蝉鸣把夏天叫醒了

天还没亮透，蝉就先叫起来了。我在堂屋的竹席上醒来，声音从门缝里钻进来，一层叠着一层，像有人在外面用木桨搅动整个夏天。

蝉声随着日头加深。到中午，它们像烧开的水，咕嘟咕嘟地漫过屋檐和街树之间的空隙。我把耳朵贴在窗棂上，想从里面挑出一声单独的，挑不出来。那声音像一根线，缠着成群的蝉。

院里老槐树的荫，是整个夏天最凉的地方。荫跟着太阳走：早上盖住水井，晌午盖住石阶，下午又爬回堂屋的门槛。我们躺在荫里的凉席上，看日光从叶缝漏下来，在地上碎成圆圆的光点。光点会动，我们伸手去捉，手一近，它就散了。

巷口小卖部的冰柜里，冰棍冻成一整块，售货员拿小棍一根根撬开。五分钱一根的绿豆冰棍，签子上冒着白汽，我举着它走回家，走得很慢，怕风把凉气吹跑。

我蹲在树荫底下吃冰棍。蝉在头顶叫，甜水顺着手指往下流，凉气一直沉到心口。冰棍吃到一半就化了，我把它举高，对着蝉声咬最后一口，木签上还剩一层绿沙，也舔掉了。

那天下午还玩了什么、跟谁拌了嘴，我都记不清了，只记得树荫是绿的，冰棍是甜的，蝉声大得像要把整个夏天掀翻过来。

八月底的一天，蝉声忽然变了样。不再是盛夏那种密不透风的合唱，变成一阵长、一阵短的稀落叫声，像有人隔着很远在问：夏天是不是要过完了。我抬头看槐树，叶子边上已经卷起了黄。

如今夏天到了，我还会在城市里找蝉声。听见一声，那片树荫、那根冰棍、那个昏昏欲睡的中午就全回来了，连指尖都记得那股甜。暑假一年一年地过去，蝉却年年都这样，把夏天叫醒。

The Cicadas Called the Summer Awake

Before dawn broke, the cicadas were already calling. I woke up on the bamboo bed in the middle hall, and the sound came in through the gap of the door, layer after layer, as if someone outside were stirring the whole summer with a wooden paddle.

The cicada chorus thickened as the day deepened. At noon it sounded like boiling water, bubbling over the space between the eaves and the street trees. I pressed my ear against the window lattice and tried to pick out a single voice, but could not. The sound was like a thread, and whole crowds of cicadas were tangled in it.

The shade of the old locust tree in our courtyard was the coolest place of the whole summer. The shade moved with the sun: in the morning it covered the well, at noon it covered the stone steps, and in the afternoon it climbed back to the door of the middle hall. We lay on mats inside the shade and watched sunlight leak through the leaves into small round spots on the ground. The spots traveled, and we reached

out to catch them, but they scattered as soon as our hands came near.

At the mouth of the lane stood a small shop with an icebox, and the popsicles inside had frozen into one solid block. The shopkeeper pried them apart one by one with a small stick. A green bean popsicle cost five cents. White vapor rose from the stick, and I carried it home slowly, afraid the wind would blow the cold away.

I squatted under the tree shade and ate the popsicle. The cicadas called overhead, sweetness ran down my fingers, and the cold sank all the way to my heart. Halfway through, it started melting, so I held it high and took the last bite facing the cicada song. A layer of green sand was left on the stick, and I licked that off too.

I no longer remember what games we played that afternoon or who I quarreled with. I only remember that the tree shade was green, the popsicle was sweet, and the cicadas were so loud that they seemed ready to turn the whole summer upside down.

One day in late August, the cicada song changed. It was no longer the airtight chorus of high summer but a scattered calling, now long, now short, like someone asking from far away whether the summer was about to end. I looked up at the locust tree and found the leaves curling yellow at the edges.

Now when summer comes, I still listen for cicadas in the city. The moment I hear one, that tree shade, that popsicle, and that drowsy noon all return at once, and even my fingertips remember that taste of sweetness. Summer vacations pass year after year, yet the cicadas call each summer awake in exactly the same way.

蝉声跟进了城

入伏以后，小区花园的柏树上响起了蝉。我在书房听见，笔停在半空——那声音和三十年前老院子葡萄架上的，是同一个。

老院子的夏天是从蝉鸣里泡出来的。清晨葡萄叶上还挂着水，蝉已经开嗓，一声拉得很长，像谁在屋顶上慢慢锯一根木头。中午叫得最凶，密密匝匝，把整个院子罩在声音底下。夜里它们歇了，院子静得能听见井水晃动的声音。鸡在墙根下打盹，狗趴在门槛的荫里，舌头伸出来，也不赶。

葡萄架的荫是夏天里最好的一间屋子。荫落在地上，厚厚一层，祖母把竹床搬到荫里，让我们睡午觉。蝉在头顶叫，荫凉从后背漫上来，人半睡半醒，觉得整个夏天都躺在这片荫里，哪儿也不用去。日头偏西，荫从鸡窝那边挪回竹床底下，祖母就喊：起来了，荫都回来接你们了。

父亲骑车去镇上，回来时车把上挂着一网兜冰棍，用旧棉袄裹着。他进院先喊我的名字，我

光着脚跑出去，冰棍还硬着，棉袄上洇出一片湿。父亲说路上骑得快，风帮了忙。我举着冰棍绕葡萄架跑一圈才肯咬第一口，糖精水的甜味，能从舌尖一直甜到脚后跟。

我在城里长大以后，很多年没听过那样密的蝉声。老院子拆了，葡萄架不知去向，祖母和父亲先后走了。有一年夏天回镇上，柏油路两旁裁得齐齐整整的行道树上，蝉居然还在叫，叫声和从前一模一样。我站在树荫里听完一整段，手心出汗，眼眶也出汗。

如今柏树上的蝉每天替我叫那个夏天。孩子放学回来，趴在窗台上找蝉，找到了就喊：爸爸，它在这儿。我走过去，也听见了。蝉声落在窗台上，落在我们两个人中间，像一片挪了三千里的树荫。

The Cicada Song Followed Me Into the City

After the dog days began, cicadas started singing in the cypress trees of our residential garden. I heard them from my study and my pen stopped in midair — that sound was the same one from the grape trellis in the old courtyard thirty years ago.

Summer in the old courtyard steeped itself in cicada song. Early in the morning, water still clung to the grape leaves when the cicadas cleared their throats, each note drawn out long, like someone slowly sawing a piece of wood on the roof. At noon they sang the fiercest, dense and tight, covering the whole courtyard under a lid of sound. At night they rested, and the courtyard was quiet enough to hear the well water sloshing. The hens dozed under the wall, and the dog lay in the shade of the doorstep with its tongue hanging out, too lazy to be chased away.

The shade of the grape trellis was the finest room of the summer. The shade lay thick on the ground, and grandmother moved the bamboo bed into it for our afternoon nap. The cicadas sang overhead, coolness rose from the ground into our backs, and half asleep we felt the whole summer lying inside this shade with nowhere else to go. When the sun leaned west and the shade slid back from the henhouse to under the bamboo bed, grandmother called: get up, the shade has come back to fetch you.

Father rode his bicycle to town, and on the way home a net bag of popsicles hung from the handlebar, wrapped in an old padded coat. He called my name first thing in the courtyard. I ran out barefoot, and the popsicles were still hard, with a wet patch spread across the coat. Father said he pedaled fast and the wind helped. I ran one lap around the trellis holding the popsicle aloft before I dared take the first bite. The sweetness of saccharin water traveled from my tongue all the way to my heels.

After I grew up in the city, I did not hear cicadas that thick for many years. The old courtyard was demolished, the grape trellis vanished, and grandmother and

father passed away one after another. One summer I went back to the town, and on the neatly trimmed roadside trees along the asphalt, the cicadas were somehow still singing, note for note the same as before. I stood in the tree shade and listened to one whole passage through, my palms sweating, my eyes too.

Now the cicadas in the cypress call that summer for me every day. When my child comes home from school, he presses against the windowsill looking for them, and when he finds one he shouts: Dad, it is right here. I walk over and hear it too. The cicada song lands on the windowsill, between the two of us, like a patch of tree shade moved three thousand li away.

蝉鸣里的一天

叫醒我的是蝉。清早五点多，窗纸刚透出一线白，院子里的蝉就一声接一声地试嗓子，像赶集前清点人数。我翻了个身，竹席上还剩一点夜的凉。

祖父已经在菜地里了。他蹲在黄瓜架下绑蔓，草帽压在膝盖上。我跟去帮忙提水，木桶晃出来的水花打湿鞋面。日头还没站起来，蝉叫得松散，一声是一声，听得清它们各自站在哪棵树上。

日头立起来以后，蝉就合成了同一片声音。祖父把活儿收进墙根的桑树荫里，修剪子、搓草绳。荫地不大，刚好站下两个人。桑树叶子厚，蝉就在头顶，叫声贴着耳朵滚，人站在荫里，像躲在一口倒扣的钟下面。祖父手上搓着绳，偶尔抬头看蝉叫的方向，说叫得这样响，说明天还是晴。

晌午，祖母从镇上带回一根冰棍，红心的，攥在手里直冒白汽。我含着它躲进屋后的树荫。冰棍化得比吃得快，糖水顺着手腕往下爬。蝉声在正午稠得化不开，我靠着树干眯起眼，凉从脚底往上走，甜在舌头上化，那根冰棍吃到最后舍不得咬，只用舌头一点点舔，连木签都舔得干干净净。

午睡起来，蝉声矮了半截，日头从正南滑向西边。祖父从井里吊起镇了一下午的西瓜，刀一碰，瓜自己裂开，凉气混着蝉声一起涌进院子。我们坐在树荫底下吃瓜，汁水顺着手肘滴。蝉声这时候变得柔软，一阵长一阵短，像唱累了。祖父把瓜籽吐进墙根，说明天再镇一个。

天黑透之前，最后几只蝉叫了几声就停了。我帮着收桌子，心里有点空，又有点满。空的是蝉不叫了，满的是这一天从早到晚，蝉一直在，荫一直在，甜的东西也来过。暑假还长，我知道明天清早，蝉还会把我叫醒。

One Day Inside the Cicada Song

What woke me was the cicadas. A little past five in the morning, the window paper had just turned pale at the edge, and the cicadas in the courtyard were testing their voices one after another, like vendors counting heads before the market. I turned over; the bamboo mat still held a little of the coolness of the night.

Grandfather was already in the vegetable garden, squatting under the cucumber trellis tying down the vines, his straw hat resting on his knee. I went along to help carry water, and the splashes from the wooden bucket wet my shoes. The sun had not yet risen, and the cicadas sang loosely, note by separate note, and you could hear which tree each one stood on.

Once the sun stood up, the cicadas merged into a single wall of sound. Grandfather moved the work into the shade of the mulberry tree by the wall, trimming branches and twisting straw rope. The patch of shade was small, just enough for two people. The mulberry leaves were thick, the cicadas right overhead, their song rolling against the ears; standing in the shade felt like hiding under an upside-down bell. Grandfather twisted rope as he worked, occasionally looking up toward where the cicadas sang, saying that such a loud chorus meant tomorrow would stay clear.

At noon, grandmother brought back a popsicle from town, red at the heart, giving off white vapor in my hand. I held it in my mouth and hid in the shade behind the house. It melted faster than I could eat it, and sweet water crawled down my wrist. The cicada song at high noon was too thick to stir; I leaned against the tree trunk and dozed off, coolness rising from my feet, sweetness melting on my tongue. At the end I could not bear to bite the stick, so I licked it little by little, until even the wooden stick was clean.

When I woke from the nap, the cicada song had dropped half its volume, and the sun had slid from due south toward the west. Grandfather hoisted the watermelon he had cooled in the well all afternoon; the knife barely touched it and the melon split open by itself, cold air surging into the courtyard together with the cicada song. We sat under the tree shade eating melon, juice dripping down our elbows. The cicadas had turned soft by then, one phrase long, one short, as if tired of singing. Grandfather spat the seeds toward the base of the wall and said he would cool another one tomorrow.

Before the dark settled completely, the last few cicadas called a couple of times and stopped. I helped clear the table, feeling a little empty and a little full. Empty because the cicadas had stopped; full because from morning to night the cicadas had been there, the shade had been there, and something sweet had come through. The summer vacation was still long, and I knew that tomorrow at dawn the cicadas would

wake me again.