小河收留了整个暑假

最后一门考试收卷那天，我和表哥骑车直奔小河。路边的柳树把影子搭了半条路，暑气被压在叶缝里，吹到脸上的风已经是暑假的风。

小河不宽，也不深，最深处水到小腿肚。我们卷起裤腿踩进去，一整个下午的燥热凉得一激灵就散了。河床铺着圆石头，脚丫踩上去打滑，身子一晃，笑声先跑了出来。泡久了的石头捡起来对着太阳看，透亮得像一块玉。

表哥忽然掬起一捧水泼过来。水在太阳里碎开，水花的每一瓣都亮。我躲，还是溅了半脸，弯腰回敬两捧。我们一递一地泼，水花接连升起，落在水面上盘旋的蜻蜓背上，蜻蜓抖着翅膀飞走了。

泼累了，我们弯腰找扁石板打水漂。表哥挑一块，侧着身子一甩，石板贴着水面跳四下，每跳一下都顶起一小朵水花。我学着扔，前几块都直挺挺砸进水里，砸出一朵闷声的蘑菇水花。后来手腕学会了抖，石头跳了两下，我喊得比考场上答对题还响。

歇下来的时候，我在浅滩看见一条手指长的小鱼，立在水草边上一动不动。我拢起手去兜，它尾巴一摆蹿走了，尾巴带起的水花正打在我鼻尖上，凉得发酸。表哥说这条河里的鱼都精，年年看人，早看穿了。我们后来也不追了，就蹲在浅滩边看它立着，安安静静看了一小会儿。

那个下午，没有人问考试分数，也没有人提新学期的补习班。小河慢慢地流，水从脚丫边过去，时间也像被水冲得光滑了。我站在水里看云的影子从河面飘过去，觉得暑假真正开始，不是从散学那天，是从湿了脚丫的这一会儿。

傍晚回家，我从桥上回头望。夕阳把河面铺成金色，我们溅起的水花全都安静了下去，河重新平了，像什么都没发生。可我知道，这个暑假会记得我这双脚丫，我也会记得这条河。

The Little River Took In Our Whole Summer

The day the last exam papers were collected, my cousin and I biked straight to the little river. The willows along the road laid their shadows across half the path, the summer heat was pressed into the gaps between the leaves, and the wind on our faces was already the wind of vacation.

The little river is not wide and not deep; at its deepest the water reaches a calf. We rolled up our trouser legs and stepped in, and the stuffiness of a whole afternoon scattered in one shiver. The riverbed is paved with round stones; our feet slipped on them, our bodies swayed, and the laughter ran out first. Stones that had soaked a long time, picked up and held against the sun, were clear as a piece of jade.

Suddenly my cousin scooped up a handful of water and threw it at me. It broke apart in the sun, every petal of the splash bright. I dodged and still got half my

face wet, then bent down and answered with two handfuls. We splashed back and forth, the sprays rising one after another and falling on the backs of dragonflies circling above the water, which flew off shaking their wet wings.

Tired of splashing, we bent looking for flat stone slabs to skip. My cousin chose one, swung it sideways, and it hopped four times along the surface, each hop pushing up a small splash. I learned by throwing; my first stones plopped straight in, making muffled mushroom-shaped sprays. Later my wrist learned the flick, a stone skipped twice, and I shouted louder than when I got an answer right in an exam hall.

Taking a rest, I spotted a fish as long as a finger in the shallows, standing motionless by the watergrass. I cupped my hands to scoop it, and it flicked its tail and shot away; the splash from its tail landed right on the tip of my nose, cold enough to sting. My cousin said the fish in this river had all grown clever, watching people year after year until they saw right through us. We stopped chasing it after that, and squatted at the edge of the shallows watching it stand there, quiet for a little while.

That afternoon nobody asked about scores and nobody mentioned tutoring classes for the new term. The little river flowed slowly, water passing around our feet, and time itself seemed rinsed smooth. Standing in the water watching cloud shadows drift over the surface, I felt the summer vacation truly begin not on the day school closed but in this wet-footed moment.

Going home at dusk, I looked back from the bridge. The setting sun spread gold over the river, every splash we had raised had gone quiet, and the water lay flat again as if nothing had happened. But I knew this vacation would remember my pair of feet, and I would remember this river.