台上那三十秒没词的朗诵

周小舟报名朗诵，是因为语文老师说，这次联欢会每个班要出一个节目，没人报他就点名。全班四十六个人，他的名字在点名册第十一行，老师念到第十一行的时候，他正低头抠橡皮，一抬头对上老师的眼睛，手就举起来了。举起来他就后悔了，可手已经举起来了。

从那天起他每天对着卧室的穿衣镜念，念的是《小小的船》改的长诗，第二段写星星。他奶奶坐在床边听，听完说念得跟背书一样。他知道跟背书一样，可他只会背书一样地念。排练那天在教室，他念到第二段，前排女生回头看他，他声音立刻小下去，像收音机被人拧了音量。

六一下午，礼堂挂满彩带，前面几排坐着家长。报幕员念到诗朗诵，周小舟从侧面上台，聚光灯打在他脸上，他看不见台下，只看见一片黑，黑里隐约有手机亮着。他开口，第一段顺顺当当，声音比他排练时都大。第二段，星星那一段，他念到一半，词没了。不是模糊，是彻底没了，像抽屉被人整个抽走。

台上静下来。他听见自己的呼吸，听见话筒里嗡嗡的电流声。一秒，两秒。台下开始有细碎的声音。他站在原地，手指抠着诗稿的角，抠出四个洞。第三十秒上，他开口了，词还是没回来，他用自己的话补：星星很多，很多，就是那种，你数着数着就忘了数到几的那种。后面他磕磕绊绊把结尾接上了，念得跟背书一样，又跟背书完全不一样。

他鞠了躬下台，耳朵里全是自己的心跳。走到侧幕，台下掌声才响起来，先稀稀拉拉，然后齐了，像雨从零星到下大。同桌从座位上蹿起来冲他比大拇指，嘴型是：牛。他摆摆手，脸烫得能煎蛋。

回座位时，他桌上放着半瓶水，瓶盖是开的，瓶身上贴着一小条胶带，写着：给你留着。不知道谁贴的，猜是同桌，也可能是前排那个总回头的男生。他喝了两口，剩下的没舍得喝完。

后来周小舟还是话不多。只是班级要出节目时，点名册念到第十一行，他的手会先想一想，再举。那个忘词的三十秒他没跟谁说过，写在周记里，结尾他写：原来词丢了，人可以不跟着丢。

The Thirty Seconds Without Words on Stage

Zhou Xiaozhou signed up for the recitation because the Chinese teacher announced that each class needed one act for the party, and if nobody volunteered she would call names. Forty-six students in the class; his name sat on line eleven of the roster. When the teacher reached line eleven, he was head-down shredding his eraser. He looked up and met her eyes, and his hand went up. The instant it went up he regretted it, but the hand was already up.

From that day on he recited each evening at the full-length mirror in his bedroom, a long poem adapted from Little Boat, its second stanza about stars. His grandmother sat on the bed listening, then said he recited like he was memorizing textbooks. He knew it sounded like memorizing; memorizing was the only way he knew how to recite. At the classroom rehearsal, when he hit the second stanza, a girl in

the front row turned to look at him, and his voice shrank on the spot, like a radio being turned down.

On the afternoon of Children's Day the auditorium hung with ribbons, and the front rows filled with parents. When the host announced the poetry recitation, Zhou Xiaozhou entered from the side. The spotlight hit his face; he couldn't see the audience, only a darkness, phones glinting faintly inside it. He began. The first stanza went smoothly, his voice louder than in rehearsal. The second stanza, the one about stars - halfway through, the words vanished. Not fuzzy: gone completely, like a drawer pulled clean out.

The stage went silent. He heard his own breathing, heard the hum of current in the microphone. One second, two. Faint rustling started in the audience. He stood frozen, fingers digging at the corner of his script, punching four little holes. At the thirtieth second he spoke - the words still never came back - and he filled the gap with his own words: There are lots of stars, lots, the kind where, you count and count and forget what number you reached. After that he limped his way to the ending, stumbling, reciting like a textbook and yet nothing like a textbook.

He bowed and walked off, his ears pounding with his own heartbeat. Halfway to the wings, the applause finally started - scattered at first, then unified, like rain going from sparse to a downpour. His deskmate shot up from his seat and thrust a thumb at him, mouthing one word: awesome. He waved his hand off, his face hot enough to fry an egg.

Back at his seat sat half a bottle of water, cap already off, a strip of tape on the bottle reading: Saved for you. He never found out who put it there - probably his deskmate, maybe the boy in front who always turned around. He took two sips and couldn't bring himself to finish it.

Zhou Xiaozhou still doesn't talk much. Only, when the class needs an act and the roster reaches line eleven, his hand now thinks first, then rises. He never told anyone about those thirty forgotten seconds. He wrote them in his weekly journal, and its last line read: turns out the words can get lost without the person getting lost along with them.