单车上的夏日午后

那年暑假，我有一辆单车， 后座绑着一只帆布包，包里一本书，一瓶水。 我不去什么地方，我只是骑。 路两边的树把荫铺给我， 一段，一段，又一段， 像谁把凉意切成薄片，随我取用。

蝉鸣在树荫里等着我。 车一进去，它就响起来， 车一出来，它就停住， 好像它只给过路的人演奏。 我故意在荫里骑得慢， 让它以为我是来听曲的， 不是路过的。

正午的村庄很静，狗都躲在门影里。 只有我，和头顶的蝉，醒着。 阳光把田野晒得发白，远处的路像一条亮带，铺向远方。 我望着它想：远方有多远？ 脚一踩，它就近一寸； 再想，它又退一寸。

路过村口的老槐，我停下来喝水。 树荫大得像一间屋子， 蝉在最高处唱，声音却落在最低的枝头， 砸在地上，碎成一片一片的响。 我蹲在荫里，看蚂蚁搬运一只飞蛾， 它们排着队，走得比我还认真。

再上路，风热起来了。 帆布包在背后一颠一颠， 书角敲着腰，像提醒我别忘了它。 其实我读得很慢，一个下午， 只够读二十页，加一段路，加一片蝉鸣。 可我觉得，那个下午我读到的东西， 比后来一个学期都多。

天边浮起灰蓝的云，远方在云下发起亮来。 我掉头往回骑，树荫换到路的另一边， 蝉鸣落在身后，越来越薄。 到家时，水壶还温，书页里夹着一片槐叶。 母亲问我去哪儿了，我说： 去远方转了一圈。 她笑，我也不解释。

多年以后，我去了真正的远方， 在地铁里听见孩子的笑声，忽然想起那条亮带一样的路。树荫还在不在，我不知道， 蝉鸣每年夏天都准时回来。 而我终于明白： 那个下午，我其实哪儿也没去， 我只是把远方，骑进了心里。

A Summer Afternoon on a Bicycle

That summer I had a bicycle, a canvas bag tied to the rear seat, a book and a bottle of water inside. I was not going anywhere in particular. I was only riding. The trees on both sides of the road unrolled their shade for me, section after section after section, as if someone had sliced coolness into thin pieces for me to help myself.

The cicada song waited for me inside the shade. When I rode in, it began; when I rode out, it stopped, as if it played only for people passing by. I deliberately rode slowly inside the shade, so that it would think I had come to listen to the music, not just to pass through.

The village at noon was very quiet; even the dogs hid in the shadows of the doorways. Only I, and the cicadas overhead, were awake. The sun bleached the fields white, and the road in the distance lay like a bright ribbon stretching toward the

faraway place. I looked at it and wondered: how far is far? One push of the pedal brings it an inch closer; one more thought of it, and it retreats an inch.

Passing the old locust tree at the village entrance, I stopped to drink water. Its shade was as large as a room, and the cicadas sang at the highest point, yet the sound fell onto the lowest branch and shattered on the ground into pieces of noise. I squatted in the shade and watched ants carrying a moth, marching in line, more serious than I had ever been.

Back on the road, the wind turned hot. The canvas bag bounced behind my back, the corner of the book tapping my waist, as if reminding me not to forget it. I had been reading slowly: one afternoon was only enough for twenty pages, plus one stretch of road, plus one patch of cicada song. Yet I feel that what I read in that afternoon was more than in a whole later term.

Gray-blue clouds rose at the edge of the sky, and the distance began to shine beneath them. I turned the handlebars and rode home, the shade switching to the other side of the road, the cicada song falling behind me, thinner and thinner. When I got home the water bottle was still warm, and a locust leaf was pressed between the pages. Mother asked where I had been, and I said: I took a ride out to the distance and back. She laughed, and I did not explain.

Years later I went to a real faraway place, and in a subway car I heard a child laugh and suddenly remembered that road like a bright ribbon. Whether the tree shade is still there, I do not know; the cicada song returns on time every summer. And I finally understand: that afternoon I actually went nowhere at all; I simply rode the distance into my heart.

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