House, blue cover, once stiff, with sharp corners. On September 4th, a boy with red ears took me out of his backpack and set me on the podium. He touched my cover once, like saying goodbye to someone. I did not know then that it was the last time he would hold me that tightly.

From that day I began to travel. My road is short: from the second row to the fifth row, then back to the edge of the podium, and out again the next morning. Every morning I smell a different eraser; every night I sleep in a different backpack. One girl sealed me in a plastic bag against the rain, and the bag smelled of tangerine peel, a scent I remembered for a long time. One boy held me with sweaty palms, and my cover began to fuzz those very days.

I did not notice my own aging. First someone hooked a fingernail under my spine and bent me backward, and my back loosened. Then some thumb rubbed my bottom right corner for a month until it curled and could not be flattened. My page edges curled

little by little, and every curl marks a spot someone pressed with a thumb, again and again. Later a keeper counted me every day. She turned my pages gently. I think she likes me.

Some mind that I am old. A boy held me up and said I was this worn and still being passed around. The girl in front of him shot back that my wear comes from being read every single day. I heard that sentence in midair. If books had heartbeats, mine was very loud that day.

My most treasured part is the page with the worst curl. It is the page where Du Xiaokang says he is not going home. A boy folded a corner there; the fold was later smoothed out, but the paper kept a white crease. He also wrote a small line in pencil in the margin, written so lightly that even an eraser cannot remove it. I am keeping that line for him.

At the end of the term they placed me in the best spot of the reading corner and dressed me in a new coat of kraft paper. Under the new coat, every crease of mine houses an evening: a girl who cried, a boy who stumbled at the podium, a rascal who could not look anyone in the eye. I am an old book. Being old is the brightest thing about me.