礼物袋里的那张合影

毕业典礼结束那天，我收拾书桌，从笔袋夹层里抽出一张照片。照片是六年级最后一个六一拍的，那天我们全班在黑板前挤成一团，班长举着自拍杆，镜头晃，人脸都糊，只有后排探进来的半个脑袋特别清楚，是转学走的赵一凡。我把照片放回笔袋最里面。就是这张照片，在那个下午差点送不出去。

那天中午前，教室已经改头换面。联欢会是我们自己张罗的，黑板上画了彩带和烟花，气球从灯管上垂下来，低得我一伸手就能碰到。节目单贴在门后，一共十一个节目，一半是临时加上去的，字迹忽大忽小。班里最调皮的男生何志远报了个单口，往中间一站，开口就说：今天允许我们过六一，明天就催我们交毕业照的钱。台下先静了一秒，笑炸了。他越讲越顺，讲到食堂的包子皮比馅厚，我笑得直拍桌子。轮到全班合唱班歌，音乐委员起头起高了，女声部一开始就够不着，全体降了半个调，反而唱得整整齐齐，副歌的时候前排女生自发排成一排晃着胳膊，像一片麦浪。

合唱完发礼物。规则是抽签互换，我抽到的是赵一凡的名字，可他已经转学两个月，座位空着。班长把我的礼物放到那个空桌上，是一盒十二色的新铅笔，我在纸条上写：铅笔给你留着，照片也给你留着。我的礼物是同桌的，一个用旧校服改的笔袋，针脚歪歪扭扭，她不好意思地说手艺不行，我当场把笔袋挂到书包带上，线头还翘着，可我觉得比文具店里任何一个都好看。何志远收到的是全班签名的一件白T恤，他举起来就往身上套，签名被撑得变了形，他也不管，在教室里转了一圈展示。

下午最后一节，班主任进来了。她没拿教案，手里捏着一张对折的信纸。她说这是她带过的最后一届，六年，从一年级的拼音到六年级的辩论赛，她念信，念到你们是我教过最吵的一届，也是最舍不得的一届，停住了。她背过身去扶了扶眼镜，全班没人出声，静得能听见窗外别的班在排练节目。她缓过来，转过身，把信纸展开举起来，喊了一句：毕业快乐。我们齐声喊回去。那一声大概是我小学喊得最响的一次。

照片在笔袋里躺了两个月，边角磨软了。那天下午我们谁也没想到，一场联欢会、一盒铅笔、一封没念完的信，够人记这么多年。

The Class Photo in the Gift Bag

The day the graduation ceremony ended, I was clearing out my desk when I pulled a photo from a hidden pocket of my pencil case. The photo was taken on our last Children's Day in sixth grade: the whole class crammed together in front of the blackboard, the class monitor holding a selfie stick, the shot shaky, every face blurred, only half a head poking in from the back row perfectly clear - it was Zhao Yifan, who had transferred away. I put the photo back at the very bottom of the case. This is the photo that almost never got given away that afternoon.

By noon the classroom had changed its face. We organized the party ourselves: streamers and fireworks drawn on the blackboard, balloons hanging from the light

tubes so low I could touch them with a stretch. The program was taped behind the door, eleven acts, half of them added last minute in handwriting of wildly different sizes. He Zhiyuan, the mischief-maker of the class, signed up for a solo stand-up. He walked to the center and opened: Today they let us celebrate Children's Day, and tomorrow they'll be chasing us for graduation photo money. The room went silent for one second, then exploded. He got smoother as he went, joking that the cafeteria buns have thicker skin than filling, and I slapped the desk laughing. When it came time for the class song, the music monitor started the pitch too high, the girls could not reach it from the first line, so everyone dropped half a key, and somehow it came out perfectly even. On the chorus the front-row girls swayed their arms in an unspoken line, like a field of wheat.

After the song came the gifts. The rule was a lottery swap. I drew Zhao Yifan's name - but he had transferred away two months ago, and his desk sat empty. The class monitor placed my gift on that empty desk: a box of twelve new colored pencils. On the note I wrote: the pencils are saved for you, and so is the photo. My gift, from my deskmate, was a pencil pouch sewn from an old school uniform, its stitches crooked. She apologized for her clumsy hands; I clipped it onto my backpack strap on the spot. The loose threads still stuck out, but I thought it looked better than anything in a stationery store. He Zhiyuan received a white T-shirt signed by the whole class. He pulled it over his head right there, the signatures stretched out of shape, and he paraded around the classroom showing it off anyway.

In the last period of the afternoon, our homeroom teacher came in. No lesson plan in her hand, just a letter folded in half. She said we were the last class she would ever teach - six years, from first-grade pinyin to sixth-grade debates. She read the letter aloud, and when she reached the line you are the noisiest class I ever taught, and the one I am least willing to let go of, she stopped. She turned away and adjusted her glasses. Not a sound in the room; through the window we could hear another class rehearsing. She pulled herself together, turned back, unfolded the letter and held it up, and shouted: Happy Graduation. We shouted it back in unison. That was probably the loudest I ever shouted in elementary school.

The photo has lain in my pencil case for two months, its corners worn soft. That afternoon, none of us imagined that one party, one box of pencils, and one unfinished letter could last this many years in the memory.