试管里在冒气泡

我拿出一支试管，透明的，像一滴站起来的露水。我把它举起来对光，光在里面弯了个腰。倒进去半勺清清的白醋，再加一小勺白白的苏打，然后等，等，等。管底先是一阵小小的响，再是一阵更大的响，然后气泡，气泡，一串气泡，挤着，推着，往上跑，越跑越高，啪的一声破了，小声说了一句谁也听不见的话。我弯腰去听，气泡又在我指尖上破开，凉凉的，痒痒的。教室里的笑声也一起炸开了，飞出窗户，落在操场槐树的叶子上，槐树叶咯咯笑着，把一整个下午都笑醒了。

气泡啪地破开，像一扇小小的门开了。小门通向哪里？通向我满脑袋的问题。为什么白醋遇见苏打就会说话？为什么试管装着它们，却不批评它们？为什么气泡圆圆的身体没有腿，却跑得那么快？为什么气泡活不过一秒钟，却还是笑着的？气泡不回答，只是又破了一个，接着又破一个，像在对我摇头。老师也不回答，只是笑，眼睛笑得弯弯的，像两支透明的试管。教室里的笑声像气泡，破了一个，滚出十个，一路滚到下课铃响。

笑声飞出窗外，骑着一道光，滑下旗杆，落进花坛。蚂蚁抬起头问：你们笑什么？笑声说：试管里有气泡，气泡在说一个秘密。蚂蚁挤不进教室，就派一只小蚂蚁送来一封信，问下一次实验是什么时候。我举起洗干净的试管，轻轻说：明天，明天，气泡也会请你来看。风把笑声送回来，它还在教室里响着，响在晾干的试管口上，响在明天的白醋和苏打里，响在我们数到一半就忘掉的数数声里。

晚上我把试管的事讲给枕头听，讲着讲着，枕头上也冒出一串气泡。气泡钻进梦里，梦里全是啪的一声，小声的一句，咯咯的一阵。我在梦里笑出了声，把自己笑醒了。醒来我摸摸试管，试管凉凉的，安安静静，可我知道，明天一早，它又会装满新的气泡，新的问题，新的笑声。我把它举起来对光，光在里面弯了个腰，像在跟我约好：明天见，明天见。

Bubbles Are Rising in the Test Tube

I take out a test tube, transparent, like a drop of dew that has stood up. I hold it against the light, and the light bends its waist inside. I pour in half a spoon of clear white vinegar, add one small spoon of white baking soda, then wait, wait, wait. First a tiny rustle at the bottom of the tube, then a louder one, and then bubbles, bubbles, a string of bubbles, pushing and shoving, running upward, higher and higher, popping with a snap, whispering something nobody can hear. I bend down to listen, and another bubble bursts on my fingertip, cool and ticklish. The laughter in the classroom bursts open too, flies out of the window, and lands on the leaves of the locust tree on the playground. The leaves giggle and wake up the whole afternoon.

A bubble pops like a tiny door opening. Where does the little door lead? It leads to my head full of questions. Why do vinegar and baking soda start talking when they meet? Why does the test tube hold them without scolding them? Why do bubbles have round bodies and no legs, yet run so fast? Why do bubbles live less than one second, yet still smile? The bubbles do not answer; they just pop again, one after another,

as if shaking their heads at me. The teacher does not answer either; she only smiles, her eyes curved like two transparent test tubes. The laughter in the classroom is like bubbles: one pops, and ten roll out, rolling all the way to the ringing of the class bell.

The laughter flies out of the window, rides a beam of light, slides down the flagpole, and falls into the flower bed. An ant looks up and asks: what are you laughing at? The laughter answers: there are bubbles in the test tube, and the bubbles are telling a secret. The ants cannot squeeze into the classroom, so they send one little ant with a letter, asking when the next experiment will be. I lift the washed test tube and say softly: tomorrow, tomorrow, the bubbles will invite you to watch too. The wind carries the laughter back. It is still ringing in the classroom, ringing on the rim of the dried test tube, ringing in tomorrow's vinegar and baking soda, ringing in the counting we forget halfway through.

At night I tell my pillow about the test tube, and as I talk, another string of bubbles rises from the pillow. The bubbles crawl into my dream, and the dream is full of soft pops, tiny whispers, and fits of giggles. I laugh out loud in the dream and wake myself up. Awake, I touch the test tube: cool and quiet. But I know that tomorrow morning it will fill again with new bubbles, new questions, new laughter. I hold it up to the light, and the light bends its waist inside, as if making a promise with me: see you tomorrow, see you tomorrow.