阳台上的杯子实验室

星期六的早晨，我把小桌搬到阳台上/桌上摆一只玻璃杯，一把小勺/杯子排排站，一共三只/今天我要一只一只地试

五岁的弟弟先来报到/他搬自己的小板凳，坐得笔直/他说他要当小助手/我说好，你负责喊开始

第一只杯子，倒白醋/弟弟喊，开始/我的勺子送进白苏打/咕嘟，泡儿挤出来，一层又一层

弟弟吓得往后坐/屁股跌下板凳，他也不哭/他瞪着杯子问，它生气了吗/我笑着说，它在打哈欠

第二只杯子，倒温水/弟弟喊，开始/这一回的泡儿跑得急/噼里啪啦，像锅里下了饺子

第三只杯子，倒凉水/泡儿慢吞吞，像没睡醒/弟弟把鼻子贴在杯口/睫毛上挂了一个小泡，他也不躲

我们比一比，三杯排一排/哪杯的泡儿最勤快/弟弟用手指点，点来点去/最后选了温水那一杯

我的勺子忙个不停/一会儿舀苏打，一会儿搅/勺柄上沾了白沫，亮晶晶/弟弟抢过去，也要舀一勺

他舀得太急，洒了半勺/白粉落在桌面上，像下小雪/我们俩一起用勺子收/一勺一勺，倒回罐子里

弟弟学着我的样子/捏着小勺，屏住呼吸/往大泡那只杯里加了一小勺/泡儿又冒起来，他高兴得直跳

阳台的风吹过来/杯里的泡儿轻轻晃/弟弟打了一个哈欠，正好/跟杯子里打哈欠的泡儿一模一样

太阳照到杯子上/泡儿亮晶晶，像一串小灯/弟弟说要给杯子起名字/一只叫大泡，一只叫小泡，一只叫慢慢泡

妈妈来收桌子的时候/三只杯子空了，勺子洗干净/弟弟说，明天还玩这个/我说好，杯子不搬家，等我们

一只杯子，一把勺子，一串泡/阳台上的实验室，今天关门/我和弟弟击了一个掌/冒泡的快乐，装进梦里继续

The Cup Lab on Our Balcony

Saturday morning I carried my little table out to the balcony. On it I set one glass cup and one small spoon. Three cups stand in a row. Today I will try them one by one.

My five-year-old brother reports first. He carries over his own little stool and sits up straight. He says he wants to be the assistant. I say fine, you get to shout start.

In the first cup I pour white vinegar. My brother shouts, start! My spoon sends baking soda in. Bloop, bubbles squeeze out, layer after layer.

My brother falls back in fright, bottom tumbling off the stool. He does not even cry. He stares at the cup and asks if it is angry. I laugh and say it is only yawning.

In the second cup I pour warm water. My brother shouts, start! This time the bubbles run in a hurry, crackling and popping like dumplings dropped into a boiling pot.

In the third cup I pour cold water. The bubbles move slowly, like they just woke up. My brother presses his nose to the cup rim. A tiny bubble hangs on his eyelash, and he does not dodge it.

We compare the three cups in a row: which one bubbles the hardest? My brother points with his finger, left and right, and finally picks the warm-water cup.

My spoon never rests, scooping soda, then stirring. The handle glitters with white foam. My brother snatches it away; he wants a scoop too.

He scoops too fast and spills half. The white powder lands on the table like light snow. We gather it up together with the spoon, one scoop at a time, back into the jar.

My brother copies exactly what I do: he pinches the small spoon, holds his breath, and adds one scoopful into the cup named Big Bubble. The bubbles rise again, and he jumps for joy.

The balcony wind blows through, and the bubbles in the cups sway gently. My brother lets out a yawn, right on time, exactly like the bubbles yawning inside the cups.

The sun shines onto the cups, and the bubbles glitter like a string of tiny lamps. My brother says the cups need names: one he calls Big Bubble, one Little Bubble, and one Slow Bubble.

When Mom comes to clear the table, the three cups are empty and the spoon is washed clean. My brother says we play this again tomorrow. I say okay, the cups are not moving; they will wait for us.

A cup, a spoon, a string of bubbles. The balcony lab closes for today. My brother and I slap high-fives, and the bubbling joy travels with us into our dreams.