# 竹椅的自述

我是一把竹椅，住在菜园边的篱笆旁。我的主人是个种菜的老头，人们管他叫爷爷。每天清晨，他把我搬到篱笆内侧放好，四条腿踩实，才去开他的水壶。他知道我腿软，怕我陷进松土，年年春天给我刷一遍桐油。

我的身上有好多记号。右边扶手缠过两道竹篾，那年他搬我进屋躲雨，我磕在门槛上，他心疼得很，去镇上把我修好。左前腿有一道白印，是有一年大水，他把我举过头顶挪上台阶时，我的腿撞在石头上留的。椅面正中塌下去一点，那是他十几年坐出来的。

他每天傍晚坐我。他坐下来的分量我认得，左半边重些，他习惯往那边靠。他坐我时话不多，卷裤脚，捻泥条，看他的菜。他看菜的样子，像读一封信，一行一行地读。有时他拍一下我的扶手，像拍一个老朋友的肩。

有个孩子常来。起先他坐不上我，只敢蹲在我旁边，递给他一根黄瓜。后来他长高了，趁爷爷浇水偷偷爬上来，压得我浑身竹节直响。他吓了一跳，爷爷在畦那头笑出了声。再后来，他坐在我上头写作业，我托着他的胳膊，看他写错又划掉。他不知道我能听见笔尖划纸的声音。

有一年，爷爷来得少了。先是几天一次，后来一整个夏天没来。那个孩子替他来，坐在我上头，一坐半个钟头，什么也不干，就看夕阳。夕阳把我的椅面照成两半，一半亮，一半暗。孩子伸手摸我扶手上那道浅色的竹篾疤，摸很久。

我以为我要被扔掉了。很多个傍晚空着，雨淋在我身上，雪压在我身上。可是没有。开春的时候，有人把我搬出去晒太阳，给我刷桐油，像从前一样。那个孩子已经很高了，蹲在地上看我，像小时候爷爷看我那样。

如今他又坐上了我，压出那声熟悉的咯吱。他的分量跟爷爷不一样，可坐的位置一样，塌下去的那一点正好接住他。夕阳从丝瓜架的缝里漏下来，落在他的膝盖上。我轻轻响了一声。我想，我记着的不是一个老头，也不只是一个孩子，是这一整片菜园坐过的所有傍晚。

# Confessions of the Bamboo Chair

I am a bamboo chair, living beside the fence of a vegetable garden. My owner is an old man who grows vegetables; people call him Grandpa. Every morning he carries me inside the fence and sets me square, pressing my four legs firm before he opens his watering can. He knows my legs are soft and afraid of sinking into loose soil, so every spring he brushes me with a coat of tung oil.

My body carries many marks. The right armrest is bound with two bands of bamboo strip. The year he carried me in out of the rain, I struck the doorframe, and he grieved over it, taking me to town for mending. My left front leg bears a pale scar from the flood year, when he lifted me over his head onto the steps and my leg hit the stone. The middle of my seat has sunk a little, pressed down by ten-odd years of his sitting.

He sits in me every evening. I know the weight of him settling down, heavier on the left side, where he leans of habit. He is not talkative on me. He rolls his cuffs, twists off streaks of mud, watches his vegetables. The way he reads the garden is the way one reads a letter, line by line. Sometimes he pats my armrest, the way one pats the shoulder of an old friend.

A child came often. At first he could not climb into me and only dared crouch beside me while Grandpa handed him a cucumber. Then he grew taller and, while Grandpa watered, secretly climbed up, pressing me until every joint cried out. He started; Grandpa laughed out loud from the far end of the bed. Later he did homework sitting on me, my arms holding his elbows as he crossed out mistakes. He does not know I can hear the pen scratching paper.

One year, Grandpa came less. First once every few days, then not the whole summer. The child came in his place, sat in me for half an hour at a time, doing nothing, just watching the setting sun. The sun split my seat into two halves, one bright, one dark. The child reached out and touched the pale scar of bamboo strip on my armrest, touching it a long time.

I thought I would be thrown away. Many evenings stood empty; rain beat on me, snow pressed on me. But it did not happen. In spring, someone carried me out into the sun and brushed me with tung oil, just as before. The child was tall now, crouching to look at me the way Grandpa once looked at him.

Now he sits in me again, drawing out that familiar creak. His weight is not the weight of Grandpa, but he sits in the same place, and the little hollow catches him exactly. The sun leaks through the gaps of the luffa trellis onto his knees. I creak once, softly. I think what I hold is not one old man, nor only one child, but every evening this whole garden has ever sat through.

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