那只湿透的手套

阳台上晾着一只手套，蓝色的，袖口结着一圈洗不掉的白印子。妈妈洗了三遍都没洗干净，说这只手套报废了。我盯着那圈白印子，闻不到雪味儿，可那天的一切都回来了。

那天早上其实没什么特别的，就是醒得早。窗帘缝里漏进来的光是白的，白得不讲道理，照得被窝外面像另一个世界。我推开窗，冷气顶着肺，眼前全是雪：楼下的车全成了奶油蛋糕，花坛的边儿没了，连平时最显眼的垃圾桶也矮了半截，戴了顶圆帽子。我愣了几秒钟才想起来喊，下雪啦！声音把楼下遛狗的人吓得回头，狗也冲我汪汪了两声，大概是嫌我吵。

上学路上，雪还在下，落在伞上沙沙响，像谁在头顶上翻一本很厚的书。经过巷口，糖炒栗子的香味混在冷空气里飘过来，炒锅的师傅围着围裙铲着栗子，铁铲刮着锅底，哗啦，哗啦，栗子壳上的糖稀在雪地里冒着热气。我攥着热栗子走，栗子烫手，雪凉手，一冷一热，我干脆左手换右手地倒腾。路面积雪被早起的环卫工人扫出一条道，扫帚的印子一道压一道，像五线谱。我踩着那些印子走到校门口，嘴里哼着不成调的歌。

真正的好戏在课间。操场成了雪的原野，没人忍得住。我们班的胖子往那儿一站就是堡垒，我们躲在他身后捏雪球，雪球一个接一个往隔壁班那边飞。打到一半，我的手套叫雪球砸湿了，雪水顺着指头往里渗，我索性把手套甩了，光着手上阵。手是冰的，心是烫的，跑起来耳朵呼呼响，风裹着雪沫子打在脸上，跟小刀子似的，可谁也不觉得疼。有个雪球擦着我耳朵飞过去，砸在身后的雪堆上，炸开一朵白花。我回敬的那个雪球在半空叫班长一巴掌拍碎，碎雪扬了他一脸。他抹了把脸，笑得比谁都响。后来体育老师吹哨喊停，我们拖着冒汗的手往回走，掌心在冷空气里冒着白气，像一手心的小火车在开。那只手套我一路攥在手里，湿漉漉的，贴在掌心里凉，我却舍不得扔。

现在这只手套就晾在阳台上，袖口那圈白印子是雪水留下的。太阳照在上面，蓝布晒得发白。我伸手把它取下来，布料硬硬的，还有一点点脆。凑近了闻，没有雪味儿，只有洗衣粉的香味。可我知道，那天的栗子香、狗叫、班长脸上的碎雪，还有满操场的笑声，都还留在这只手套上，洗不掉。

The The Soaked Mitten

On the balcony hangs a single mitten, blue, with a ring of white marks at the cuff that no washing can remove. Mum scrubbed it three times and gave up, saying the mitten was finished. I stared at that white ring. I could not smell any snow, yet everything from that day came back.

That morning had actually started like any other, except I woke up early. The light leaking through the gap in the curtains was white, unreasonably white, making the world outside the quilt look like another planet. I pushed the window open. The cold air stung my lungs, and everywhere was snow: the cars downstairs had all turned into cream cakes, the edges of the flower beds had vanished, and even the trash bin, usually the most noticeable thing in the yard, had shrunk by half under a round cap.

I stood frozen for a few seconds before remembering to shout, It snowed! My shout made the man walking his dog below turn around, and the dog barked at me twice, probably annoyed at the noise.

On the way to school the snow was still falling, rustling on the umbrella like someone flipping through a very thick book overhead. Passing the alley mouth, the smell of roasted chestnuts with sugar drifted through the cold air. The vendor stood by his wok in his apron, shoveling chestnuts, the iron spatula scraping the bottom, clatter, clatter, the syrup on the shells steaming in the snow. I walked on clutching a hot chestnut. The chestnut burned one hand, the snow chilled the other, so I kept passing it from left to right. The early sanitation workers had swept a path through the snow, and the broom marks lay one over another like a musical staff. I hopped along those marks all the way to the school gate, humming a tuneless song.

The real show began at the break. The playground had become a snowfield, and nobody could resist. The big boy in our class stood there like a fortress, and we hid behind him making snowballs, one after another flying toward the next class's side. Halfway through, a snowball hit my mitten and soaked it. Meltwater crept in along my fingers, so I flung the mitten off and fought bare-handed. My hands were ice, my heart was boiling. Running made my ears roar; wind-driven snow stung my face like tiny knives, yet nobody felt any pain. One snowball whizzed past my ear and exploded into a white flower on the snow pile behind me. My return shot was slapped out of midair by the class monitor, and the shattered snow sprayed all over his face. He wiped his face and laughed louder than anyone. Finally the PE teacher blew his whistle to stop us. We trudged back with sweaty hands, palms steaming white in the cold air like little trains running on our palms. I kept that soaked mitten clenched in my hand the whole way, damp and cold against my palm, but I could not bear to throw it away.

Now the mitten hangs on the balcony, that white ring at its cuff left by melted snow. The sun beats on it, fading the blue cloth pale. I reach up and take it down. The fabric is stiff, almost brittle. When I bring it close, there is no smell of snow, only laundry detergent. But I know the chestnut smell, the dog barking, the broken snow on the class monitor's face, and all the laughter across the playground are still on this mitten, and no washing can get them out.