水洼是阵雨留给孩子的

雨是午后三点落的，落在村后的土路上。土路平时一身白灰，谁走谁扬一身。这场雨把它浇得透湿，颜色深下去，软下去，还留下一串水洼，从村口一直摆到打谷场，像谁随手撒了一地小镜子。

雨一停，我就穿着凉鞋出了门。第一脚我踩得小心翼翼，踩在最小的那个水洼上。水花从鞋边升起，一圈涟漪推着圈往外跑。我抬起脚看，鞋印在水洼里清清楚楚，连鞋底的花纹都在。再踩一脚，水花更高，我笑出了声。

阿贵和小满从巷子那头跑来，三个人立刻开始比赛，看谁踩的水洼大。最大的水洼在打谷场边上，半间屋那么大，边上还立着一块牌子，是大人立来挡土的。我们绕着它转了一圈，谁也不敢先下脚。最后还是阿贵心一横冲了进去，水花溅起半人高，他的白短裤立刻甩满了泥点。他喊，快来，水到脚踝，凉得很。我们跟进去，一人占一角，把水洼踩得四面开花。

水洼里的世界也被我们搅翻了。刚才装在水洼里的云碎成一片一片，天上的蜻蜓点水的圈也被我们的水花盖住。小满忽然指着水洼尖叫，里面有一条小蝌蚪，不知从哪儿被雨带来的。我们围过去看，谁也不许再踩，绕着它换了个方向，又去踩别的水洼。

回家前，我们排成一排，从打谷场往村里走，专挑水洼踩，一路踩出一长串啪啪的响声。裤腿全湿了，鞋里咕叽咕叽响，没人管。路过晒场，几个大人笑我们，我们也笑，笑得更大声。

后来我离了村，在城里见过许多雨。有一天下公交，站台上有个小孩趁妈妈低头看手机，一脚踩进路边的水洼，水花溅起来，他笑得直躲。我站在雨棚下，脚忽然也痒。原来水洼一直留在原地，等一个想起它的人，把快乐重新踩出声音。

The Puddles Are What the Shower Left for Children

The rain fell at three in the afternoon, onto the dirt road behind the village. The road wore a coat of white dust in ordinary times, and whoever walked it kicked up a cloud of it. This rain soaked it through; its color deepened, it softened, and it left a string of puddles stretching from the village entrance all the way to the threshing ground, like small mirrors someone had scattered on the way.

As soon as the rain stopped, I went out in my sandals. My first step was careful, landing on the smallest puddle. A splash rose along the shoe, and rings of ripples pushed outward. I lifted my foot to look: the footprint stood clear in the puddle, even the pattern of the sole. I stepped again, the splash jumped higher, and I laughed out loud.

A Gui and Xiao Man came running from the end of the lane, and the three of us at once began a contest over who could stomp the biggest puddle. The largest lay at the edge of the threshing ground, half the size of a room, with a board standing beside it that the grown-ups had set up to keep the dust down. We circled it once, none of

us daring to step in first. In the end A Gui made up his mind and charged in; the spray rose half a person high, and his white shorts were instantly dotted with mud. He shouted, come on in, the water reaches the ankle, it is wonderfully cool. We followed and each took a corner, making the puddle bloom on all four sides.

The world inside the puddles got overturned by us too. The clouds that had been stored in the water broke into piece after piece, and the rings of the dragonflies skimming the surface were covered over by our splashes. Xiao Man suddenly pointed at a puddle and screamed: inside it was a tiny tadpole, carried there by the rain from somewhere unknown. We gathered around to look, nobody was allowed to step near it again, and we moved around it to another direction and went on to stomp other puddles.

Before going home we lined up and walked from the threshing ground into the village, stepping deliberately into every puddle, making a long string of slapping sounds all the way. Our trouser legs were soaked, our shoes squelched, and nobody cared. Passing the drying yard, a few grown-ups laughed at us, and we laughed too, louder.

Later I left the village and saw much rain in the city. One day as I got off the bus, a child on the stop, while his mother looked down at her phone, stomped one foot into a puddle by the road; the splash flew up and he laughed as he dodged. I stood under the rain shelter, and my feet suddenly itched too. It turns out the puddles have always stayed in place, waiting for someone who remembers them to stomp the joy back into sound.