幕布后面的心跳

幕布是蓝格子的，边上有一道缝。我站在缝后面，能看见礼堂里黑压压的头。前面的节目还没完，话筒里传出笑声，一阵一阵的，每阵笑声过来，我的心就跟着紧一下。

我的手心全是汗，裙子上蹭了两下，还是湿的。同桌林小满站在我旁边，手里攥着节目单，攥出了褶子。她小声问：你紧张吗。我说：不紧张。说完我自己都听见声音在抖。

稿子我在心里默了不知道多少遍。春天在哪里呀，春天在哪里——不对，那不是我的，我的是一首关于春天的诗，一共四小节，第一句是：冬天还没走远的时候，我就听见了它的脚步。在家里对着镜子练过，在阳台上对着楼下的树练过，妈妈坐在小马扎上当观众，我念完她就鼓掌。

前面的节目报完了。主持人念到我们班的名字，幕布一开，灯光一下子打过来，亮得我眯起眼。我走到台中央站定，话筒是斜的，我扶正它，听见自己的鞋底在地板上蹭了一声。

我开口了：冬天还没走远的时候，我就听见了它的脚步。声音从话筒里传出来，大得吓了我一跳。第二句也顺顺当当。第三句——我张了张嘴，脑子里一片空白。昨天还在被窝里默的句子，一个字都想不起来了。

礼堂安静下来。那几秒特别长，长得我听见自己的心跳，咚、咚、咚，比鞋底蹭地板那声还清楚。我的脸烫起来，手指抠着话筒的边。台下第一排有同学开始小声说话。

就这时候，我听见一个细细的声音，从第三排传上来：春天在融化的溪水里。是林小满。我一下子想起来了，全想起来了。我接着念下去，声音又稳了，最后一句念完，我鞠了一躬。

直起身的时候，掌声起来了，哗啦啦的，比家里小马扎上那个妈妈的掌声大一百倍。我走下台，腿还有点软，林小满在过道里等我，冲我伸出一只手。我拍了一下，啪，两个人的手心都是汗。

回教室的路上，班主任说：中间那一下，处理得好。其实没人知道那一下有多险。但掌声是真的，心跳也是真的。那天晚上我把那首诗又念给妈妈听了一遍，念完，妈妈鼓掌，我在心里偷偷补上了礼堂里的那一片哗啦啦。

Heartbeats Behind the Curtain

The curtain was blue checked, with a slit along the edge. I stood behind the slit and could see the sea of heads packed dark in the auditorium. The previous act was not over; laughter came out of the microphone, wave after wave, and each wave made my heart tighten.

My palms were all sweat. I wiped them twice on my dress and they were still wet. My deskmate Lin Xiaoman stood beside me, clutching the program until it was wrinkled. She whispered: Are you nervous? I said: No. And I heard my own voice shaking.

I had recited the lines in my head who knows how many times. Where is spring,

where is spring - no, that was not mine. Mine was a poem about spring, four stanzas, and the first line was: Before winter had gone far, I heard its footsteps. I had practiced facing the mirror at home, practiced on the balcony facing the trees downstairs. Mom sat on a little stool as the audience, and clapped when I finished.

The previous act ended. The host called our class's name, the curtain opened, and the lights hit me all at once, so bright I squinted. I walked to the center of the stage and stopped. The microphone was tilted; I straightened it and heard my shoe sole scuff the floor.

I began: Before winter had gone far, I heard its footsteps. My voice came out of the speaker, so loud it startled me. The second line went smoothly too. The third line - I opened my mouth, and my mind went blank. The lines I had been reciting under the covers yesterday - I could not remember a single word.

The auditorium went quiet. Those seconds were so long that I could hear my own heartbeat, thud, thud, thud, louder than the scuff of my shoe. My face burned, and my fingers picked at the rim of the microphone. In the front row, some classmates started whispering.

Just then I heard a thin voice rise from the third row: Spring is in the melting creek. It was Lin Xiaoman. Suddenly it all came back - all of it. I went on, my voice steady again, and when I finished the last line, I bowed.

As I straightened up, the applause came, roaring, a hundred times louder than the applause of Mom on her little stool at home. I walked off stage with still-soft legs. Lin Xiaoman waited for me in the aisle and held out one hand. I slapped it - smack - both our palms were sweaty.

On the way back to the classroom, our homeroom teacher said: That moment in the middle, well handled. Actually nobody knew how close it was. But the applause was real, and so was the heartbeat. That evening I recited the poem to Mom once more, and she clapped, and in my heart I quietly layered on the roaring of that auditorium.