骤雨、屋檐和彩虹

七月十八日 星期六 雷阵雨转晴

今天下午这场骤雨，说来就来，一点商量都不讲。我刚从补习班楼里出来，抬头看了看天，觉得还能撑一会儿，结果自行车才骑到半路，雨点就啪啪地砸下来，大得像豆子，打在柏油路面上腾起一层白烟，声音像谁把一口大锅扣到了整条街上。我把车冲进路边一家文具店的屋檐底下，袖子往下滴水，鞋一踩一响。

屋檐底下不止我一个人。有个卖冷饮的阿姨，一个骑电动三轮收废品的老头。谁也不说话，三个人一起看眼前那片雨帘。雨大得排水沟都吞不过来，水顺着路牙子流成一条小河，卷着落花和几片叶子打转。收废品的老头伸手试了试雨，把手收回来说：这雨好，地里的庄稼乐了。我忽然想起奶奶田里的秧苗，这会儿它们大概正仰着脖子喝饱吧。

等雨的时候，文具店老板搬出一个暖水瓶，给老头倒了杯茶；冷饮阿姨递给我一根冰棍，我还没开口，她也没要钱，说：拿着冰棍等雨，就不觉得长了。我们三个互不认识的人，就这么在窄窄的屋檐底下一字排开，边吃边看雨。一只麻雀落到路上的水洼里，匆匆忙忙洗了个澡，雨一急又飞走了。我想起刚才自己还急得不行，恨这场雨耽误我回家打游戏，现在倒好，人站在雨中间，什么也干不了，雨反而像一份礼物了。

雨停得跟它来一样突然。云还堆着，西边却撕开了一条亮。有人喊：彩虹！我抬头——一道彩虹，半拱形，挂在城边那一排楼顶上，上头红，底下紫，不算宽，可清楚得很，像谁刚画上去的，漆还没干。冷饮阿姨忘了收摊，老头忘了发动车，我扶着自行车站着，忘了自己身上的衣服还在滴水。

后来我躺在床上想：要是这场雨不来，我会一路骑回家，进屋，照旧打开手机，这道彩虹就跟我一点关系也没有了。是这场骤雨把我按下来，让我停，停了才看见。彩虹不等人，也不解释，它就挂那么几分钟，谁抬头谁赚到，谁低头谁错过。这个夏天，城上头不知道挂过多少道彩虹，都挂给了低头看手机的人头顶上。

到家晚了，妈妈问我怎么这么晚。我说：我看了一道彩虹。她问：然后呢？我说：然后它没了，我就回来了。今晚我在日记里写：这个夏天，我被一场雨强行按停过一次，这一停，比我急着赶去的所有事都值。

The Sudden Rain, the Eaves, and the Rainbow

July 18th, Saturday, thunderstorm then clear

The sudden rain this afternoon came without any warning at all. I had just walked out of the tutoring class building and looked up at the sky, thinking it would hold off long enough for me to get home. I was only halfway there on my bike when the raindrops came down bang, big as beans, hitting the asphalt road until it turned

white with splashes. The sound was like somebody tipping a giant pot upside down over the whole street. I pushed my bike under the eaves of a stationery shop at the roadside. Water ran down my sleeves, and my shoes went squelch-squelch with every step I took.

Under the eaves, besides me, there was a lady who sold cold drinks from a cart and an old man on an electric tricycle that collected scrap paper and bottles. Nobody said anything. The three of us just stood there watching the curtain of rain in front of us. The rain came down so hard that the gutters could not swallow it fast enough, and the water ran along the curb like a small river, carrying fallen flower petals and a few torn leaves, spinning as it went. The old man from the scrap cart reached out his hand, tested the rain, pulled his hand back, and said: this rain is good, the crops in the fields are going to be happy. I suddenly thought of Grandma's rice seedlings in the village. They must be stretching their necks and drinking their fill right now.

While we waited, the shop owner brought out a thermos and poured the old man a cup of tea, and the cold drink lady handed me a popsicle without my even asking, and she did not take my money, either. She said: hold a popsicle while you wait for the rain, and the waiting does not feel long. Three people who had never met stood in a row under the narrow eaves, eating and watching the rain. A sparrow landed in a puddle on the road, took a hurried little bath, and flew off when the rain came harder. I remembered that only ten minutes earlier I had been in a terrible hurry, angry that this rain was ruining my plan to get home and play games. Now I was standing in the middle of the rain with nothing to do at all, and the rain had turned into a present.

The rain stopped just as suddenly as it had started. The clouds were still piled up in mounds, but a band of light had already been laid down along the west side of the sky. Somebody shouted: a rainbow! I looked up. There it was, a rainbow, half an arch, hanging above the row of buildings at the edge of the city, red on the outside, violet on the inside, not very wide, but clear and bright, as if somebody had just painted it there and the paint was not dry yet. The cold drink lady forgot to pack up her cart, the old man forgot to start his engine, and I stood there with one hand on my bike, completely forgetting that my own clothes were still dripping water.

Later, lying in bed, I thought about it: if this rain had not come, I would have pedaled straight home, walked into my room, opened my phone as usual, and this rainbow would have had nothing to do with me at all. It was this sudden rain that forced me to stop, and it was the stopping that let me see it. The rainbow does not wait for anybody, and it does not explain itself to anybody either. It just hangs there for a few minutes. Whoever happens to be looking up gets to see it, and whoever keeps his head down simply misses it. How many rainbows must have hung over this city

this summer, over the heads of all the people who were looking down at their screens?

When I finally got home, Mom asked me why I was so late. I said: I was watching a rainbow. She asked: and then? I said: and then it disappeared, and I came home. In my diary tonight I wrote one line: this summer, I was once forced to stop by a rain, and that stopping was worth more than everything I had been in such a hurry to get back to.

阳台上的双道彩虹

七月二十九日 星期三 雷阵雨转晴

下午四点多，天变成了铁锅的颜色，一层一层往楼顶上面压。风先到，把路边梧桐树的叶子吹得翻了面，露出浅绿的背面，又把一个塑料袋在街上赶得一跳一跳。然后雨就轰地下来了，斜着下，打在阳台的玻璃上啪啪响，像有人敲门还不等人应。我正在书桌前跟一道数学题较劲，笔一放，走到窗边去看。对面那栋高楼一下子就没了，只剩顶上两层在雨雾里留着一个淡淡的轮廓。落水管的水像瀑布一样倒出来，路上的水洼开满了密密的泡，像一千多个肥皂泡同时出现又同时破掉。

城里的雷阵雨跟奶奶村里的雨不一样。村里的人可以跑到田埂上去，站在雨中间；这里全城只能隔着一层玻璃看。我想：这场雨落给了全城，可全城都关着窗户。

雨停了，云从中间裂开，光哗地倒下来，把整座城市洗得发亮。妈妈在客厅喊：快来快来，快看！我跑到阳台上。西边天上，那一排高楼的顶上，挂着一道彩虹——还不止一道！大彩虹底下还有一道，淡淡的、细细的，颜色顺序是反的。双彩虹。我两只手忙乱地从兜里摸出手机，手指头笨得连焦点都对不上，拍出来天上糊着一团灰白。再拍，还是糊。妈妈说：把手机放下，用眼睛看。我把手机塞回兜里，认认真真地看。彩虹在慢慢变淡，红色那一段先没，蓝色那一段最后才走。它没了以后，天就是平常的天，好像什么都没发生过。

我看着手机里那两张糊掉的照片，忽然明白了一件事：有些东西，不是用来带走的，是用来看见的。我一个夏天都在忙着记录：录游戏集锦，录同学讲的段子，连吃饭都要先拍一遍，然后那些文件再也不会被打开，像一沓我根本没去过的旅行的收据。可这道彩虹，我是用两只眼睛一秒一秒看完的，从它出来看到它消失，它存在我脑子里，比任何照片都清楚，也都新。

还有一件事要记下来：妈妈一直站在我旁边。她每天忙，我记不起她上一次这样站着看天是什么时候了。这一次是她喊我过来看的，不是我喊她。原来大人也需要有人提醒他们抬头，只是他们从来不说。

今晚我在日记里写：彩虹一共活了七分钟左右。我没把它带走，可我全得到了。

The Double Rainbow on Our Balcony

July 29th, Wednesday, thunderstorm then clear

It was a little past four in the afternoon when the sky turned the color of an old iron pot, pressing lower and lower over the tops of the buildings. The wind arrived first. It blew the leaves of the scholar trees along the roadside inside out, showing their pale green backs, and it dragged a plastic bag down the street in jumps. Then the rain came down with a roar, falling sideways, tapping a fast rhythm on the balcony window glass that sounded like somebody knocking and refusing to wait for an answer. I had been sitting at my desk working through a math problem set. I put my pen down and went to the window to watch. The tall building across the street disappeared in an instant, and only the faint outline of its top two floors stayed visible inside the rain mist. Water poured out of the downpipe like a waterfall, and the puddles on the road bloomed with dense little bubbles, like a thousand soap bubbles appearing and vanishing all at once.

A summer thunderstorm in the city is different from the rain in Grandma's village. Out there, people can walk to the edge of the field and stand right in the middle of it. Here, the whole city can only watch the rain through a single pane of glass. I thought to myself: this rain is falling for everybody in the city, and yet almost every window in the city is closed.

Then the rain stopped, the clouds split open in the middle, and light poured down and washed the whole city bright. Mom called from the living room: come quick, come quick, look at this! I ran out to the balcony. Over the western sky, above the row of high-rises, there was a rainbow — and it was not alone. Under the big bright one there was a second, fainter and thinner, with its colors in the reverse order. A double rainbow. I fumbled my phone out of my pocket with both hands, my fingers so clumsy that the screen could not decide what to focus on, and the picture I took showed nothing but a grayish-white smudge across the sky. I took another one. Still a smudge. Mom said: put the phone away and look with your own eyes. So I put the phone into my pocket and really looked. The rainbow was already fading, slowly, the red part disappearing first and the blue part staying the longest. When it was gone, the sky was just an ordinary sky again, as if nothing at all had happened.

I looked at the two blurry photos on my phone, and suddenly I understood something. Some beautiful things are not meant to be taken away. They are meant to be seen. I have spent the whole summer trying to record things: recording game clips, recording the funny videos my classmates make, photographing the food on the table before I take a single bite, and then never opening any of those files again. The recordings sit in my phone like a pile of receipts for trips I never actually took. But this rainbow, I watched it with my own two eyes, second by second, from the

moment it appeared to the moment it disappeared, and it is stored somewhere inside my head, sharper and fresher than any photo could ever keep it.

There is one more thing I want to write down. Mom stood next to me the whole time. She is busy every single day, and I could not remember the last time she had stood still long enough to look at the sky. This time it was she who called me over to look, not the other way around. Maybe grown-ups need somebody to remind them to look up too; they just never say so out loud. Next time there is something in the sky, I decide right now, I will be the one who calls.

Tonight I wrote in my diary: the rainbow lived for about seven minutes. I failed to take it away with me, and I got every second of it.

田埂上的彩虹

八月六日 星期四 雨转晴

我在奶奶家已经住了一个星期。今天的雨是下午落的，整个村子一下子静了，只剩雨打在瓦上的声音，密一阵，疏一阵，墙边车前草的大叶子接雨，接一把撒一把。爷爷不出门，坐在屋檐下的小板凳上卷旱烟，一片一片叶子慢慢抹，跟他做所有事一样慢。我坐在他旁边剥玉米。雨从屋檐口滑下来，在湿地上砸出一个一个圆圆的小坑，坑满了，又在前头砸出新的坑。

雨停了，云往后山那边跑干净了，光回到田上。爷爷站起来，朝西边眯眼看了一会儿，说：你看，虹在田上。我顺着他的手指看——一道好大的彩虹，一头扎在后山的云里，一头垂到我们的玉米地上空，像谁在我们家田上搭了一座彩色的桥。玉米叶上还挂着雨，让光一照，整片地亮闪闪的，风一来，哗地轻轻晃一下，像地在出气。

爷爷说：西虹晒衣裳，东虹泼水缸。今天这道虹落在西边，往后几天是晴天，麦子可以按计划割了晒了。我问他这些老话是谁教他的。他说他爷爷教的，传了不知道多少辈，没错过。我忽然想起地理课本上那句「彩虹是阳光射进空气里的水滴、发生折射和反射形成的色散现象」，就背给他听。爷爷把烟卷好，点上，说：你说的对，我说的也对。我知道虹里有雨，你知道虹里有光——咱爷俩看的是同一道虹。

我站在田埂上，看那道彩虹一直看到它没了。在城里我也见过彩虹，在手机屏幕里，边上让手指挡掉一块，底下不挨着任何东西。这是我头一回看见有头的彩虹，一头挨着云，一头挨着地，挨着玉米地，挨着我和爷爷站的地方。照片里的彩虹是一张画，田上的彩虹是一个地方，人站在它底下，它罩着人。

我还想明白一件事：我书里的知识和爷爷田里的知识，从来没见过面，可它们说的是同一片天。课本能讲出彩虹为什么有七种颜色，老话能算出明天能不能晒麦子，两个都不撒谎，两个也都不是全部。光有书，我会知道彩虹是物理，可会误了晒麦子；光有田，我会知道天气，可永远不会去问为什么。这两种知识像两只手，人得两只手一起用，才捧得住这个世界。

今晚我在日记里写：这个夏天，我在奶奶的田上看见了一道真的彩虹。爷爷的彩虹是天气，我的彩虹是物理，彩虹自己呢，它就是一道彩虹，挂在每个人头顶上，谁愿意怎么懂，它就让人怎么懂。

The Rainbow Over the Cornfield

August 6th, Thursday, rain then clear

I have been staying at Grandma's in the village for a week now. Today the rain fell in the afternoon, and the whole village went quiet inside it. The only sounds were the rain on the tile roof of the house, dense for a while, sparse for a while, and the big plantain leaves by the wall catching handfuls of it and spilling them back out. Grandfather did not go out either. He sat on a small stool under the eaves rolling a cigarette, smoothing the leaf over and over, slowly, the way he does everything, and I sat next to him shucking corn. The raindrops slid off the edge of the eaves and punched small round holes in the wet ground, one after another; each hole filled up, and a new hole opened in front of it.

When the rain stopped, the clouds ran away toward the mountain behind the village, and the light came back over the fields. Grandfather stood up, squinted toward the west for a moment, and said: look, there is a rainbow over the fields. I followed his finger. A big rainbow, one end stuck into the cloud on the back mountain, the other end hanging down right over our cornfield, as if somebody had set up a colored bridge above the place where our family works. The corn leaves were still wet from the rain, and under the light the whole field glittered; when the wind came, it swayed all at once with a soft rustle, like the ground breathing out.

Grandfather said: rainbow in the west, hang the clothes out to dry; rainbow in the east, the water comes down like a bucket. Today's rainbow sits in the west, so the next few days will stay fine, and we can cut and dry the wheat right on schedule. I asked him who had taught him these sayings. He said his grandfather taught him, and nobody knows how many generations back they go, and they have never once been wrong. I remembered a line from my geography textbook — a rainbow is the dispersion of sunlight refracted and reflected inside water droplets in the air — and I recited it out loud to him. Grandfather finished rolling his cigarette, lit it, and answered: what you said is right, and what I said is right too. I know there is rain inside the rainbow; you know there is light inside the rainbow. We two are looking at the same rainbow.

I stood at the edge of the field and watched that rainbow until it was gone. In the city I had seen rainbows before, on phone screens, cut off at the edges by

somebody's thumb, floating above nothing. This was the first time I saw a rainbow with ends, a rainbow that touched the ground, that connected the cloud on the mountain, the cornfield, and the exact spot where Grandfather and I were standing. A rainbow in a photo is a picture. A rainbow over a field is a place. You stand underneath it, and it stands over you.

I also thought something through. The knowledge in my books and the knowledge in Grandfather's fields have never met each other, and yet they describe the same sky. My textbook can explain why the rainbow has seven colors, and Grandfather's sayings can tell whether tomorrow will let us dry the wheat. Neither one is lying, and neither one is the whole thing by itself. If I only had the book, I would know the rainbow was physics and I would miss the wheat. If I only had the field, I would know the weather and I would never ask why. These two kinds of knowledge are like two hands, and a person needs both of them to hold the world up.

Tonight I wrote in my diary: this summer I saw a real rainbow over Grandma's field. Grandfather's rainbow is weather, my rainbow is physics, and the rainbow itself is only a rainbow. It hangs over everybody's head, and it lets every person understand it in his own way, and the sky does not mind at all.