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.