讲台上的最后一回六一

前一天晚上，我在办公室写到九点半。给六（2）班的寄语，我写了三稿。第一稿太像讲话，划了；第二稿列了六年的事，从他们把毛毛虫捉进铅笔盒开始数，写着写着变成了流水账，又划了。第三稿只剩一页纸，开头是：你们是我教过最吵的一届。写完这句我停了很久，把笔搁下，去水房接了半杯热水，回来接着写最舍不得的一届。写完我把信纸对折，夹进教案里，又抽出来，换进外套内兜。

六一当天我到教室时是七点五十，门后贴着节目单，字迹忽大忽小，我一眼认出哪几行是何志远补上去的。黑板上画着彩带和烟花，画烟花的那个女生去年连圆都画不圆。气球垂得低，我伸手碰了碰，没扶正，由它去。我坐到教室最后一排靠墙的位置，从那里看出去，整个教室像一锅正在烧开的水。四人合唱的电子琴插头松了，弹琴的男生按回去接着弹，台下笑成一片，我在后排跟着笑，手里捏着没喝的保温杯。何志远的单口讲到食堂包子皮比馅厚，全班拍桌子，我承认那句话说得比我好。全班合唱班歌起高了，全体降半个调，副歌时前排女生晃起胳膊，我数了数，四十二个人，一个都没缺席，包括上周请假住院的那个，他妈妈昨天在群里说他今天返校，我盯着他空座位的方向看了两遍才放心。

发礼物环节我站在门边看着。抽到转学生名字的那个孩子把一盒铅笔放在空桌上，纸条写得歪歪扭扭：铅笔给你留着。我别过头去看窗户。同桌俩交换一个针脚歪斜的笔袋，一个说手艺不行，一个当场挂上书包。何志远套上全班签名的白T恤，签名撑得变了形，他举着胳膊在教室里转，经过我面前时喊了句老师你看。我说看见了，声音比我预想的平静。

最后一节我进教室，外套内兜里那张信纸贴着心口，有点烫。我本来准备了一整套话：珍惜时间，认真择校，常回母校。站在讲台中间，看着四十二张脸，那些话一句都想不起来，只好掏出信纸念自己那一稿。念到最吵的一届，全班哄笑；念到最舍不得的一届，声音不争气地哑了。我转过身，在黑板上画了一个小小的太阳，画得比信里那句还轻。掌声起来的时候我扶了扶眼镜，心想幸好背对着他们。

散场后人走了，彩带还挂着，有个气球在窗玻璃上一下一下地撞。我在黑板前站了一会儿，把粉笔槽里的灰拢了拢，没擦那行字。六一快乐，毕业快乐。我关灯锁门，在楼道里听见隔壁班还在唱班歌，跑调跑得理直气壮。我放慢脚步，让他们多唱了一会儿。

One Last Children's Day from the Podium

The night before, I was writing in the office until nine thirty. The message for Class 6-2 took me three drafts. The first read too much like a speech - crossed out. The second listed six years of events, starting from the day they smuggled a caterpillar into a pencil box, and turned into a running account - crossed out again. The third was one page, opening with: you are the noisiest class I ever taught. After that line I stopped for a long time, put down the pen, went to the water room for half a cup of hot water, came back, and wrote: and the one I am least willing to let go of. When I finished, I folded the letter, slipped it into my lesson plan, then took it out again and moved it to my coat's inner pocket.

On Children's Day I reached the classroom at 7:50. The program was taped behind the door in handwriting of wildly different sizes, and I recognized at a glance which lines He Zhiyuan had added. The blackboard wore painted streamers and fireworks; the girl who drew the fireworks could not draw a round circle last year. The balloons hung low; I touched one, did not straighten it, and let it be. I sat at the back row against the wall. From there the whole room looked like a pot of water coming to a boil. The electronic keyboard's plug came loose during the quartet, the boy playing pressed it back in and kept going, the audience roared, and I laughed in the back row holding an unopened thermos. When He Zhiyuan's stand-up reached the joke about cafeteria buns with thicker skin than filling, the class banged the desks, and I admitted the line landed better than anything I could say. The class song started too high and everyone dropped half a key; on the chorus the front-row girls swayed their arms. I counted: forty-two students, not one missing, including the boy hospitalized last week - his mother had written in the group chat that he was returning today, and I checked the direction of his seat twice before I relaxed.

During the gift exchange I stood by the door watching. The child who drew the transferred boy's name placed a box of pencils on the empty desk, the note crooked: pencils saved for you. I turned my head toward the window. Two deskmates traded a pencil pouch with crooked stitches - one apologizing for her hands, the other clipping it to her backpack on the spot. He Zhiyuan pulled on the white T-shirt signed by the whole class, signatures stretched out of shape, arms wide as he paraded past me, shouting Teacher, look. I said I saw it, my voice calmer than I expected.

In the last period I walked in, that folded letter against my chest through the coat pocket, almost hot. I had prepared a whole set of speeches: cherish time, choose schools carefully, visit the old school often. Standing at the podium facing forty-two faces, I could not recall a single line, so I took out my own draft and read it. At the noisiest class line the room laughed; at the least willing to let go line my voice betrayed me. I turned around and drew a small sun on the blackboard, lighter than the sentence in the letter. When the applause rose, I adjusted my glasses and was grateful to be facing away.

After dismissal the room emptied, streamers still hanging, one balloon tapping the window glass now and then. I stood before the blackboard for a while, gathered the chalk dust into the tray, and did not erase the words: Happy Children's Day, Happy Graduation. I turned off the lights and locked the door, and in the corridor I heard the next class still singing their class song, off-key with full confidence. I slowed my steps and let them sing a while longer.