从长隧道里开出来的火车

“穿过长隧道，雪国就在眼下了。”《雪国》开头这一句，我读了四遍。课上读一遍，晚上读一遍，睡觉前又读了两遍。不知道为什么，这一句老在我脑子里跑，像一列小火车在我脑袋里开。

书里的场景是这样的：火车穿过长长的隧道，窗外一下子全白了。天是白的，田是白的，山也是白的。主人公岛村坐在车窗边上，暮色把玻璃变成一面镜子，玻璃里照出车厢里暖黄的灯，也照出外面的雪景。一个少女的脸在玻璃上，浮在远远的雪山上。作者写，隧道的黑和外头的白换位置的那一瞬间，特别好看。我读到这里把书合上，想象那个画面，想了很久。

我一开始不明白，为什么写一扇窗户写这么多。后来我好像懂了一点。玻璃像把两个世界贴在了一起：一边是车厢里又暖又吵，一边是雪国又冷又静。少女的脸在两个世界中间，一半让车厢里的灯照着，一半搁在冷冷的雪山上。一个人坐在火车上，在出发和到达中间，在这儿和那儿中间，那个地方没有名字，也是最孤单的地方。

我想起爸爸带我坐火车去外婆家那次。火车进隧道的时候，我耳朵嗡嗡的，车厢里的灯也暗了一下。出隧道那会儿，正好是快过年时下的那场雪，窗外白花花一片。我把脸贴在玻璃上看，玻璃里照出我自己的脸，我的脸后头就是雪原。我盯着玻璃里那个“我”看了好久，觉得他有点像别人。读《雪国》我忽然想起那个时刻。原来那种感觉是有名字的，只是一个日本的作家很早很早以前就把它写下来了。

书里说，雪国很远，要穿过隧道才能到。我想，这个“远”不光是公里数。我住的城市很吵，上学、考试、下课打闹，吵得人快听不见自己在想什么了。书里的雪国没有声音，白把什么都盖住了。一个人忽然面对一片干干净净的白，就会开始面对自己。岛村大老远跑来，为了一个他说不清楚的东西。也许他只是想在一个没有声音的地方，待上一阵。

现在我在地图上看见隧道，就会想起这本书。我不知道什么时候能去一次真正的雪国。可是我记得那一句：火车从长隧道里开出来，雪国就在眼下了。等我长大，冬天挑一天，我也要坐一列火车，坐在窗边，自己等那一条隧道。

The Train That Emerged From the Long Tunnel

"The train came out of the long tunnel, and the snow country lay below." I read this first line of Snow Country four times: once in class, once in the evening, and twice more before bed. I do not know why, but the line keeps running through my head, like a little train running inside my brain.

The scene in the book goes like this: the train passes through a long tunnel, and outside the window everything suddenly turns white. The sky is white, the fields are white, the mountains are white. The man Shimamura sits by the window. In the twilight the glass becomes a mirror: it reflects the warm yellow lamps inside the carriage,

and also the snowy scenery outside. The face of a girl floats in the glass, resting above the faraway snow mountains. The author writes that the moment the dark tunnel and the bright outside switch places is especially beautiful. I read this, closed the book, and imagined that scene for a long time.

At first I did not understand: why write so much about one window? Later I think I understood a little. The glass is like two worlds pasted together. On one side is the warm, noisy carriage; on the other is the silent, cold snow country. The face of the girl floats between the two worlds, half lit by the lamps inside, half laid on the cold snow mountains. A person sitting on a train, between leaving and arriving, between here and there — that place has no name, and it is the loneliest place.

I remember the train ride when Dad took me to the house of Grandma. When the train went into a tunnel, my ears rang and the lights in the carriage dimmed. Coming out of it, it was exactly the snow that fell near the New Year, and outside the window was a world of white. I pressed my face to the glass, and the glass showed my own face with a snow field behind it. I stared at that "me in the glass" for a long time, and he felt a little like somebody else. Reading Snow Country, I suddenly remembered that moment. So that feeling had words — a Japanese writer had written them down long, long ago.

The book says the snow country is far; you must pass through a tunnel to reach it. I think this "far" is not just kilometers. My city is noisy: school, exams, shouting at recess. The noise almost drowns out my own thoughts. The snow country in the book has no sound; the white covers everything. When a person suddenly faces pure, clean white, they begin to face themselves. Shimamura came all this way for something he could not name. Maybe he only wanted to be somewhere without noise for a while.

Now every time I see a tunnel on a map, I think of this book. I do not know when I can visit a real snow country. But I know that line: the train came out of the long tunnel, and the snow country lay below. When I grow up, I want to take a train on a winter day, sit by the window, and wait for that tunnel myself.

温泉旅馆里那个记日记的人

《雪国》里有一个地方，我合上书也忘不掉：那家开在雪国深处的温泉旅馆。书里写，旅馆外头的雪堆得比墙还高，客人们泡在热乎乎的温泉里，窗子一开，冷气混着硫磺的味道涌进来。夜里雪下得更勤，整家旅馆像被雪埋住了一样，只剩下灯还亮着。

旅馆里有个女孩子叫驹子。她在雪国长大，每天干活、招呼客人，可是她做的好几件事，看

起来都没有用。她记日记，把每一天的天气、风、雪都记下来，记了好几年。她读小说，读完还写感想，可是雪国里没有人和她讨论。她弹三味线，弹得很认真，可听的人泡着温泉，有一搭没一搭地听。岛村从东京来，听了以后说，记这样的日记有什么用呢，反正也不会给别人看。驹子听了，脸有点红，说她不这样过不下去。

刚读到这里，我觉得岛村说话有点过分。可是往下读，我忽然想起一件事，脸有点热。去年我练钢琴，练一首没人点的曲子，是比赛落选以后我非要弹完的那首。我妈站在门口听了一会儿，说：又不比赛，弹这个给谁听？我当时没答上来，关上琴盖就去写作业了。驹子那句话在我耳朵里响起来：不这样，过不下去。原来我妈和岛村问的是同一个问题，而驹子替我回答过了。

书里还写，驹子每天清早把旅馆的走廊擦一遍，雪光从窗纸透进来，走廊白得发亮。她做这些事的时候没有观众，客人还没起床，雪国还睡着。我猜她擦走廊的时候心里是安静的，就像她记日记的时候一样。一个人对没有用的事认真，这个认真不是做给谁的，是做给自己的。

温泉旅馆在书里那么远：先坐火车穿过隧道，再换车，再走一段山路。雪把路都填平了，旅馆像浮在一片白中间。岛村那样的城里人来了又走，走的时候雪还在下。我读的时候老想：驹子会不会难过？后来我想，她大概难过，可她也有别人没有的东西——她记得每一天的雪，她弹的每一遍曲子都弹完了。她的日子没有一天是空的。

现在我每天也记三行小日记，就记天气和我干的事，本子是语文本剩下的空页。有人问记这个干嘛，我说不知道，反正不记过不下去。这话从我嘴里出来的时候，我觉得自己有点像温泉旅馆里那个女孩子了。

The Girl Who Kept a Diary at the Hot Spring Inn

There is one place in Snow Country I cannot forget even after closing the book: the hot spring inn deep in the snow country. The book describes snow piled higher than the walls outside; guests soak in the steaming water, and when a window opens, cold air rushes in mixed with the smell of sulfur. At night the snow falls harder, and the whole inn seems buried under snow, with only the lamps still lit.

A girl named Komako works at the inn. She grew up in the snow country; she works and waits on guests every day, yet several things she does look useless. She keeps a diary, writing down the weather, the wind, the snow, year after year. She reads novels and writes her thoughts afterward, though no one in the snow country discusses books with her. She plays the shamisen earnestly, but the guests soak in the hot spring and listen half-heartedly. Shimamura, who came from Tokyo, said: what is the use of keeping such a diary? No one will ever read it. the face of Komako reddened a little, and she said she cannot go on living without doing it.

When I first read this, I thought Shimamura was being rude. But as I kept reading, I suddenly remembered something, and my face got hot. Last year I practiced

piano — a piece no one had asked for, the one I insisted on finishing after losing a competition. Mom stood at the door for a while, then said: there is no contest, who are you playing it for? I had no answer then; I closed the piano lid and went to do homework. The words of Komako rang in my ears: I cannot go on living without doing it. So Mom and Shimamura were asking the same question, and Komako had already answered it for me.

The book also writes that Komako wipes the corridor of the inn clean every early morning. Snow-light shines through the window paper, and the corridor glows white. She does these things with no audience — the guests are still asleep, the snow country is still asleep. I think her heart is quiet when she wipes the corridor, just as it is when she writes her diary. When a person is earnest about something useless, that earnestness is not for anyone else; it is for herself.

The inn is so far away in the book: first a train through a tunnel, then a transfer, then a mountain path. The snow fills the roads flat, and the inn seems to float in the middle of a white sea. City people like Shimamura come and go; when they leave, the snow is still falling. While reading, I kept wondering: is Komako sad? Later I thought, she probably is, but she also has something others do not — she remembers the snow of every day, and every piece she plays, she plays to the end. Not one of her days is empty.

Now I write three lines of diary every day, just the weather and what I did, in the blank pages left from an old exercise book. When people ask what is the use, I say I do not know — I just cannot go on without writing it. When those words came out of my mouth, I felt a little like that girl at the hot spring inn.

白茫茫的雪野，和一双养蚕的手

《雪国》里最白的一段，是写清晨的雪野。岛村早上推开窗，外头的雪野一直白到天边，田、河滩、远山，全连成一片，分不清哪儿是地的尽头、哪儿是天的开始。书里说，那样的白，像有人把世界又擦掉了一层，只剩下一个底子。我读这段的时候是晚自习，教室里日光灯白晃晃的，我盯着这段字，耳朵里忽然安静了，好像那一片白从书里漫出来，把我们那排课桌都泡在里面。

书里还写了一个我从来没注意过的东西：手。少女叶子的手，被说成像养蚕的人的手，又凉又干净，指头细，可是有力气。作者说，一看见那样的手，就想起蚕宝宝趴在竹匾上的样子，想起雪国屋里安静的蚕声。我读到这里把手翻过来看自己的。我的手是普通的手，指头上有写字磨出的茧。可是这个写法把我惊了一下：原来一双手可以说出一个地方。养蚕的手，就是雪国的手，凉凉的，安安静静的，跟那片雪野是同一样的东西。

我们家阳台上有一回晾白床单。那天下了小雪，床单挂在绳上，外头的雪地在楼下铺开。风

一吹，床单鼓起来又落下。我站在阳台上看，看了很久，忽然觉得床单和雪地之间没有界限，好像床单也是雪的一部分，雪也是床单的一部分。那时候我还说不出感觉，只觉得心里被什么东西轻轻按了一下。现在读《雪国》我才知道，那种“白把东西连成一片”的感觉，书里写透了。雪野把田和山连成一片，白床单把阳台和雪地连成一片。白是一种会把“分开”取消掉的颜色。

书里的雪野安静，可是不是空的。作者写雪野上有鸟叫，声音细细的，叫完更静；写远处有人走路，踩雪的声音一步一步。我原来以为写安静就该什么都不写，现在晓得了，写一点声音，安静反而更重。就像我们班自习，最静的时候不是没人，是有人翻了一下书，大家都听见了那一下。

语文老师问我们读后感想写什么，好多同学写人物，写驹子，写岛村。我写的是那片雪野。我在作文里写：这本书让我记住一种白。那种白不是没有颜色，是把所有颜色收起来保管，等春天来了再还给大家。叶子的手也是，雪国的人也是，都替那片雪野保管着什么。我说不清是什么，可我知道我下次看见大雪，会站得久一点，替自己也保管一会儿。

合上书，我给自己定了一个小小的计划：等我再长大些，冬天要挑一个下雪的早晨，起得早早的，找一个能看见空地的窗户，推开窗，什么都不干，就看那片白。书里的人看过了，我要自己也看一次。

The Endless White Field, and a Pair of Silkworm-Keeping Hands

The whitest passage in Snow Country describes the snow field at dawn. In the morning Shimamura pushes open the window, and the snow field outside is white all the way to the horizon — fields, riverbeds, distant mountains, all joined into one, with no line where the earth ends and the sky begins. The book says such whiteness is like someone wiping another layer off the world, leaving only its base. I was reading this during evening study hall, under the pale fluorescent lights, and as I stared at those lines my ears suddenly went quiet, as if that whiteness had spread out of the book and soaked our whole row of desks.

The book also describes something I had never paid attention to before: hands. The hands of the girl Yoko are said to be like the hands of someone who keeps silkworms — cool and clean, thin-fingered but strong. The author writes that seeing such hands makes one think of silkworms lying on bamboo trays, of the quiet rustle of silkworms in a snow-country room. I read this and turned my own hand over to look. Mine is an ordinary hand, with calluses from writing. But this way of writing startled me: so a pair of hands can tell you about a whole place. Silkworm-keeping hands are the hands of the snow country — cool, quiet, made of the same stuff as that snow field.

Once we hung white sheets on our balcony. That day there was light snow, and the snowy ground spread out below. In the wind the sheets swelled and fell. I stood on the balcony watching for a long time, and suddenly there seemed to be no border between the sheet and the snow field, as if the sheet were part of the snow and the snow part of the sheet. Back then I could not name the feeling; I only felt something press gently on my heart. Reading Snow Country now, I know that feeling of "white joining things into one" has been written out completely in the book. The snow field joins fields and mountains into one; the white sheet joins the balcony and the snow field into one. White is a color that cancels separation.

The snow field in the book is quiet, but not empty. The author writes of birds calling over it, thin voices, and the quiet deeper after they stop; of someone walking far off, footsteps crunching in the snow, step by step. I used to think that to write quietness you should write nothing at all. Now I know that a little sound makes the quiet heavier. Like our class during study hall: the quietest moment is not when no one is there, but when someone turns a page and everyone hears it.

Our Chinese teacher asked what we wrote our reflections on. Many classmates wrote about characters — Komako, Shimamura. I wrote about the snow field. In my essay I wrote: this book taught me to remember a kind of white. That white is not the absence of color; it gathers all colors up and keeps them safe, to return them when spring comes. the hands of Yoko too, and the people of the snow country, are all keeping something safe for that snow field. I cannot say what it is, but I know that next time I see heavy snow, I will stand a little longer, and keep a little while for myself.

Closing the book, I made myself a small plan: when I am older, on a snowy winter morning I will get up early, find a window facing an open ground, push it open, do nothing, and just look at that white. The people in the book have seen it; I want to see it once with my own eyes.