听你说完四个小时的人

小豆豆被原来的学校退学了。妈妈没有骂她，只说：去一所新学校吧。在校长室，校长让她坐下，说：把你想说的话全部说出来，说什么都可以。小豆豆讲了四个小时。她讲窗边的桌子，讲落在学校屋檐上的燕子，讲刚才坐来的电车，讲电车应该开到哪里去。校长一直听着，身子稍微向前倾，一次也没有打断。她讲完了，校长只说了一句：你真可爱。

读到这里，我把书放下了。我想起了我的同桌。有一回他给我讲他看过的动画片，眼睛亮亮的，讲到大半，我看了两次表，还打断了他两次，问他作业是哪一页。后来他就再也不给我讲故事了。我一直以为是他不想讲了，读了《窗边的小豆豆》我才知道，我就像那些没有耐心听小豆豆说话的大人。

书里说，校长后来常常对小豆豆说“你真可爱”。我数过，这样的句子在书里出现了一次又一次。一个人被这样听过、这样夸过，长大以后才会去听别人。小豆豆后来成了一个能认真听别人说话的人，因为她小时候被人认真听过。

今年六一儿童节，我给自己安排了一个任务：把同桌那个没讲完的动画片听完，中间不看表，不打断；然后给他讲我暑假打算看的书，让他也听我说完。我觉得儿童节不只是收礼物，也可以送人一样东西。我想送的那一样，叫“听你说完”。

我们班还有一个同学，说话慢，轮到他发言，经常有人催。今年儿童节我想做一件事：他发言的时候，我第一个举手，请大家安静。这件事比演节目难，但我愿意试试。

巴学园没有大礼堂，没有彩排，没有领导讲话。它的儿童节不在日历上，藏在每天下午，藏在校长听孩子们把话说完的那段时间里。我想，我们学校的儿童节，也可以藏一点这样的时间进去。

The Man Who Let Her Talk for Four Hours

Totto-Chan was asked to leave her first school. Her mother did not scold her. She only said: let us find you a new school. In the headmaster's office, the headmaster asked her to sit down and said: say everything you want to say; anything is fine. Totto-Chan talked for four hours. She talked about the desk by her window, the swallows on the school eaves, the tram she had just ridden, and where trams ought to go. The headmaster kept listening, leaning slightly forward, and never interrupted once. When she finished, he said only: you are a lovely girl.

I put the book down at that page. I thought of my deskmate. Once he was telling me about a cartoon he had watched, his eyes shining. Halfway through, I checked my watch twice and interrupted him twice to ask which page the homework was on. After that he never told me stories again. I always thought he simply stopped wanting to. Reading Totto-Chan taught me that I had been like the grown-ups who had no patience to listen to her.

The book says the headmaster went on telling Totto-Chan she was lovely, again and again. I counted, and the sentence appears over and over. A child who is listened to like that, praised like that, will grow up able to listen to others. Totto-Chan became someone who listened carefully to people, because as a small girl she had been listened to carefully.

This Children's Day I have set myself a task: listen to the end of the cartoon story my deskmate never finished, without checking my watch or cutting in; then tell him about the books I plan to read over summer vacation, and let him listen to all of me. A Children's Day is not only for receiving gifts. You can also give someone one thing. The thing I want to give is called: I will listen until you are done.

There is another boy in our class who speaks slowly. When it is his turn to speak, people hurry him. This Children's Day I want to do one thing: when he stands up to speak, I will raise my hand first and ask everyone to be quiet. That is harder than performing in a show, but I am willing to try.

Tomoe had no auditorium, no rehearsals, no speeches from leaders. Its Children's Day was not on the calendar. It hid in the afternoons, in the time when the headmaster let children finish what they wanted to say. I think our school's Children's Day could hide a little of that time inside it as well.