女儿的手心上停着一小片彩虹

接女儿放学那个傍晚，校门口卖泡泡水的摊子前围着一圈人。五毛钱一小瓶，她仰着脸看我，我点头。她拧开盖子，把吹管凑到嘴边，没有立刻吹，先像大人那样端详了一下瓶子里的泡泡水。

第一个泡泡没吹成，只吹出一串小沫子。她不气馁，把吹管在瓶口蘸了蘸，这一回吹得又轻又慢。一个圆鼓鼓的泡泡离了吹管，晃晃悠悠往西飘。西边的太阳正低，光斜斜地打过来，泡泡的肚子立刻亮了，上面转着颜色，粉的、青绿的、孔雀蓝，一小片一小片，像有人拿极细的笔在上面不停地换颜料。

女儿追着那个泡泡跑出去几步，张开两只手去接。泡泡落在她手心里，破了，她手心湿了一小片。她盯着自己手心看，然后抬头喊：爸爸，彩虹在我手上！她喊得那么笃定，好像彩虹本来就该住在泡泡里，只是今天搬出来给她看一眼。

我在花坛边站着，忽然想起白天办公室的窗户。那个钟点，光也是斜的，我对着电脑从来没注意过。此刻我认真看那些泡泡：每一个上面都有彩虹，无一例外。后来我告诉她，那是光在肥皂膜里前后两层上弹了一下，两下碰头，有的颜色叠得更亮，有的颜色互相抵消，剩下的就是她看见的这些。她听懂多少我不知道，她只说了一句：那光在里面一定很挤。

回家的路上她把最后一瓶泡泡水吹完，瓶子空了，她把它捏扁，郑重地放进垃圾桶。路灯亮起来之前，最后一个泡泡带着它的彩虹从我们头顶飘过去，她仰头目送它，像送一个朋友。

那天晚上我在她的日记里替她记了一句：泡泡里的彩虹不是画上去的，是光自己排出来的队。写完我自己又看了一遍。大人总以为奇迹要花钱买，其实它五毛钱一瓶，就在放学路上等着。

A Little Rainbow Resting in My Daughter's Palm

The evening I picked my daughter up from school, a crowd ringed the bubble-water stall by the gate. Five cents a little bottle. She looked up at me, and I nodded. She unscrewed the cap, brought the wand to her lips, and did not blow at once; first she studied the solution in the bottle the way grown-ups do.

The first attempt failed, producing only a string of foam. Undaunted, she dipped the wand at the bottle's mouth, and this time blew soft and slow. A plump bubble left the wand and drifted west. The sun was low in the west, its light slanting across, and the bubble's belly lit up at once, turning with color, pink, pale green, peacock blue, in small patches, as if someone kept changing paints on it with an impossibly fine brush.

My daughter ran a few steps after it, both hands open. The bubble landed in her palm and popped, wetting a small patch of skin. She stared at her palm, then looked up and shouted: Daddy, there is a rainbow on my hand! She shouted it so matter-of-factly, as if a rainbow were supposed to live inside bubbles and had simply moved out today for one look at her.

I stood by the flower bed and suddenly thought of my office window. At that hour the light slants too, and facing my computer I had never once noticed. Now I really looked at the bubbles: every one carried a rainbow, without exception. Later I told her it was light bouncing off the front and back layers of the soap film; the two bounces meet, some colors stack brighter, some cancel each other, and what is left is what she saw. How much she understood, I do not know. She said only one line: the light must be very crowded in there.

On the way home she finished the last bottle. When it was empty she crushed it flat and placed it solemnly in the trash bin. Before the street lamps came on, the final bubble floated over our heads carrying its rainbow, and she watched it go with her face tilted up, like seeing off a friend.

That night I wrote one line in her diary for her: the rainbow inside a bubble is not painted on; it is light lining itself up on its own. After writing it I read it again myself. Grown-ups keep believing miracles must be bought. Actually they cost five cents a bottle, waiting on the way home from school.