读完一本，我又摸到了下一本的门把手

《草房子》最后一页合上，我愣了一会儿，然后做了一件以前不会做的事：我打开手机搜曹文轩还写过什么。以前我读完一本书就完了，书是任务，交完就散。那天晚上我列了个单子：《青铜葵花》《根鸟》《山羊不吃天堂草》。单子写在一张烟盒纸上，是我爸垫桌脚的纸，我抽走藏进了笔袋。

先借到的是《青铜葵花》，图书馆藏本不多，我排了两周才轮到。书里那个叫青铜的男孩不能说话，靠手势和眼神跟家里通信。我读到他把自己的鞋让给葵花穿、自己光脚踩雪回家那一段，停下来了，跟读杜小康那次一样停下来。我发现问题：我读的书里总有穷，穷里总有人把最好的让给别人。我把这个问题写在烟盒纸背面，打算以后每读一本就回答一次。

《根鸟》读得慢，因为它是讲一个人去找一个梦里的姑娘，一路走一路丢东西，我读得不顺，读到一半想扔。但我想起《草房子》里桑桑生病那段也读得心里发沉，我没扔，硬着头皮读完。读完那天我居然有点想它。原来读得慢的书不一定坏，可能是我还没走到它跟前。

我的借书证半年换了一张，边都磨毛了。图书馆的阿姨认识我，每次都说又是你。同桌小周看我天天借，也办了证，我俩现在换着读，他借他的科幻，我借我的，周末在小区长椅上各看各的，看完互相讲一遍。讲不出来的那本，就说明没读进去，下回重读——这也是我自己琢磨出来的规矩。

上学期期末，我妈把我那沓烟盒纸翻出来，上面已经写了十几行，每行是一本书和一个问题。她问我写这个干什么，我说不知道，就是想知道下一个问题是什么。她没再说话，把我的借书证用透明胶带包了边。阅读的门是《草房子》推开的，后面这些门把手，是我自己一个个摸到的。

After One Book, I Found the Handle of the Next

The moment I closed the last page of Grass House, I sat dazed for a bit, then did something I would never have done before: I searched on my phone for what else Cao Wenxuan had written. Before, finishing a book was the end of it — a book was an assignment, handed in and over. That night I made a list: Bronze and Sunflower, Root Bird, The Goat That Does Not Eat Heaven's Grass. I wrote the list on a cigarette-pack paper I pulled from under my father's wobbly table leg, and hid it in my pencil case.

The first one I got was Bronze and Sunflower. The library had few copies and I waited two weeks in line. The boy in it, Qingtong, cannot speak and talks with his family through gestures and looks. When I reached the part where he gives his own shoes to Sunflower and walks home barefoot in the snow, I stopped — the same way I stopped at Du Xiaokang. A pattern hit me: the books I read always contain poverty, and inside the poverty someone always gives the best thing away. I wrote that question on the back of the cigarette paper, planning to answer it again with every new book.

Root Bird was slow going. It is about a boy chasing a girl from a dream, losing things on the road as he goes, and the reading felt rough; halfway through I wanted to quit. But I remembered how heavy the chapters of Sang Sang's illness felt in Grass House, and I had not quit then. I pushed through to the end, and to my surprise the book stayed with me afterward. Turns out a slow book is not necessarily a bad one — maybe I just had not walked up to it yet.

I have replaced my library card twice in half a year; the edges wore fuzzy. The librarian knows me now and says, you again, every time. My deskmate Xiao Zhou saw me borrowing daily and got a card too. We swap books now: he borrows his science fiction, I borrow mine, and on weekends we sit on the neighborhood bench reading our own piles, then retell each other what we read. If I cannot retell a book, it means I did not really read it, and I reread it next time — a rule I worked out myself.

At the end of last term my mother found my stack of cigarette papers. They had grown to a dozen lines, each one a book and a question. She asked what I was doing with them. I said I did not know — I just wanted to know what the next question would be. She said nothing more, and taped clear plastic around my library card. The door of reading was pushed open by Grass House, but the handles of all the doors after it, I found one by one with my own hands.

www.vv99.net