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.