红门、药罐，和那张没及格的卷子

我的书桌角上摆着三样东西：一本《草房子》，一只旧茶杯，还有一张订在笔记最后的物理测验卷。妈妈问我为什么留着那张打了大红叉的卷子。当时我答不上来，现在想想，答得上来了。

《草房子》里，我最放不下的是那扇红门。杜家的杂货铺一直开在红门后面，他们是油麻地最富的人家。船沉了以后，红门贴上白纸，杜小康从大家仰着看的同学，变成了大家垂着怜的同学。他不肯要那份怜。他跟着爹进芦苇荡，鸭子跑散了，他一个人追，追到天黑，抱住找回来的头鸭坐在泥里。

同样忘不了的，还有桑桑药寮里的味道。那间小屋常年飘着药气，桑桑把最苦的药一口一口灌下去，火针按在脖子上，他疼得攥紧床单，也没喊第二声。病拿走了他的力气，没把他变成胆小的人。他后来还把自己的棉袄脱给了比他更冷的人。

我那张物理测验卷，分数难看得不能给人看。我在楼梯间哭了一场，回家宣布再也不学物理，整整一周没翻开课本。后来物理老师把我叫过去，一道一道错处讲下来，我发现不是自己笨，是太多地方装懂，把窟窿留到了考场上。

现在把三样东西摆在一起看，我懂了：红门是杜小康要扛的，药罐是桑桑要扛的，那张卷子是我要扛的。人得学会扛自己那一份，扔不掉，也装看不见不行。

我不再想撕那张卷子。我把它翻过来，在背面把错题重做了一遍，红叉还在，可它不再扎眼。杜小康支摊那天，桑桑喝完药那天，我重新拿起物理课本那天，都是普通的一天，也都是人这辈子少不了的一天。苦难没敲门的时候，谁也躲不过；它进了门，能陪它坐下来的，只有自己。

The Red Door, the Medicine Pot, and My Failed Test Paper

Three things sit on the corner of my desk: a copy of Grass House, an old tea cup, and a physics test paper stapled at the back of my notebook. My mother once asked me why I kept that paper with its big red cross. I had no answer then. Now, thinking it over, I do.

In Grass House, what I cannot let go of is the red door. The Du family store had always stood behind it, and they were the wealthiest household in Youmadi. After the boat sank, white paper was pasted over the red door, and Du Xiaokang changed in everyone's eyes from a classmate they looked up to one they looked down on with pity. He refused the pity. He followed his father into the reed marsh. When the ducks scattered, he chased them alone until dark, then sat in the mud holding the first duck he caught back.

Just as hard to forget is the smell inside Sang Sang's medicine room. That little room always hung with the steam of herbs. Sang Sang forced the bitterest medicine down mouthful by mouthful. When the fire needle pressed into his neck, he gripped the bedsheet hard and never cried out a second time. The illness took his strength but

did not turn him into a coward. Later he even took off his own padded coat and gave it to someone colder than himself.

My physics test paper carried a score too ugly to show anyone. I cried once in the stairwell, came home and announced I would never study physics again, and did not open the textbook for a whole week. Then my physics teacher called me over and went through the mistakes one by one. I found it was not that I was slow. It was that I had pretended to understand too many things, leaving holes for the exam to find.

Looking at the three things side by side now, I understand: the red door is what Du Xiaokang must carry, the medicine pot is what Sang Sang must carry, and that test paper is what I must carry. Everyone has to learn to carry their own share. You cannot throw it away, and you cannot pretend you do not see it.

I no longer want to tear up the paper. I turned it over and redid every wrong problem on the back. The red cross is still there, but it no longer stabs my eyes. The day Du Xiaokang set up his stall, the day Sang Sang finished his medicine, the day I picked up the physics textbook again, were all ordinary days, and all days no life can do without. When hardship has not yet knocked, nobody escapes; once it walks in, the only one who can sit down with it is yourself.