爷爷的草帽飞走了

那年暑假，风说来就来。午后还又热又静，桑叶一动不动，一转眼，一阵风从巷子口冲进来，把晾衣绳上的衣服抽得啪啪响。爷爷坐在门口补鱼篓，头上的草帽就是这么飞起来的，打着旋往前飘，像谁扔出去的大圆盘。

爷爷先站起来，我第二个。草帽贴着田埂滚，被风托起来飘两段，又落地接着滚。我在后面追，手快够着了，风一挑，它又往前滚出半丈。爷爷在我身后喊：别顶着风抓，绕到前头接。我没听懂，绕到上风口，草帽却一头栽进了稻田。

爷爷没等我，已经光脚下了田。他七十岁的人，走了一辈子田埂，还是在泥里打了个趔趄，一只手稳住了身子，另一只手在空中摆了个架势，像在唱戏。我站在田埂上喊爷爷小心，他头也不回，眼睛盯着那顶帽子。

草帽挂在一丛稻秧上，帽檐歪着，像一只掉进绿色里的小窝。爷爷一步一步蹚过去，伸手，又缩回来，招手叫我过去看：帽顶上蹲着一只绿青蛙，鼓着肚皮，一动不动。风把帽子吹进田里，青蛙把它当成了家。

爷爷没有先捡帽子。他两只手拢成碗，把青蛙捧起来，走到田边水口，手一放，青蛙扑通滑进水里，水面铺开一圈圈波纹。他这才捡起帽子，磕掉泥，重新扣回头上，像什么都没发生。

回到家，奶奶看见帽檐上的坑，笑他：帽子遭了大罪了。爷爷拿手里的竹帽敲了敲那个坑，说帽子没坏，就是帽顶沾了泥。当天傍晚，他还戴着这顶有坑的帽子出去看水。

后来整个暑假，风一突然来，我就先抬头看天。我不是看风，我是在找一顶打旋的草帽。草帽没再飞走过，可爷爷在田里摆手的样子、帽顶上鼓肚皮的青蛙，在我心里放了一整个夏天，想起来就拿出来看一眼。

Grandpas Straw Hat Flew Away

That summer, the wind came whenever it liked. In the afternoon the air had been hot and still, mulberry leaves hanging without moving; in the blink of an eye a gust rushed in from the mouth of the alley, making the clothes on the line clap like firecrackers. Grandpa was sitting at the doorway mending a fish basket, and his straw hat flew off his head just like that, spinning as it floated forward, no different from a big disc thrown by someone.

Grandpa was the first to stand up, I was the second. The hat rolled along the field ridge, lifted by the wind for two stretches, then dropped and rolled on. I chased behind it, and when my fingers were about to close on it, another gust sent it rolling half a zhang ahead. Grandpa shouted behind me: do not grab against the wind, go around and meet it. I did not understand, and when I ran around to the windward

side, the hat blew straight into the rice paddy.

Grandpa did not wait for me. He was already down in the paddy barefoot. He was seventy that year and had walked field ridges all his life, yet he slipped in the mud, steadied himself with one hand, the other arm striking a pose in the air like an actor on a stage. I stood on the ridge calling for him to be careful, and he did not turn his head once, his eyes fixed on that hat.

The hat was caught by a clump of rice seedlings, its brim tilted, like a small nest fallen into the green. Grandpa waded over step by step, reached out, then drew his hand back, and waved me over to look: on the crown of the hat sat a green frog, puffed up, not moving. The wind had blown the hat into the paddy, and the frog had mistaken it for home.

Grandpa did not lift the hat first. He cupped his hands around the frog, walked to the water edge at the side of the paddy, let go, and the frog slid into the water with a plop while rings spread over the surface. Only then did he pick up the hat, knock off the mud, and set it back on his head as if nothing had happened.

Back home, grandma saw the dent on the brim and laughed, saying the hat had survived a great tribulation. Grandpa tapped the dent with the bamboo hat in his hand, saying the hat was fine, only the crown had a little mud on it. That evening he wore the dented hat out to check the water.

For the rest of that summer, whenever the wind came suddenly, I looked up at the sky first. I was not looking for the wind; I was looking for a straw hat spinning through the air. The hat never flew away again, but the sight of grandpa waving his arms in the paddy and the frog sitting puffed up on the hat stayed with me the whole summer, and I took it out to look whenever I thought of it.

风筝挂上了电线

那只大燕子风筝是我爸扎的，竹骨糊报纸，尾巴拖一米长，飞起来巷子口的人都抬头。出事那天风正好，线轴转得飞快，我越放越得意，线在手里绷得嗡嗡响。忽然一股横风过来，风筝往侧面一歪，我本能地松了半圈线想稳它，就这半圈的工夫，线从线轴上滑脱了。

大燕子没有掉下来。它晃了几晃，顺着风往巷子尽头飘，最后挂在了电线上，稳稳地停在那儿，尾巴在电线底下飘着，像挂在半空的一幅画。我举着空线轴站在原地，脑子里全是爸说过的话：电线碰不得。我撒腿往家跑，一路喊，爸，风筝挂电线上了。

爸出来仰头看了看，神色倒是平静：挂就挂着吧，人没事就好。他拽着我回去，当天不许我再提风筝。傍晚巷子里的人都在说这件事，有人劝爸拿竹竿去捅，爸摆手：电线上的东西，谁也

不能碰，等供电所的人来。

那三天，燕子就挂在电线上。风大时它抖一抖，风小时它一动不动，我们放学都绕到巷子口看它一眼，像看一只被定住的鸟。我给它起了个名字，叫半空。奶奶笑我，一个破风筝，还起名。

供电所的人来的那天上午，白色工程车开进巷子，两个穿蓝色工装的师傅下车，一个戴绝缘手套上杆，一个在下面拦人。师傅拿绝缘剪咔嚓几声，把缠着的旧线剪断，那只燕子晃晃悠悠落下来，我抢着跑过去捡。师傅叮嘱我们：以后离电线远点放，风筝挂线上了别自己取，打电话我们来。爸连声道谢，师傅摆摆手，说这风筝糊得还挺周正。

燕子尾巴在电线上磨掉了一小截，剩下的半截尾巴打了个结，照样能飞。重新放起来那天，它比从前飞得还高。我仰头看着它，总觉得它在电线上那三天没白挂——它见过全巷子的人抬头看它，还坐过供电所的工程车，比我们谁都见多识广。

后来那只风筝收在门后，尾巴上那个结一直没拆。每次看见那个结，我就想起它挂在半空的样子，和巷子口那些仰起来的头。暑假过去一大半，这件事被我们讲了又讲，讲到最后，爸都会补一句：记住，电线上的东西，谁也不能碰。

The Kite Ended Up in the Power Lines

The big swallow kite was made by my father, bamboo bones covered with newspaper, its tail a full meter long. When it flew, everyone at the mouth of the alley looked up. The wind was perfect that day. The spool spun fast, I let out more and more line with growing pride, the line humming in my hands. Then a crosswind came, the kite tilted sideways, and by instinct I paid out half a turn of line to steady it. In that half turn, the line slipped off the spool.

The big swallow did not fall. It swayed a few times, drifted with the wind toward the end of the alley, and ended up caught in the power lines, hanging there steady, its tail floating below the wires like a painting suspended in midair. I stood where I was holding an empty spool, my head full of what my father had always said: never touch the power lines. I ran home as fast as my legs could carry me, shouting on the way: father, the kite is caught in the wires.

My father came out, looked up, and stayed calm. If it hangs there, so be it, he said, as long as no one is hurt. He pulled me back home and would not let me mention the kite that day. In the evening the whole alley was talking about it. Someone urged him to poke it down with a bamboo pole, and my father waved that off: nothing in the power lines belongs to anyone to touch, wait for the power station people.

For three days the swallow hung in the wires. In strong wind it shivered, in weak wind it sat still, and after school we all detoured to the mouth of the alley to look at it, like watching a bird frozen in place. I gave it a name, Half-Sky. Grandma

laughed at me, a ragged kite and it even has a name.

On the morning of the fourth day, a white utility truck of the power station drove into the alley. Two workers in blue uniforms got out, one climbing the pole in insulated gloves, one holding people back below. With a few snips of the insulated cutter the worker cut the tangled old line, and the swallow floated down. I was the first to run and pick it up. The worker told us: keep away from the wires when flying kites, and if a kite ever gets caught, never take it down yourselves, call us and we will come. My father thanked him again and again, and the worker waved it off, saying the kite was actually put together quite neatly.

The swallow tail had been worn short against the wires, and the remaining half was tied in a knot, yet it still flew. The day we flew it again, it went higher than before. Watching it up there, I felt its three days in the wires were not wasted: it had seen the whole alley looking up at it, and it had ridden in a utility truck, more worldly-wise than any of us.

The kite has lived behind our door ever since, the knot in its tail never untied. Every time I see that knot, I remember it hanging in midair and all the upturned faces at the mouth of the alley. Summer vacation was more than half over, and we told this story again and again, and at the end my father always added: remember, nothing in the power lines is for anyone to touch.

鹅没赶走，我先跑了起来

外婆屋后养着三只大白鹅，白天放出来在河边吃草，傍晚自己知道回圈。那年暑假我回去，自告奋勇要赶鹅。外婆斜眼看我：你？鹅认生，不听你的。我拍胸脯，我在城里连狗都不怕。外婆笑出了声，全巷子的人都听见了。

傍晚我拿一根竹竿下到河边。三只鹅正在浅水里不紧不慢地吃草，脖子一伸一缩，像商量好的。我吆喝一声，竹竿往地上一顿：回圈！鹅抬起头看我，看得很慢，从我的鞋看到我的脸，那眼神不像看人，像看一个不懂事的东西。

领头的是一只豁嘴鹅，嘴尖缺了一小块，据说是抢食抢赢过狗留下的。它朝我走了两步，我后退一步。它再走两步，我又退一步。我嘴上还硬着，腿已经诚实了。豁嘴鹅忽然一伸脖子，翅膀半张，冲我扑过来，另外两只跟着一起上。我把竹竿扔了。

我跑，鹅追。半条巷子，我听见翅膀扑棱的声音在背后，比脚步声还密。鹅脖子长，追到跟前一伸嘴，拧住我小腿就是一拧。那种疼又钝又狠，我一路跳一路喊。巷子里的人从屋里探出头，看见一个男孩被三只白鹅追着跑，全都笑出了声，没有一个人来帮忙——他们都知道鹅不咬死人，就是拧人疼。

我情急之下扑进路边堆着的草垛。草垛深，鹅嘴够不着。三只鹅在草垛外站成一排，伸长脖子朝里看，像审一个躲起来的犯人。我埋在草里，心跳得像打鼓，裤腿上一处一处火辣辣的。僵持了能有五分钟，豁嘴鹅先掉头，三只鹅排着队，昂首挺胸回了自己的圈，走得不慌不忙，像赢的不是我。

我从草垛里爬出来，裤腿上五个针眼样的小孔，小腿青了一块。外婆迎出来，一边给我抹油一边笑：我说鹅不听你的，你还不信。我龇牙咧嘴地说，它们不是不听，它们是合伙。

晚上我坐在门槛上，看屋后的鹅圈。三只鹅已经睡了，缩着脖子，白成一团。白天那件事现在想起来还想跑，可又忍不住想笑。豁嘴鹅拧我那一下，是我整个暑假最疼的一下，也是最多人笑的一下。后来我再没自告奋勇过——不是怕，是懂了：不是所有看起来慢的东西，都好欺负。

The Geese Were Not Driven Off, and I Started Running First

Behind grandmothers house lived three big white geese, let out to graze by the river in the daytime and finding their own way back to the pen at dusk. That summer when I went back, I volunteered to drive them home. Grandma gave me a sidelong look: you? Geese distrust strangers; they will not listen to you. I thumped my chest: I am not even afraid of dogs in the city. Grandma laughed out loud, and the whole alley heard it.

At dusk I took a bamboo pole down to the river. The three geese were cropping grass in the shallow water at an unhurried pace, necks stretching in and out as if rehearsed. I gave a shout and stamped the pole on the ground: go home! The geese raised their heads and looked at me, looking very slowly, from my shoes up to my face. Their eyes were not looking at a person; they were looking at something that did not know its place.

The leader was a goose with a notched bill, a small piece missing from the tip, said to be a wound from a food fight it once won against a dog. It took two steps toward me, and I took one step back. It took two more, and I stepped back again. My mouth was still tough, but my legs had already turned honest. Suddenly the notched goose shot its neck out, half-spread its wings, and charged at me, and the other two followed. I threw away the bamboo pole.

I ran, the geese chased. Half an alley long, I heard the beating of wings behind me, denser than footsteps. A goose neck is long; when it caught up, its bill shot out and twisted a wrench at my calf. The pain was blunt and vicious at once, and I hopped and shouted the whole way. People in the alley poked their heads out of their doors and saw a boy chased by three white geese, and everyone laughed, and not one person

came to help — they all knew geese do not hurt people to death, they only twist terribly.

In desperation I threw myself into a haystack stacked by the road. The stack was deep, and goose bills could not reach in. The three geese stood in a row outside, necks stretched in, peering like interrogating a fugitive in hiding. Buried in the straw, my heart drummed, and my trouser legs burned in patch after patch. The standoff lasted about five minutes before the notched goose turned around first, and the three geese filed back to their pen, heads high, chests out, unhurried, as if the winner of the day had not been me.

I crawled out of the haystack with five needle-like holes in my trouser leg and a bruise rising on my calf. Grandma came out laughing while she rubbed oil on my leg: I said the geese would not listen to you, and you would not believe me. Through my grimace I said: it was not that they would not listen, it was that they conspired.

At night I sat on the doorstep looking at the goose pen behind the house. The three geese were already asleep, necks tucked in, white as one cloud. What happened by day still made me want to run when I thought of it, yet I could not help laughing too. The wrench the notched goose gave me was the most painful moment of that whole summer, and also the one that made the most people laugh. I never volunteered again after that — not from fear, but from understanding: not everything that looks slow is easy to bully.