那天我没备课，读了一本闲书

那场雪把学校封了半天。学生放假回去，宿舍楼里就剩我们几个没走的老师。我本来计划好了：下午备两节课，把古诗那单元的课件做完。计划列得很细，几点到几点讲什么，写在纸上。

雪从午后开始飘，越下越密。我坐在桌前做课件，做到第一首诗的注释就卡住了——不是注释难，是我心里浮。窗外雪片大，一片压一片地斜着落，落在操场旗杆上，落在跑道上，把平时吵惯了的操场盖得安安静静的。我看了很久的雪，久到自己都察觉不出来。

后来我做了一件很多年没做过的事。我从行李箱底层抽出那本带过来一直没拆封的书，一个作家写自己故乡冬天的散文集，撕了塑封，坐在窗边的椅子上读。纸书，不是手机。第一页就写雪，写他小时候屋檐下的冰溜子。我给自己泡了杯茶，大红袍，办公室顺来的，泡得很浓，第一杯烫，第二杯苦，第三杯刚好，喝到后来没味了我也没换。

那个下午我没有打开课件。书里写一个人雪天关在屋里翻旧书，翻着翻着睡着了，醒来茶凉透了。我读到这句的时候笑了一下，因为我的茶也凉了一半。我把凉茶一口喝完，凉的也不难喝，就是涩。窗外的雪把天色往下压，四点就像六点，我开了台灯继续翻，纸页在台灯下白得发亮。

合上书的时候，我忽然想起自己念师范的年代，冬天宿舍没暖气，我们裹着棉被轮流朗读，读的是书，哈的是白气。我从什么时候起只读教参和考纲的？教了十几年书，教学生读书，自己倒把读书这件事弄丢了。雪还在下，我坐在原地想这件事，想了很久，没有答案，也没有要紧，想过了就算数。

第二天雪停了，我照常上课，课件还是没做完，我凭老底子讲的，讲得一般。但课上讲到一个雪的句子，我合上书本，跟学生说我昨天读到一个更好的句子，就背给他们听了。背完教室里静了一会儿。那几十秒的安静，比任何一次课堂纪律都好。我没提我读了闲书，也没布置他们去读。有些东西不用说，雪落在纸上，他们看得见。

That Day I Did Not Prepare Lessons - I Read a Book for Pleasure

That snow closed the school for half a day. The students went home for the break, and only a few teachers remained in the dormitory building. I had planned it all out: prepare two lessons in the afternoon, finish the slides for the classical poetry unit. The plan was written on paper, down to what to teach at which hour.

The snow began drifting after noon, thicker and thicker. I sat at my desk making slides and got stuck at the notes for the first poem - not because the notes were hard, but because my mind was restless. Outside the window the flakes were large, falling slantwise layer upon layer, onto the flagpole in the playground, onto the running track, covering the noisy playground in silence. I watched the snow a long time, so long I did not notice myself doing it.

Then I did something I had not done in years. From the bottom of my suitcase I took out the book I had brought and never unwrapped - a collection of essays in which a writer writes about the winter of his hometown. I tore off the plastic and sat down by the window with it. A paper book, not a phone. The very first page was about snow, about the icicles under his childhood eaves. I brewed myself tea, da hong pao, borrowed from the office, brewed strong: the first cup scalding, the second bitter, the third just right, and when the fourth had no taste left I did not change it.

That afternoon I never opened the slides. In the book a man shuts himself in on a snowy day leafing through old books, and drifts off as he reads, and wakes to find his tea stone cold. I laughed when I reached that line, because my tea had gone half cold too. I drained it in one go. Cold tea is not undrinkable, just astringent. Outside, the snow pressed the daylight down; four o'clock looked like six. I turned on the desk lamp and kept reading, the pages shining white under the light.

When I closed the book, I suddenly remembered my years at teachers' college, winters with no heating in the dorm, us wrapped in quilts taking turns reading aloud - reading books, breathing white vapor. Since when had I read only teaching manuals and exam outlines? I had taught for over a decade, teaching students to read, while losing reading itself. The snow kept falling. I sat there thinking about it a long time, with no answer, and it did not matter; having thought it counted.

Next day the snow stopped. I taught as usual, slides still unfinished, getting by on experience, and doing it middling. But when we reached a line about snow, I closed the textbook and told the class I had read a better line the day before, and recited it to them. Afterward the room was quiet for a moment. Those tens of seconds of silence were better than any class discipline I had ever kept. I did not mention the book of essays, and I assigned them nothing to read. Some things do not need saying. Snow falls on the page, and they can see it.