妈妈的布鞋湿透了

舟舟是先看见那双布鞋的。雪下得那样大，校门口来的人不是棉靴就是雪地鞋，只有那个人脚上是一双黑布鞋，鞋帮已经洇成深黑色，踩进雪泥里，拔出来，鞋印在雪地上留下一个湿窟窿。他愣了愣，才认出那是妈妈。

事情要从半小时前说起。放学时雪正下得欢，教室窗外的梧桐枝子上压着雪，一根一根压弯了腰。舟舟站在校门房的雨棚下，手插在袖筒里。他早上看过天气预报，知道有雪，却忘了带伞。同学赵磊的爸爸开车来接，车窗上的雪片化了，一道一道往下淌，赵磊临走冲他挥手，喊他等伞。雨棚边的雪堆上落了一层新雪，平得没人踩，舟舟用脚尖在上面画了一个歪歪扭扭的伞，画完又觉得傻，把脚印蹭掉。

妈妈快步走过来，伞举在他头顶，笑着说来得不算晚。舟舟抬头，看见妈妈耳边的碎发叫雪打湿了，贴在脸侧，鼻尖冻得发红。他的目光落回那双布鞋，鞋尖还在往外渗水，白袜子透出一团深色。舟舟的喉咙动了一下，什么也没说，伸手把围巾从自己脖子上解下来，绕到妈妈脖子上，绕了两圈，打了个死结，手法笨得很。妈妈说他围巾上有雪，凉。他抓住围巾的角往紧里掖，说，你穿布鞋来接我，我围上就不凉了。妈妈低头看那个死结，笑出了声，没拆。

两个人挤在一把伞下往家走。伞不大，一个人撑刚好，两个人撑就挤，肩膀必须挨着肩膀。雪片斜着飞，打在伞上噼啪响，伞沿滴下来的水在雪地上砸出一排小坑。妈妈走路的步子比平时小，每一步都躲着雪泥最深的地方走，布鞋踩在干净雪上，咯吱一声。舟舟把伞柄接过来，举高，往妈妈那边偏。妈妈的手覆在他手背上，帮他把伞扶稳。路灯亮了，光柱里全是旋转的雪，两个人的影子在雪地上连成一片。路过包子铺，玻璃门一开一合，白汽涌出来，妈妈买了两个豆角包子，塞进他手里，说路上吃，别冻着。

到家，妈妈进门先脱了布鞋，鞋印在门口的地垫上，一圈深色的水。她穿着袜子踩在地板上，先去摸他书包上有没有淋湿。舟舟站在门口，手里还捏着一个没吃完的包子，看妈妈的背影，布鞋湿的，围巾上是他那个死结。他把包子最后一口塞进嘴里，豆角馅儿的，热的，从嗓子一路暖到胃里。

Mum's Cloth Shoes Were Soaked Through

Zhouzhou spotted the cloth shoes first. In a snowstorm that heavy, everyone at the school gate wore padded boots or snow boots, except one person in a pair of black cloth shoes, their uppers already darkened with water, pressing into the slush and pulling out, leaving wet holes in the snow. He stared for a moment before he recognized it was his mum.

It began half an hour earlier. At dismissal the snow was falling cheerfully, and the plane tree branches outside the classroom window bowed under the weight of snow. Zhouzhou stood under the awning of the gatehouse, hands tucked into his sleeves. He had checked the forecast that morning, knew there would be snow, yet forgotten his umbrella. Zhao Lei's father came to pick him up by car, snowflakes melting in streaks

down the window, and Zhao Lei waved goodbye, shouting that he should wait for an umbrella. On the snow pile beside the awning a fresh layer lay smooth and untouched, and Zhouzhou drew a crooked umbrella on it with his toe, then felt silly and scraped the mark away.

Mum came up at a quick step, holding the umbrella over his head, smiling that she was not too late. Zhouzhou looked up and saw the wisps of hair by her temples wet from the snow, stuck to her face, her nose tip frozen red. His eyes dropped back to those cloth shoes, water still seeping from the toes, a dark patch showing through the white socks. His throat moved, but he said nothing. He reached up, unwound the scarf from his own neck, wound it twice around hers, and tied it in a hard knot, his fingers clumsy. Mum said his scarf was cold with snow on it. He tucked the ends in tightly and said, you came to fetch me in cloth shoes, so if I wrap you up you will not be cold. Mum looked down at the hard knot and laughed out loud, but did not untie it.

The two of them squeezed under one umbrella heading home. The umbrella was small, just right for one person, tight for two, so their shoulders had to touch. Snowflakes flew slantwise, crackling on the canopy, and the water dripping from its rim punched a row of little pits in the snow. Mum's steps were smaller than usual, each one avoiding the deepest slush; when the cloth shoes found clean snow they went crunch. Zhouzhou took the umbrella handle, held it high, and leaned it toward Mum. Her hand covered his on the handle, helping him keep it steady. The street lamps came on, the light columns full of spinning snow, and their two shadows merged into one patch on the ground. Passing the bun shop, its glass doors opened and closed, white steam pouring out. Mum bought two bean-paste buns and pushed them into his hands, saying eat them on the way, keep the cold out.

At home, Mum took off the cloth shoes first, leaving a ring of dark water on the doormat. Stockinged, she stepped onto the floor and went first to feel his schoolbag for any wetness. Zhouzhou stood in the doorway, still holding the half-eaten bun, watching his mother's back: cloth shoes soaked, and on her scarf his clumsy hard knot. He popped the last bite of bun into his mouth. Bean paste filling, warm, traveling all the way from his throat down into his stomach.