暑假结束时,我站在孩子旁边

星期天的晚上，我往儿子房间走，准备催他赶紧把作业收收尾。去年这个时候，这是一年里最让我头疼的事：他坐在书桌里面，我坐在书桌外面，我催一次、两次、三次，到第三次我火气上来，到第四次他就哭了，作业还是空着，夜也白白过去，第二天晚上再从同一个地方开始。

可门一开，我愣在门口。他正在自己整理作业。一科一摞，码得整整齐齐，对照一张他自己抄的清单打勾，数学卷子还从1到14编了序号，说这样夹在文件袋里就不会乱。他抬头看见我站在门口，说：妈，我快弄完了，就剩英语阅读记录。我说哦，那你慢慢弄，就安静地站在他床边看。我忽然反应过来：他不需要我催了。这个变化是什么时候发生的？也许是七月里我决定不再陪坐、不再替他收拾桌子的时候，也许还要早。孩子是在大人不留神的时候长大的。

过了一会儿，他把我叫过去，非要看他的暑假日记。他念他学做饭那一页：第一盘鸡蛋粘在锅底，铲子铲不下来，爸爸拿勺子挖出来的，那天晚上我们吃了糊鸡蛋炒饭，谁也没说糊，笑了整整一个星期。我们俩站在房间里笑到肚子疼。我趁这个由头回顾了这个暑假，发现它跟往年的不一样：他开始跟我去菜市场，一路自己拎着最重的那袋；他自己拿螺丝刀把房门松了的合页拧紧了，门不坠了，他退后两步看了看，像个小工程师。这些事都不在作业清单上，没有老师会检查，可在我心里，它们比作业值钱。

准备开学，今年也是一起弄的。我们一起装书包，买笔、本子、新的文件袋，然后坐在餐桌旁谈初三的打算。过去都是我说得多，定计划、下命令；这一次他说得比我多。他说数学要单做一个错题本，因为他翻了上学期的卷子，发现自己错的来来回回就是那两类；他说每天晚饭前要去操场跑步，因为去年体测是他成绩单上唯一的难看数字。我大部分时间就在旁边说：行，行，好，好。当孩子开始自己定计划，家长最好的工作就是听着。

晚上躺在床上，我想了很久。对家长来说，暑假结束的时刻，就是看着孩子又长一截、而且不用人推的时刻。去年我还在替他管暑假，今年我站在旁边，看他管他自己。原来放手多一点，不是失控，是给孩子留出让你惊喜的地方。今年我要是多催那一次，就看不见他自己把一切收拾妥当了。这是这个暑假教给我的一课，它不在他收起来的任何一本作业里。

At the End of Summer, I Stood Beside My Child

Sunday night, I walked down the hall about to remind my son to hurry up and finish his summer homework. Last year at this time, this was the most headache-inducing thing of the whole year. He sat on the inside of his desk, I sat on the outside. I reminded him once, twice, three times. By the third reminder my temper was up, and by the fourth he was crying, and the homework was still empty, and the night was wasted, and the next night started all over again from exactly the same place.

But when I opened his door, I stopped in the doorway and stood there. He was packing up his homework by himself. He had made piles, one for each subject, and he was checking them against a list he had copied out by hand on a piece of scrap paper. He had even numbered his math practice papers from one to fourteen, so that they

would stay in order inside his folder. He looked up, saw me standing there, and said: Mom, I am almost done, only the English reading log is left. I said: all right, take your time, and I stood quietly by his bed and watched him work. Then it hit me: he does not need me to remind him anymore. When did this change happen? Maybe in July, when I decided to stop sitting next to him and stopped cleaning up his desk after him. Maybe even earlier. Children grow while the grown-ups are not looking.

A little later, he called me over and made me read his summer diary. He read out loud the page about learning to cook: the first plate of eggs stuck to the bottom of the pan, he could not scrape them off with the spatula, so his father came over and dug them out with a spoon, and that night the whole family ate burnt-egg fried rice, and nobody mentioned that it was burnt, and we laughed about it for a full week. We stood there in his room laughing until our stomachs hurt. Then I looked back on this summer myself, and I found that it had been different from the summers before. He had started coming to the market with me and carrying the heaviest bag all the way home by himself. He had fixed the loose hinge of his own door with a screwdriver, and when the door stopped sagging, he stepped back and looked at it like a little engineer. None of these things are on any homework list, and no teacher will ever check them, but in my eyes they are worth more than homework.

Getting ready for the new term was a shared job this year, too. We packed his schoolbag together, bought pens, notebooks, and a new folder, and then we sat at the kitchen table and talked about his third year. In the past, I was the one who talked the most, making plans and giving orders. This time he talked more than I did. He said he wanted a separate mistake notebook for math, because he had looked through his papers from last term and found that he always made the same two kinds of mistakes. He said he wanted to run on the school playground every evening before dinner, because his sports test score last year was the only ugly number on his report card. I mostly just sat there and said: all right, all right, good, good. When your child starts making his own plans, the best job left for a parent is to listen.

That night, lying in bed, I thought about it for a long time. For a parent, the end of the summer vacation is the moment of watching the child grow one more span without anybody pushing. Last year I was still managing his summer for him; this year I stood beside him and watched him manage it himself. It turns out that letting go a little more is not losing control. It is giving the child the room where he gets to surprise you. If I had reminded him one more time this year, I would have missed watching him put everything in order on his own. This is the lesson this summer vacation taught me, and it is not written in any of the homework he packed away.