油麻地的孩子

你问油麻地有多大。油麻地不大。一条河，一排草房子，一片艾地，就够了。你问油麻地的孩子什么样。我给你请三个出来，一个一个站好。

第一个，叫桑桑。他头顶的白鸽，扑棱棱飞上天。他拆了家里的蚊帐，织成一张渔网，捞起满网的银光。他把碗里的油渍舔得发亮，他骑着父亲的大自行车，铃铛响过整条河。他生病的时候，疼得弯成一只小虾，可他抬起头，还是笑。桑桑是油麻地的火苗，烧起来，噼啪响。

第二个，叫秃鹤。他的脑袋，没有头发，有光。别人笑，他把头埋进衣领。后来他把头抬起来，抬得高高的，一步一步，走成游行队伍里最亮的那一颗。他喊出的口令，比谁的都响。秃鹤是油麻地的月亮，白天躲着，夜里自己发亮。

第三个，叫纸月。她的书包背得直直的，她的字写得轻轻的。她上学要走很远的路，走过芦苇，走过桥，走过想欺负她的目光。她不吵，不闹，她把委屈叠起来，叠成纸船，放进水里。纸月是油麻地的风，你看不见她，她一过，芦苇全弯腰。

火苗，月亮，风。他们住在草房子里，屋顶铺着金黄的茅草，风一吹，草就唱歌。他们也会哭，也会疼，也会被笑话，也会在夜里想家。可第二天太阳一出来，他们又站在河边，影子排成一排。

你问他们后来去哪了。桑桑长大了，带着疼过的身体去看世界。秃鹤长大了，他的名字陆鹤，被人记住了。纸月长大了，她的纸船不知道漂到了哪个港口。他们走出油麻地，油麻地装进他们心里。

你问油麻地还在不在。在。它在一本书里，书页翻一下，草房子就亮一次。它也在你心里，你读一遍，孩子们就长大一遍。来，跟我念：油麻地，一条河，一排草房子。桑桑，秃鹤，纸月。火苗，月亮，风。

The Children of Youmadi

You ask how big Youmadi is. Youmadi is not big. One river, one row of straw houses, one field of mugwort, and that is enough. You ask what the children of Youmadi are like. Let me invite three of them out, standing one by one.

The first is called Sangsang. The white doves on his head flutter up into the sky. He took apart the family mosquito net and wove it into a fishing net, scooping up a netful of silver light. He licked the grease from his bowl till it shone. He rode his father's big bicycle, the bell ringing along the whole river. When he fell ill, pain bent him into a little shrimp, yet he still lifted his head, still smiling. Sangsang is the flame of Youmadi. When it catches, it crackles.

The second is called Bald Crane. His head has no hair. It has light. When people

laughed, he buried his head in his collar. Later he raised it, high, step by step, walking as the brightest head in the parade line. The commands he shouted rang louder than anyone's. Bald Crane is the moon of Youmadi. He hides by day and shines by himself at night.

The third is called Paper Moon. Her schoolbag hangs straight on her back. Her handwriting falls light on the page. She walks far to school, past the reeds, past the bridge, past the eyes that wanted to bully her. She does not quarrel, does not cry out. She folds her grievances into paper boats and sets them on the water. Paper Moon is the wind of Youmadi. You cannot see her, but when she passes, every reed bows.

Flame, moon, wind. They live in the straw houses with golden thatch, and when the wind blows, the grass sings. They cry too, hurt too, get teased too, and lie awake missing home too. But when the sun rises the next day, they stand by the river again, their shadows in a row.

You ask where they went afterward. Sangsang grew up and carried his aching body to see the world. Bald Crane grew up, and his real name, Lu He, was remembered. Paper Moon grew up, and her paper boats drifted to some harbor no one knows. They walked out of Youmadi, and Youmadi went inside them.

You ask whether Youmadi still exists. It does. It lives in a book: turn a page, and the straw houses light up once. It lives in your heart too: read it once, and the children grow up once. Come, say it with me: Youmadi, one river, a row of straw houses. Sangsang, Bald Crane, Paper Moon. Flame, moon, wind.

我的三个朋友住在书里

别人问我，你的朋友是谁。我说，三个。他们不住在隔壁楼，不住在同一个小区。他们住在《草房子》里，住在第一百四页、第二百页、第三百页。我一说他们的名字，他们就从书里探出头来。

桑桑是我的胆量。他敢把蚊帐拆了打鱼，我敢把手举起来。他敢骑大自行车冲下坡，我敢走进那间新教室。他疼的时候不喊疼，我摔破膝盖的时候，先看看四周，再站起来。他是火苗，我冷的时候，就翻开那一页，烤一烤手。

秃鹤是我的脊梁。有一回，我的门牙被同学数了又数，我回家，把脸埋进枕头。夜里我翻开书，秃鹤正把头抬得高高的，走过整条街。他替我走了一遍我没敢走的路。第二天我进教室，把下巴抬起来，抬得跟他一样高。数我的人愣住了。他是月亮，我黑的时候，他就自己亮起来。

纸月是我的安静。我吵过架，摔过门，把委屈喊得整栋楼都听见。纸月不。纸月把委屈叠成

纸船，一只一只放进河里。我学着她的样子，把生气写在纸上，叠成小船，摆在窗台。风一吹，船头全朝着外面。气就消了。她是风，我乱的时候，她一过，我心里的芦苇就顺了。

火苗，月亮，风。别人有三个住在一条街的朋友，我有三个住在书里的朋友。他们不会转学，不会搬家，不会长大以后不理我。我走到哪，书带到哪，他们就在那儿等我，一页一页，站得整整齐齐。

你要不要也认识他们。认识他们很容易。去书架，抽出一本蓝封面的书，翻开。第一条河，一排草房子，一片艾地。桑桑先跑出来，白鸽扑棱棱。秃鹤慢慢走出来，头顶发光。纸月最后出来，轻轻地，怕踩疼了芦苇。

我的三个朋友，住在书里。你的三个朋友，也住在那儿。我们都在油麻地的河边，碰面。

My Three Friends Live Inside a Book

People ask me who my friends are. I say, three. They do not live in the next building or in the same neighborhood. They live inside The Straw House, on page 140, page 200, page 300. The moment I say their names, they poke their heads out of the book.

Sangsang is my courage. He dared to take apart the mosquito net to catch fish, so I dare to raise my hand. He dared to ride the big bicycle down the hill, so I dare to walk into that new classroom. When he hurt, he did not cry out. When I scrape my knee, I look around first, then stand up. He is a flame. When I am cold, I open to his page and warm my hands.

Bald Crane is my backbone. Once, a classmate counted my big front teeth again and again. I went home and buried my face in the pillow. At night I opened the book, and Bald Crane was walking down the whole street with his head held high. He walked, for me, the road I did not dare to walk. The next day I entered the classroom with my chin lifted, as high as his. The kids who counted froze. He is the moon. When it is dark in me, he shines by himself.

Paper Moon is my quiet. I have quarreled, slammed doors, shouted my grievances loud enough for the whole building to hear. Paper Moon does not. She folds grievances into paper boats, one by one, onto the river. I learned from her: I write my anger on paper, fold it into little boats, and line them on the windowsill. When the wind blows, every bow points outward. The anger melts away. She is the wind. When I am in a mess, she passes, and the reeds inside me lie down smooth.

Flame, moon, wind. Others have three friends living on one street. I have three friends living in a book. They will not transfer schools, will not move away, will not grow up and ignore me. Wherever I go, the book goes, and they wait for me there,

standing page by page, in perfect order.

Do you want to meet them too? It is easy. Go to the shelf, pull out a book with a blue cover, and open it. First a river, a row of straw houses, a field of mugwort. Sangsang runs out first, doves fluttering. Bald Crane walks out slowly, his head shining. Paper Moon comes last, softly, afraid of hurting the reeds' feet.

My three friends live inside a book. Your three friends live there too. We all meet by the river of Youmadi.

河边点名：桑桑、秃鹤、纸月

（领）油麻地的河边，今天点名。点到名字的，站出来。第一个，桑桑。（合）到！（领）桑桑站出来，带着一身鸽毛的味道，带着拆了蚊帐的空蚊帐杆子，带着满兜的羊眼和半块砖头。（合）这就是桑桑，油麻地最响的铃铛。

（领）第二个，秃鹤。（合）到！（领）秃鹤站出来，站得很慢。他的头顶没有头发，头顶有太阳。（领）别人笑的时候，他把手插进兜里。（合）现在他把头抬起来。（领）口令是他喊的，一二一，是他喊的，喊得整条河都齐了步。（合）这就是秃鹤，油麻地最亮的灯。

（领）第三个，纸月。（合）到！（领）纸月站出来，书包带子理得平平的。（领）她走过芦苇，走过桥，走过那些不友好的眼睛，她一个字没骂。（合）她把委屈叠成纸船。（领）河里现在漂着几只，你数数，全是纸月放的。（合）这就是纸月，油麻地最轻的风。

（领）点名还没完。第四个，桑桑的白鸽。（合）到！（领）第五个，秃鹤的光头。（合）到！（领）第六个，纸月的纸船。（合）到！（领）第七个，金黄的草房子。（合）到！（领）第八个，秦大奶奶的艾地。（合）到！（领）第九个，那条河。（合）到！

（领）名字都点完了。现在问你们，他们在哪。（合）在一本书里。（领）书在哪。（合）在书包里。（领）书包在哪。（合）在肩上。（领）油麻地在哪。（合）在心里。心里有，草房子就亮，艾地就香，河就流。

（领）明天再点名，点谁。（合）点我们。（领）为什么。（合）因为我们读过了。读过草房子的孩子，名字也在那条河边，排着队，等着答到。桑桑，秃鹤，纸月，还有你。一二一，向前走。

Roll Call by the River: Sangsang, Bald Crane, Paper Moon

(Lead) By the river of Youmadi, roll call today. Whoever hears a name, step forward. First, Sangsang. (All) Here! (Lead) Sangsang steps forward, smelling of dove

feathers, carrying the bare poles of the dismantled mosquito net, pockets full of sheep's eyes and half a brick. (All) This is Sangsang, the loudest bell of Youmadi.

(Lead) Second, Bald Crane. (All) Here! (Lead) Bald Crane steps forward, very slowly. His head has no hair. His head has sunlight. (Lead) When people laughed, he slid his hands into his pockets. (All) Now he lifts his head. (Lead) The marching commands are his, one-two-one, his voice, and the whole river falls into step. (All) This is Bald Crane, the brightest lamp of Youmadi.

(Lead) Third, Paper Moon. (All) Here! (Lead) Paper Moon steps forward, her bag straps smoothed flat. (Lead) She walked past the reeds, past the bridge, past the unfriendly eyes, and never cursed one word. (All) She folded her grievances into paper boats. (Lead) Count how many float on the river now. Paper Moon set them all. (All) This is Paper Moon, the lightest wind of Youmadi.

(Lead) Roll call is not over. Fourth, Sangsang's white doves. (All) Here! (Lead) Fifth, Bald Crane's shining head. (All) Here! (Lead) Sixth, Paper Moon's paper boats. (All) Here! (Lead) Seventh, the golden straw houses. (All) Here! (Lead) Eighth, Grandma Qin's mugwort field. (All) Here! (Lead) Ninth, the river. (All) Here!

(Lead) Every name is called. Now tell me, where are they. (All) Inside a book. (Lead) Where is the book. (All) In our schoolbags. (Lead) Where are the schoolbags. (All) On our shoulders. (Lead) Where is Youmadi. (All) In our hearts. If the heart holds it, the straw houses light up, the mugwort smells sweet, and the river keeps flowing.

(Lead) Tomorrow's roll call, whom do we call. (All) Ourselves. (Lead) Why. (All) Because we have read it. Children who have read The Straw House have their names lined up too, by that river, waiting to answer. Sangsang, Bald Crane, Paper Moon, and you. One-two-one, march forward.