那张贴在课桌上的纸条

初一第一次数学测验，我考了六十二分。

卷子发下来那一刻，我把试卷往抽屉最里面塞，像藏一个见不得人的东西。

课间，同桌林小羽把一张纸条贴在我的文具盒盖上，上面写：错题不是丢人的地方，是待补的地方。

字是她那种歪歪扭扭的字，末尾还画了一个举着扳手的火柴人。

那天放学她拦住我，说，你数学好，我英语好，咱们中午互相考二十分钟，谁也不许嫌谁笨。

我说我数学不好。她说，六十二分是你上个月的数学，这个月的得重新算。

我们的互相考核从那个周三中午开始。

她考我，一元一次方程移项变不变号，我答对了；角平分线的性质，我答错了，她让我把那条性质抄了三遍。

我考她英语单词，sheep 的复数她脱口而出，dictionary 她拼到一半卡住，我提醒她第一个音节，她自己把后面拼完了。

中午二十分钟，一个学期几乎没有断过。

有几天我烦了，觉得浪费时间，她也不劝，隔天中午照样拿着两张小卡片站在我桌前。

期中我数学八十九分，她英语从七十一分到八十六分。

成绩出来那天，我们谁也没请客，只是在纸条上那个火柴人旁边又画了一个，两个火柴人一起举着扳手。

现在回想这件事，我想明白了几层。

鼓励不是一句加油，鼓励是她把卡片准备好、把时间固定下来，是我陪你做。

共同进步也不是平均用力，而是各自补上对方的缺口，像两块齿轮咬在一起，互相带着转。

我原先觉得接受帮助是承认自己不行，后来才明白，接受帮助只是把不行的地方放到桌面上，放上来才有机会补。

更深的一层是，帮别人的那个中午，我学到的比被帮的那个中午还多，讲一遍，才是真的会。

那张纸条我到现在还留着，文具盒旧了，纸条的胶都干了，字还清楚。

错题不是丢人的地方，是待补的地方。这句话我后来也写给了别的同学。

The Note Stuck on My Desk

In the first math quiz of junior one, I got sixty-two points.

The moment the paper was handed back, I pushed it to the bottom of my drawer, like hiding something shameful.

At break, my deskmate Lin Xiaoyu stuck a note on the lid of my pencil case. It read: a wrong answer is not a place to be ashamed of, it is a place to be repaired.

The handwriting was her own crooked kind, and at the end she had drawn a matchstick figure holding a wrench.

That day after school she stopped me and said, you are good at math, I am good at English, let us quiz each other for twenty minutes at noon, and neither may call the other stupid.

I said my math was bad. She said, sixty-two is your math of last month; this month has to be counted again.

Our noon quizzes began that Wednesday.

She quizzed me: when a term moves across the equals sign, does the sign change; I got it right. The property of an angle bisector, I got wrong, and she made me copy that property three times.

I quizzed her on English words; the plural of sheep came out of her mouth at once, dictionary stuck halfway, I reminded her of the first syllable, and she finished the spelling herself.

Twenty minutes at noon, almost without a break for a whole term.

Some days I got annoyed and thought it a waste of time; she did not argue, and the next noon she stood before my desk with two small cards as usual.

At the midterm I got eighty-nine in math, and her English rose from seventy-one to eighty-six.

The day the results came out, neither of us treated the other to anything; we only drew another matchstick figure beside the first on the note, two figures holding wrenches together.

Thinking it over now, I have understood several layers.

Encouragement is not a single cheer; encouragement is her preparing the cards and fixing the time, is me doing it with you.

Mutual progress is not equal effort either, but each mending the gap of the

other, like two gears meshed, turning each other along.

I used to think accepting help was admitting I was no good; now I know it only means putting the weak place on the table, where it can finally be repaired.

Deeper still: at the noon when I helped her, I learned more than at the noon when I was helped, because explaining once is truly knowing.

I still keep that note. The pencil case is old, the glue of the note has dried, but the words are still clear.

A wrong answer is not a place to be ashamed of, it is a place to be repaired. I have since written this sentence for other classmates too.

一千五百米的配速

初二上学期的体育测试，项目是一千五百米。

跑到第三圈，我的嗓子开始冒烟，腿像灌了半桶沙，心里那个声音又出来了，走一走，走一走没人看见。

就在我脚步一乱的时候，一个人从内道慢下来，退到我旁边。

是周悦。她本来在第二梯队，跑得不紧不慢。

她也不看我，就盯着前面，说，跟着我的影子，别想圈数，想步子。

于是第三圈后半和第四圈，我一直踩着她的影子跑，她的影子长，我的步子就跟着变大。

收尾那一圈她忽然加速，甩开我十几米，回头喊了一句，冲，终点就一脚的事。

我冲了。成绩七分四十一，及格线是八分整。

过线那一刻我扶着膝盖喘，她递过来半瓶水，说，你看，没人看见你走，也没人看见你跑完。

那之后我们定了一个规矩，每天放学后绕操场慢跑三圈，谁也不许请假，请假的人第二天补一圈。

那三圈没有计时，没有名次，我们一边跑一边说今天哪道题难、食堂哪个菜咸。

有风的日子她会把围巾塞给我，有雨的日子我们就在体育馆走廊做高抬腿。

一个学期下来，一千五百米补测我跑进了七分十秒，她的八百米从班级中游进了前五。

体育委员说我们俩像换了个人，我们俩对视一眼，都想起那三圈没有计时的圈。

这件事我后来想了很久，想出三层意思。

头一层的道理，周悦那天最了不起的地方，不是她陪我跑，而是她先退到我能跟上的频率，再一点点把频率抬上去。鼓励不是喊快点，是先到你身边。

再往深一层，共同进步不是两个人比赛。我们那三圈要是比谁快，撑不过两个星期；正因为不比，才跑了一整个学期。一起走的路，比谁走得快走得远。

最里面一层是反思我自己。我以前不敢接受陪跑，怕拖累别人，也怕别人看出我弱。后来才懂，怕拖累是把友情当成绩，真正的友情不怕慢，怕的是一个人跑、一个人停。

我也学会了做那个退到别人旁边的人。上个月有个同学跑步落在最后，我退到他旁边，说，跟着我的影子。

好朋友让我变得更好，不是因为他带我飞，是因为他肯先慢下来，再带我一起快起来。

The Pacing of Fifteen Hundred Meters

In the PE test of the first term of junior two, the event was fifteen hundred meters.

Halfway through the third lap, my throat began to smoke, my legs felt half-filled with sand, and that voice came back: walk a bit, no one will see.

Just as my steps faltered, someone on the inner lane slowed down and dropped back beside me.

It was Zhou Yue. She had been running comfortably in the second group.

She did not even look at me; she kept her eyes ahead and said, follow my shadow, do not count laps, count steps.

So for the rest of the third lap and all of the fourth, I stepped on her shadow; her shadow was long, and my stride grew with it.

On the last lap she suddenly sped up, pulling ten-odd meters ahead, and turned back to shout one line: sprint, the finish is one stride away.

I sprinted. My time was seven minutes forty-one; the passing line was eight minutes flat.

The moment I crossed it I bent over my knees gasping, and she passed me half a bottle of water and said, see, no one saw you walk, and no one saw you finish either.

After that we made a rule: jog three laps around the field after school every day, no one may take a day off, and whoever does owes an extra lap the next day.

Those three laps were not timed and had no ranking; we ran and talked about which problem was hard today and which dish in the canteen was salty.

On windy days she stuffed her scarf into my hands; on rainy days we did high knees in the gym corridor.

Over one term, at the make-up test I ran fifteen hundred meters inside seven minutes ten, and her eight hundred meters moved from the middle of the class into the top five.

The PE monitor said we were like two different people; we looked at each other and both thought of those untimed laps.

I have thought about this for a long time, and thought out three layers.

The first layer: the most remarkable thing Zhou Yue did that day was not running with me, but first dropping to a pace I could keep up with, then raising the pace little by little. Encouragement is not shouting faster; it is arriving at your side first.

The second layer: mutual progress is not a race between two people. If our three laps had been a race, they would not have lasted two weeks; precisely because there was no racing, they lasted a whole term. A road walked together goes farther than whoever walks fast.

The third layer is reflection on myself. I used to dare not accept pacing, afraid of dragging someone down and afraid of showing my weakness. Only later did I understand that fearing to be a burden treats friendship as a grade; real friendship is not afraid of slowness, it is afraid of one person running while the other stops.

I also learned to be the one who drops back beside another person. Last month a classmate fell to the last place in running; I dropped back beside him and said, follow my shadow.

A good friend makes me better not because he lets me fly, but because he is willing to slow down first, then speed up together with me.

写给陈屿的半封信

陈屿：这封信我写了一半就打算寄给你，因为剩下的一半，我想留到明年再写。

先说去年十一月那个晚上。我物理竞赛初赛失利，坐在台阶上想，明年不报了。

你没劝，也没讲道理，只把一张纸条翻过来，在背面写了一行日期，从那天起往后一百天，每天一道竞赛题，一道你的弱项函数题，谁断一天，谁给全班买冰棍。

你说，想退出可以，一百天以后再说。

那一百天里，你的监督准得像闹钟。我断过两次，一次值日一次发烧，你都记在纸条角上，用铅笔，没划掉。

三十七天那天我烦了，把题摔在桌上，说你这是拿友情押赌。你想了半天，说，不是押赌，是我信你，先把信写成日子。

第九十一天，你忽然跟我说，函数你彻底通了，月考数学一百一十七，全班第五。

我愣住。我这才发现，一百天里你每天做的那道函数题，才是你自己的竞赛。你嘴上陪我补竞赛，手上自己在补最难的功课。

一百天到期，我报了复赛，拿了省三。你的名次从三十开外进了前十。

颁奖那天你只说了一句，你看，谁也没给谁买冰棍。

陈屿，我要反思的事有三件。

一桩，我那时把鼓励理解成安慰，你把它做成了日程。一句我信你，要拆成一百天里每天的一道题，才算数。

二桩，我一直以为那一百天是你帮我，直到第九十一天才明白，共同进步不是一个人拉一个人，是两个人各自爬坡，偶尔回头喊一声。你的坡，比我的陡。

三桩，是我对你的亏欠。你断过的两次，我用铅笔记着没划掉；我断的每一次，你都替我补了题。友情里欠下的账，要用同样的认真还。

所以这封信只写一半。剩下的一半，留给明年的一百天，留给你的数学竞赛，留给我们谁也不给谁买冰棍的日子。

如果明年这半封也写完了，我就把它和这半封钉在一起，钉在我们都够得着的地方。

你的同桌，卢小航。

Half a Letter to Chen Yu

Chen Yu, I will send this letter to you when it is only half written, because I want to keep the other half for next year.

Let me begin with that evening in November last year. I failed the first round of the physics contest, sat on the steps, and thought, I will not sign up next year.

You did not console me and did not preach. You only turned a slip of paper over

and wrote one line of dates on the back: one hundred days starting that day, one contest problem a day plus one function problem from my weak subject, and whoever breaks a day buys popsicles for the whole class.

You said, if you want to quit, fine, but say it again after one hundred days.

In those hundred days your supervision was as exact as an alarm clock. I broke it twice, once on cleaning duty and once with a fever; you penciled both into the corner of the note and never erased them.

On day thirty-seven I got fed up, slammed the problems on the desk, and said you were staking friendship on a bet. You thought a long time and said, not a bet; I believe in you, and first I write that belief into days.

On day ninety-one you suddenly told me that functions had fully opened up for you, one hundred seventeen on the monthly math test, fifth in the class.

I froze. Only then did I notice that the function problem you did every day was your own contest. With your mouth you paced my contest; with your hands you were mending your hardest subject.

When the hundred days ended I signed for the second round and won a provincial third prize. Your rank moved from outside the top thirty into the top ten.

On the awarding day you said only one line: see, neither of us bought anyone popsicles.

Chen Yu, there are three things I want to reflect on.

The first: I used to understand encouragement as comfort; you made it into a schedule. One sentence of I believe in you only counts when it is broken into one problem a day for a hundred days.

The second: I always thought those hundred days were you helping me, until day ninety-one I understood that mutual progress is not one person pulling another, but two people climbing their own slopes, occasionally turning back to call out. Your slope was steeper than mine.

The third is what I owe you. The two days you broke, I kept penciled and never erased; every time I broke, you made up the problems for me. Debts owed in friendship must be repaid with the same seriousness.

So this letter stays half written. The other half is left for the hundred days of next year, for your math contest, for the days when neither of us buys the other popsicles.

If next year this half gets finished too, I will staple it to this half, and

staple them where we can both reach.

Your deskmate, Lu Xiaohang.