我也堆过一个不怕火的朋友

语文课上老师带我们读《雪孩子》。老师问谁敢讲一讲故事，我把手举得最高，因为这本书我幼儿园就听过，现在又读了一遍，故事里的每个地方我都熟。雪孩子是小兔妈妈堆的，会走路会跳舞，跟小白兔在林子里玩。房子起火了，小白兔在屋里出不来，雪孩子从火里把她抱出来。他自己呢，化在地上，晒晒太阳变成水汽，飞上天成了白云。

老师又问：雪孩子最后不见了，你们难过吗？教室里静了一会儿，后排的董小川说难过，声音有点闷。我说我第一遍读难过，现在不难过了，因为他变成云了。老师点点头，说这就是故事留给人的东西：难过是真的，不难过也是真的。

放寒假前那礼拜，我们这儿下了一场雪。我跟爸爸在楼下堆雪人，堆到一半我停下来，跟爸爸说我要堆一个雪孩子。爸爸问堆成什么样。我说就照书里那样，胳膊是两根树枝，眼睛是石子，还要给他围条旧围巾。爸爸把他那条灰围巾扯下来给了雪人。雪人不戴围巾的时候看着有点凶，戴上以后一下子就温和了，像会跟人点头的样子。

堆好那天晚上我趴在窗台看了它很久。我忽然有点担心：要是我们楼下也起火了，雪孩子会不会又往火里冲？我知道这是瞎想，可我就是这么想的。我跟爸爸说，明天给它挪到楼道口，别让它守着柴堆。爸爸笑我，说雪人又不是真的人。我说我知道，可是书里那个也不是真的呀，我读的时候心是真的疼了一下。爸爸不笑了，过一会儿说，那你给它挪个稳妥地方。

雪人站了四天，第五天早上只剩一堆雪加一条灰围巾。围巾我收回来洗了。我没有哭，我抬头看了看天，天是灰的，没有云，我猜他还没飞上去，或者飞上去的当天阴天看不见。书上说雪孩子变成白云，那他就得等一个晴天。

开学后老师收读后感，我写的是：雪孩子教会我两件事。一件是勇敢，害怕还要往前去。另一件是友情，朋友不一定陪你很久，但他救过你、陪过你，这部分化不掉。我把这两句念给同桌听，她说写得太正经了。我说这是真的，我那个雪人替我证明过。

现在我把那条灰围巾叠好放在抽屉里。爸爸说等明年第一场雪，我们还去堆。我想好了，还堆在楼道口，还围这条围巾。雪孩子要是看见，应该会跟小白兔一样，绕着它跳一圈舞。

I Once Built a Friend Who Was Not Afraid of Fire

In Chinese class our teacher read the story of the Snow Child with us. She asked who dared to retell it, and I raised my hand highest, because I had heard this story back in kindergarten, and now I had read it again — every part of it was familiar. The Snow Child was built by Mother Rabbit; he could walk and dance, and played with Little Rabbit in the woods. The house caught fire, Little Rabbit could not get out, and the Snow Child carried her out of the flames. As for himself, he melted onto the ground, was warmed by the sun into vapor, flew up, and became a white cloud.

The teacher asked again: the Snow Child disappeared in the end — are you sad? The classroom went quiet for a moment. Dong Xiaochuan in the back row said he was

sad, his voice a little muffled. I said I was sad the first time I read it, but not anymore, because he became a cloud. The teacher nodded and said this is what a story leaves behind for people: the sadness is real, and the not-being-sad is real too.

The week before winter break, we got a snowfall. Dad and I built a snowman downstairs. Halfway through I stopped and told Dad I was building a Snow Child. Dad asked what shape. I said just like in the book: arms of two branches, eyes of pebbles, and an old scarf around his neck. Dad pulled off his gray scarf and gave it to the snowman. Without the scarf the snowman looked a little fierce; with it on, he instantly looked gentle, like someone who would nod at you.

That night after building him, I leaned at the windowsill and watched him for a long time. Suddenly I felt a little worried: if a fire broke out in our building, would the Snow Child charge into it again? I knew this was silly, but that is exactly what I thought. I told Dad we should move him to the stairway entrance tomorrow, away from the firewood pile. Dad laughed at me, saying a snowman is not a real person. I said I know, but the one in the book isn't real either, yet when I read it my heart really ached for a second. Dad stopped laughing, and after a while said: then move him somewhere safe.

The snowman stood for four days. On the fifth morning only a heap of snow and a gray scarf were left. I took the scarf home and washed it. I did not cry. I looked up at the sky; it was gray, no clouds. I guess he had not flown up yet, or the day he flew up was overcast and I could not see him. The book says he became a white cloud, so he has to wait for a sunny day.

After school started, the teacher collected our reading responses. I wrote: the Snow Child taught me two things. One is bravery — going forward even while afraid. The other is friendship — a friend may not stay with you long, but the part where he saved you and kept you company never melts away. I read those two lines to my deskmate, and she said they sounded too serious. I said they are true; my snowman testified for me.

Now I keep that gray scarf folded in my drawer. Dad says when the first snow of next year comes, we will go build one again. I have decided: still at the stairway entrance, still with this scarf. If the Snow Child sees it, he will probably dance a circle around it, just like Little Rabbit did.