一杯水的自述

我是一杯水，装在一只直筒的玻璃杯里。今天下午，一只小孩的手把我灌满，灌得很满，我的头顶鼓出一小圈，比杯口还高。然后一张纸片盖住了我。纸片带着铅笔字，还有一股作业本的味道。

接着，世界翻了过来。我的头顶朝下，杯底朝天。按常理我该落下去，浇在那个小孩的手上。可我没有。我压着那张纸片，纸片向下鼓，绷成一小片帆，它就是不掉。我后来才明白，托住它的不是我头顶上的空气，是空气整个儿的海。我们就住在海底，是纸片下面那整片空气的海，把我顶在了这里。

倒过来之后，我发现了我身体里的几粒气泡。它们贴在我新的头顶，就是杯底的位置，透明的，比盐粒还小。那是灌水的时候被关进来的空气，一直躲在我的壁上，现在全浮到了最高处。其中三粒过了很久挪了一次位置。别以为我安静，我在纸片后面一直轻轻地动，动得极慢，慢得像睡着的人的呼吸。

那个小孩举着我走了几步，又把我扣到他妈妈头顶上去。他妈妈坐着没动，眼睛一直看着我。大人很少这样看我。他们倒我，喝我，把我烧开，把我冻成冰，从没有谁举着我认真看上一刻钟。她看了。她看见纸片绷紧的边，看见那三粒气泡挪了位置，看见我悬在她头发上方，安安稳稳，没有落。

后来她自己也做了一次。我看见她的手有点抖，纸片盖上去的时候盖歪了半次，重新盖。倒过来的那一瞬她屏住了气。水没落。她笑了一下，那种笑我见过，是小孩第一次看见我身上藏着的东西时才会有的笑。她小声说了一句：原来你一直有劲。

现在我被放回桌上，正过来，站在那盏台灯下面。纸片揭掉了，我重新平着，看起来和下午之前一模一样。只有我自己知道，我托过一张纸，被一整片空气的海托过，还被一个大人认认真真看过一刻钟。一杯水平平常常的水，其实从来没有平平常常过。

Confessions of a Cup of Water

I am a cup of water, living in a straight-sided glass. This afternoon a child's hand filled me to the top, too full, so that my head bulged into a small dome above the rim. Then a piece of paper covered me. The paper carried pencil marks and the smell of a homework notebook.

Then the world turned over. My head faced down, the bottom of the cup faced up. By ordinary logic I should have fallen and drenched the child's hand. But I did not. I pressed on the paper; the paper sagged and tightened into a small sail, and it would not fall. Only later did I understand: what held it up was not the air above my head but the whole sea of air. We live at the bottom of that sea, and it is the sea of air beneath the paper that propped me here.

After the turn, I discovered the bubbles inside me. They clung to my new head, at

the bottom of the cup, transparent, smaller than grains of salt. They were air trapped when I was poured, hiding on my walls all along, now floated to the highest point. Three of them changed places after a long while. Do not think I am still. Behind the paper I keep moving gently, moving so slowly it is like the breathing of a sleeping person.

The child carried me a few steps and held me over his mother's head. She sat still and kept her eyes on me. Grown-ups rarely look at me like that. They pour me, drink me, boil me, freeze me into ice; nobody has ever held me up and studied me for a quarter of an hour. She did. She saw the taut edge of the paper, saw the three bubbles change places, saw me hanging above her hair, steady, not falling.

Later she tried it herself. I felt her hand tremble a little; she covered the cup crookedly the first time and covered it again. In the instant the cup inverted, she held her breath. The water did not fall. She smiled a small smile, the kind I have only seen on children the first time they notice what is hidden inside me. She whispered: so you have had strength all along.

Now I am back on the table, turned upright, standing under the desk lamp. The paper is gone, I lie flat again, looking exactly as I did that morning. Only I know that I held up a piece of paper, was held up by an entire sea of air, and was looked at seriously for a quarter of an hour by a grown-up. An ordinary cup of water has never once been ordinary.