十二月十八日，星期四，雪

十二月十八日，星期四，雪。

今天早上我一拉开窗帘就叫出声来。雪！院子里白得晃眼，白得连天都是亮的。我跑去喊爸爸起床，爸爸揉着眼睛出来看了一眼，就说，好，今天堆雪人。

吃过早饭，我们推开门出去。院子里的雪是新下的，松软，一脚踩下去陷到脚脖子。我蹲下来，双手捧起一把雪，攥成一个拳头大的小雪球，放在地上开始往前推。小雪球滚一圈，粘一层雪，滚一圈，再粘一层，很快滚到篮球那么大，推起来就沉了。我从院子这头推到那头，手冻得发蜇，手套都湿透了，指头麻得像是别人的。爸爸接过去说，我来，你歇会儿。爸爸弯着腰推，雪球越滚越大，滚到脸盆那么大的时候停住。爸爸说，够了，这是身子。我们又滚了一个小一点的当头，爸爸两手一兜，把它摁在上头，又捧雪把接缝的地方抹结实。

该找鼻子了。我跑进屋，拉开冰箱的抽屉翻，蔬菜格里躺着一根胡萝卜，橘红的，还挺长。我在水龙头下冲了冲，用毛巾擦干净，跑出去往雪人脸上正中间插。胡萝卜太长了，雪人的鼻子戳出去老远，歪着头一看，像它正在闻天。我把胡萝卜尖掰掉一截，又往里按了按，这下正好。眼睛是两颗黑石子，嘴巴我用七粒小种子排了一条弯弯的线，排完我看了看，它在笑。

爸爸掏出手机，让我站在雪人旁边。我举起手比了个剪刀手，站得笔直。爸爸蹲下来，说，喊雪人。我大声喊，雪人！咔嚓一声。爸爸低头看照片，笑了。照片里我的鼻子冻得红红的，比雪人的胡萝卜鼻子还红。

我还给雪人找了两根树枝当胳膊，插在身子两边，一只手朝上，一只手朝下，像在挥手。中午我给它围了一条旧围巾，是我不戴的灰围巾。

晚上睡觉前，我跑到窗边又看了一眼。雪人站在院子中间，让屋里透出去的光照着，胡萝卜鼻子亮出一点橘色。我冲它说了声晚安，才去刷牙。

December 18, Thursday, Snow

December 18, Thursday, snow.

This morning I pulled open the curtain and cried out. Snow! The yard was dazzling white, so white that even the sky was bright. I ran to wake Dad. He came out rubbing his eyes, took one look, and said, good, today we build a snowman.

After breakfast we pushed the door open. The snow in the yard was new and soft, and my feet sank to the ankle with each step. I squatted down, scooped up a handful of snow, packed it into a fist-sized ball, set it on the ground, and began to push. One round of rolling, one new layer of snow; another round, another layer. Soon it was basketball-sized and heavy to push. I rolled it from one end of the yard to the other, my hands stinging with cold, my gloves soaked through, my fingers numb as if

they belonged to someone else. Dad took over: my turn now, you rest. He pushed bent at the waist, and the ball grew until it was the size of a washbasin. That's enough, he said, this is the body. We rolled a smaller one for the head, and Dad lifted it on both hands and pressed it on top, then patted snow along the seam to make it firm.

Time to find a nose. I ran inside and pulled open the fridge drawer. A carrot lay in the vegetable bin, orange-red, quite long. I rinsed it under the tap, dried it with a towel, ran out, and stuck it in the middle of the snowman's face. The carrot was too long; the nose poked out far, and tilting my head to look, it seemed to be sniffing the sky. I broke off the tip, pushed it in deeper, and now it was just right. The eyes were two black pebbles; for the mouth I lined up seven small seeds in a curved line, and when I finished I looked at it - it was smiling.

Dad took out his phone and had me stand beside the snowman. I raised a V with my fingers and stood ramrod straight. Dad crouched down and said, shout snowman. I shouted, Snowman! Click. Dad looked down at the photo and laughed. In the photo my nose was frozen red, redder than the snowman's carrot nose.

I also found two branches for arms and stuck them into the sides, one hand up, one hand down, as if waving. At noon I wrapped an old scarf around it, my gray one I no longer wear.

Before bed I ran to the window for one more look. The snowman stood in the middle of the yard, lit by the light from our house, its carrot nose glowing a touch of orange. I said good night to it, then went to brush my teeth.

一月九日，星期日，晴转化雪

一月九日，星期日，晴转化雪。

今天太阳出来了，我第一件事是跑去看雪孩子。雪孩子是上周日和爸爸堆的，站在单元楼门口的花坛边上，一直站得好好的。今天它好像矮了一点。我围着它转了一圈，看不出别的变化，就是矮了一点，围巾都滑到它的肚子上了。

中午更糟。屋檐开始滴水，嗒，嗒，全砸在雪孩子脚边，地上的雪湿哒哒地贴着一层黑灰。雪孩子的左边胳膊——那根树枝——掉下来了，它身子歪着，头也歪着，可它还是笑，那七粒排成弯线的种子还在。我把它扶正，扶完它又慢慢歪回去。我有点着急，回家问爸爸，雪孩子是不是要死了。爸爸放下碗说，雪人到了天暖的时候就会变回雪水，这是雪人的办法，不是死。我不太服气，可是也没办法。

我想了一个办法。雪孩子站在太阳底下，那它晒到太阳就化了，对不对？我请爸爸帮忙，把雪孩子挪到楼后面的背阴处去。爸爸说身子太大，搬不动，搬了会散。我们试了一次，雪人的身

子裂了一道缝，赶紧又捧雪糊上。爸爸想了个新办法：把阳台上的旧雨伞撑开，用绳子拴在雪人身后的铁栏杆上，伞面斜过来，正好罩住雪人的头。这下好了，雪孩子的头顶上有一把蓝伞，像戴了一顶大帽子。我守着它看了一个下午，伞底下确实不滴水。

可是傍晚收伞的时候，我发现雪孩子的头细了一圈，脖子细得快要撑不住头了。它不是被晒化的，它一直在化，只是慢一点快一点。我蹲在它面前，跟它说，你明天还在吗。它不回答。雪孩子从来不回答。

最后我做了一件大事。我把它的胡萝卜鼻子拔下来，擦干净，带回屋放进冰箱。我还把两颗黑石子眼睛也捡回来了，放在窗台上。爸爸问，那你把雪孩子变成什么了。我说，我把它的鼻子和眼睛救出来了，剩下的让它自己慢慢回天上。爸爸摸了摸我的头，没说话。

睡前我又去窗边看。楼后面的雪孩子只剩一小堆，围巾盖在上面，像盖着被子。窗台上胡萝卜和两颗石子在台灯底下，橘的橘，黑的黑。我想起那张合影，我比剪刀手，它歪戴蓝伞。照片里它还是完整的，鼻子长长的，正在闻天。我关了灯。雪孩子，晚安。

January 9, Sunday, Clear Then Thaw

January 9, Sunday, clear then thaw.

The sun came out today, and the first thing I did was run to see Snow Child. Snow Child was built last Sunday with Dad, standing by the flower bed at the building entrance, standing just fine all along. Today it looks a little shorter. I walked around it once and could see no other change - just a little shorter, and its scarf had slid down onto its belly.

By noon it was worse. The eaves began to drip, tap, tap, all landing at Snow Child's feet, and the snow on the ground was damp with a layer of gray grit. Snow Child's left arm - that branch - had fallen off. Its body leaned, its head leaned too, but it was still smiling; those seven seeds lined into a curve were still there. I straightened it, and it slowly leaned back. I got a bit worried, went home and asked Dad whether Snow Child was dying. Dad put down his bowl and said, when the weather turns warm a snowman turns back into water - that is the way of snowmen, not death. I did not quite accept it, but there was nothing to do.

I thought of a plan. Snow Child stands in the sun, and sun makes it melt, right? I asked Dad to help move Snow Child to the shady side behind the building. Dad said the body is too big to move, it would fall apart. We tried once, the body cracked a seam, and we hurried to pat fresh snow over it. Dad came up with a new plan: open the old umbrella from the balcony, tie it with rope to the iron railing behind the snowman, tilt the canopy across - it covered the snowman's head exactly. Now Snow Child had a blue umbrella over its head, like a big hat. I kept watch over it all

afternoon, and under the umbrella there really was no dripping.

But when we took the umbrella down at dusk, I found Snow Child's head had grown a ring thinner, its neck too thin to hold its head up. It was not melted by the sun - it had been melting all along, only slower or faster. I squatted in front of it and asked, will you still be here tomorrow. It did not answer. Snow Child never answers.

In the end I did one big thing. I pulled out its carrot nose, wiped it clean, brought it inside, and put it in the fridge. I also retrieved the two black pebble eyes and set them on the windowsill. Dad asked, so what have you turned Snow Child into. I said, I rescued its nose and eyes; let the rest of it slowly go back to the sky by itself. Dad ruffled my hair and said nothing.

Before bed I checked the window again. Behind the building Snow Child was only a small heap now, the scarf lying over it like a quilt. On the windowsill the carrot and the two pebbles sat under the lamp, orange and black. I remembered that photo: me flashing a V, it tilting under the blue umbrella. In the photo it is still whole, nose long, sniffing the sky. I turned off the light. Good night, Snow Child.

一月二十五日，星期二，大雪

一月二十五日，星期二，大雪。

放学的时候雪下得正紧，校门口白茫茫一片。我心想，完了，今天作业多，爸爸晚上还要加班，堆雪人肯定没戏了。我踩着雪往家走，一路都在想怎么说服爸爸少加一点班。

结果回到家，爸爸看见窗外的雪，眼睛比我还亮。他把笔电往书桌上一放，说，换衣服，下楼。我愣了两秒钟才反应过来，高兴得差点跳起来。我们全副武装：帽子、手套、围巾，爸爸还翻出了他上学时候的雪地靴，踩在雪上咯吱咯吱响，他说这双靴子四十年了，就等大雪天穿。

我们分工：我滚头，他滚身子。我捧雪攥了个雪球推，推到篮球大就推不动了。回头一看，爸爸那个雪球已经滚到半人高，他弓着背，两手推着，一步一步往前拱，雪在他脚下咯吱咯吱地叫。我说爸你小点，他说来不及了，越滚越大，你看，停不下来了。最后他那个雪球大得我们俩都抱不动，他干脆用铁锹一块一块往上面加雪，堆出一个比我还高的身子。我的小雪球头搁上去，显得身子太大头太小，像一个大胖墩顶了个小脑袋。爸爸想了想，又围着身子加了一圈雪，把腰收细了一点，好看了。

鼻子出问题啦。家里胡萝卜昨天用完了。爸爸披上外套就下楼，十分钟后回来，手里举着一根胡萝卜，像举一面旗。他说超市就剩最后一根，一个大爷跟他抢，他跑得快。他把胡萝卜插上去，退后两步端详，又拔下来换个角度重插，插到满意为止。眼睛他用煤球抠了两小块按上去，嘴巴是一根树枝压出来的弧线。

该拍照了。爸爸蹲在雪地里，指挥我：站这儿，手搭在它胳膊上，脸别看镜头，看它。我照做了，手搭在雪人那根树枝胳膊上。爸爸又喊，笑一个，跟它合影呢。咔嚓。他又拍了一张他自己在雪人旁边竖大拇指的，说这张要发给他老家我爷爷看。

上楼的时候，爸爸鞋全湿了，他在门口跺脚，雪渣子乱飞。我问他，爸，你堆雪人的技术怎么这么好。他擦鞋，想了想说，我小时候年年堆，你爷爷家的场院，堆过一整排。他说这话的时候语气跟平时不一样，像在说别人的事，又像在说很久很久以前的事。

我现在趴在窗台写日记。楼下那个雪人站在路灯底下，头小小的，鼻子长长的。我忽然明白了一件事：爸爸不是陪我堆雪人，是他自己早就想堆了。他心里藏着一个小孩，平时上班收着，一下大雪就放出来啦。

January 25, Tuesday, Heavy Snow

January 25, Tuesday, heavy snow.

At dismissal the snow was falling hard, and the school gate was a white blur. I thought, it's over - so much homework tonight, and Dad has to work overtime, so the snowman is definitely off. I walked home through the snow, rehearsing how to talk Dad into working a little less.

But when we got home and Dad saw the snow outside the window, his eyes lit up brighter than mine. He set his laptop on the desk and said, change clothes, let's go down. I froze for two seconds before it registered, then nearly jumped for joy. We geared up completely: hats, gloves, scarves. Dad even dug out the snow boots from his school days; they crunch-crunch on the snow, and he said the boots are forty years old and had been waiting just for a heavy snow day.

We split the work: I roll the head, he rolls the body. I packed a ball and pushed it until it was basketball-sized and I could push no more. I looked back - Dad's ball was already half his height, and he was bent at the waist, pushing with both hands, inching forward, the snow crying crunch-crunch under his feet. I said, Dad, make it smaller. He said, too late, it grows the more I roll, look, I can't stop it. In the end his ball was too big for both of us to hug, so he used a shovel to pile snow onto it block by block, building a body taller than me. My little snowball head on top looked like a tubby kid with a tiny head. Dad thought a moment, added a ring of snow around the body and slimmed the waist a bit - much better.

The nose was a problem. We ran out of carrots yesterday. Dad threw on his coat and went downstairs, and ten minutes later came back holding up a carrot like a flag. He said it was the last one at the supermarket, an old gentleman raced him for it, and Dad was faster. He stuck it in, stepped back to study it, pulled it out and re-

stuck it at a new angle, and kept going until he was satisfied. For eyes he broke off two bits of a coal briquette and pressed them on; the mouth was an arc pressed in with a twig.

Photo time. Dad crouched in the snow and directed me: stand here, hand on its arm, don't look at the camera, look at it. I did as told, my hand on the snowman's twig arm. Dad called out again, smile, you're posing with it. Click. Then he took one of himself next to the snowman giving a thumbs-up, saying this one must be sent to my grandparents back in his hometown.

Going upstairs, Dad's shoes were soaked through, and he stamped at the doorway, snow grit flying. I asked him, Dad, how are you so good at building snowmen? He wiped his shoe and thought a moment: I built one every year as a kid - in the courtyard at your grandpa's house, I once built a whole row. He said it in a different tone from usual, as if talking about someone else, or about something very very long ago.

Now I am writing this diary at the windowsill. Downstairs that snowman stands under the street lamp, head small, nose long. I suddenly understood one thing: Dad was not building a snowman to keep me company - he had wanted to build one for ages. He keeps a child hidden inside himself, tucked away during workdays; when a heavy snow falls, out it comes.