麻雀眼里的清晨

麻雀头一睁眼，就知道不对。窝里漏白，天亮得太早，也太冷。它钻出来，站上的那根电线也粗了一圈——电线上裹了雪。

它认不出这个院子了。墙头平得像新发的面，平得叫它不敢落脚，怕一踩陷进去。柴垛矮了一截，顶上圆滚滚的。最离奇的是枣树：它认得每一根枝，夜里还光秃秃的，这会儿每一根细枝都描了白，整棵树像谁重新长了一遍，长在白纸上。它落在老位置，爪子一挨枝，雪簌簌落下来，抖它一身，它扑棱飞低一点，雪又落它一身。它恼了，落在墙根，墙根的雪最软，一脚一个坑。

觅食要紧。它跳进院子当中，昨天这里有一片谷壳，今天没有了，全让雪被捂着。它扒，爪子往前一搂，搂开一层雪，底下还是雪；再搂一层，露出一点土地，可是谷壳早叫雪泡软了，不成样子。它抬头看看窗，窗玻璃白蒙蒙的，看不见屋里。它歪头，再歪头。它记得这家人往常这个时辰会撒一把小米，就在窗台上，铁簸箕磕三下，磕磕磕，那是开饭的铃。

今天铃没响，窗倒推开了。一个小孩趴在窗台上，先把手往雪里按，按出两个坑，它不懂那叫什么。接着小孩的胳膊动了，抓了一把什么扬出来——小米，一颗一颗落在窗台上，落在雪上，黄澄澄的。它先不落地，跳近，跳远，再看。小孩不动了，趴在窗上看它。它到底落下去，啄一口，米是干的，是好的。它扑棱飞上电线，冲院里叫，叫得又急又响，眨眼间电线上落了一排，院里窗台下落了三只、四只。

小孩的母亲起来扫路，扫帚唰，唰，扫出一条黑土的路。麻雀跳到路上闻了闻，没有米，还是跳回窗台。它吃两口，飞开，再落回来吃两口。窗台上的米少了，它不着急，它知道这家人会再撒。

太阳出来了，枣树上的雪开始往下掉，一坨一坨砸在雪地上。麻雀灌饱了，抖抖毛，从电线上出发了，贴着院子上空飞了一圈。底下的院子白得新的，路黑得新的，脚印一行一行新的。它想，这个院子今天重新发了一遍，跟墙头那层面一样，新得叫它想落脚。

Early Morning Through a Sparrow's Eyes

The sparrow opened its eyes and knew something was wrong at once. White leaked into the nest; dawn came too early and too cold. It squeezed out, and the wire it landed on had grown a size thicker - the wire was wrapped in snow.

It did not recognize this yard. The top of the wall was as flat as freshly risen dough, so flat it dared not land, afraid of sinking in. The woodpile had sunk a notch, round-topped. The strangest thing was the jujube tree: it knew every branch, bare all through the night, and now every thin twig was drawn in white, the whole tree as if someone had regrown it, grown it on white paper. It landed on its old perch; the moment its claws touched the branch, snow rustled down and shook all over it. It fluttered lower, and snow shook all over it again. Annoyed, it landed at the foot of the wall, where the snow was softest, one hole per step.

Finding food came first. It hopped into the middle of the yard. Yesterday there had been a patch of husks here; today there was nothing, all of it covered by the quilt of snow. It scratched, raking forward with its claws, opening one layer of snow - snow underneath; raking another layer, a bit of soil appeared, but the husks had long been softened by the snow, past recognition. It looked up at the window. The glass was hazy white; it could not see inside. It tilted its head, then tilted it again. It remembered that this family usually scattered a handful of millet at this hour, right on the windowsill, and the iron dustpan would knock three times, knock, knock, knock - the dinner bell.

Today the bell did not ring, but the window pushed open. A child lay on the windowsill, first pressing hands into the snow, making two holes - it did not know what that was called. Then the child's arm moved, and a handful of something flew out - millet, grain by grain, landing on the windowsill, on the snow, golden yellow. It did not land at first; it hopped closer, hopped away, looked again. The child stopped moving and watched it from the window. It finally dropped down, pecked once - the millet was dry, good. It fluttered up to the wire and called into the yard, urgent and loud, and in a blink a row landed on the wire, three, four under the windowsill.

The child's mother got up and swept the path, swish, swish, opening a black line of earth. The sparrow hopped onto the path and sniffed - no millet - and hopped back to the windowsill. It ate two pecks, flew off, came back for two more. The millet on the sill was running low; it was not worried. It knew this family would scatter more.

The sun came out, and the snow on the jujube tree began to drop, clump after clump, thumping onto the ground. The sparrow, full, fluffed its feathers and set off from the wire, skimming low over the yard on one round. Below, the yard was newly white, the path newly black, the footprints new row by row. It thought: this yard has been freshly risen today, like that layer of dough on the wall, new enough to make it want to land.