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.

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