写给二十年后的自己

今年六一的升旗仪式，和往年不一样。班主任说，国旗下讲话我们不讲排练好的套话，全班每人写一句话，写给二十年后的自己，由我挑几句念给全校听。这个决定在班里炸开了锅：有人问二十年后的自己还认不认得现在的字，有人说要写就要写最厉害的愿望。我收纸条的时候，三十九张，每张都折成不同的形状，有的折成飞机，有的折成方块，还有一张折成了一颗星星。

讲话那天早上，我在台上展开那些纸条。我说：同学们，二十年后，我们三十九个人里，有人可能成了老师，有人可能成了修飞机的人，有人可能在做我们现在还没听说过的工作。但是不管成了什么，下面这些话是九岁的你写给大人的。然后我念。有人写：你还会不会在夏天找蝉？有人写：别忘了你三年级最好的朋友叫小航，你们拉过钩。有人写：希望二十年后的你，看到有人摔倒还会去扶。念到这句的时候操场特别安静，安静得能听见旗在响。

我也念了自己那张。我写的是：你还记得妈妈每天拧开的水壶盖吗？记得的话，就回去帮她拧一次。念完我朝三年级那一片看，我妈妈就站在家长观礼区，她愣了一下，然后抬手晃了晃，像赶走什么，又像是在打招呼。

讲话的最后，我把三十九张纸条装进一个铁盒，封条上写着开盒日期：二十年后的六一。铁盒交给了学校档案室，保管单由班长签的名。校长在总结讲话里说，这是他听过最短的一次国旗下讲话，也是他最不想打断的一次。

散会回教室的路上，同桌问我，二十年后的我们真的会打开那个盒子吗。我说不知道，但是写信这件事已经完成了——写下的那一秒，九岁的我们就已经站到了大人面前，把童年递了过去。风从操场那边过来，把队伍里校服的衣角吹得轻轻动。那天没有一个人说笑。我们都在心里，给自己存了一封信。

A Letter to Myself Twenty Years From Now

This year's June First flag ceremony was different from any before. Our homeroom teacher announced that for the flag speech we would skip the rehearsed clichés: every student in the class would write one sentence to themselves twenty years from now, and I would read a few chosen lines aloud to the whole school. The class erupted. Someone asked whether the grown-up version of them would still recognize their handwriting; someone said if you write, write the grandest wish. When I collected the slips there were thirty-nine, each folded differently — some into airplanes, some into squares, one into a star.

On the morning of the ceremony I unfolded the slips on the podium. I said: fellow students, in twenty years, among our thirty-nine, someone may be a teacher, someone may repair airplanes, someone may be doing a job none of us has heard of yet. But whatever you become, the words below are written to the grown-up you by the nine-year-old you. Then I read. One said: do you still hunt for cicadas in summer? Another: don't forget your best friend in third grade was named Xiaohang, you once

pinky-promised. Another: I hope the you of twenty years later still helps up anyone you see fall. When I read that line, the playground went very quiet — quiet enough to hear the flag rustling.

I read my own slip too. Mine said: do you still remember the water-bottle lid Mom loosened every day? If you do, go home and loosen it for her once. After reading, I looked toward the third-grade section. My mother was standing in the parents' area; she froze for a moment, then raised her hand and waved — as if shooing something away, or as if saying hello.

At the end of the speech I put all thirty-nine slips into a tin box, its seal strip marked with the opening date: June First, twenty years later. The box went to the school archive, and the class monitor signed the custody receipt. In his closing remarks the principal said it was the shortest flag speech he had ever heard, and the one he least wanted to interrupt.

On the walk back to class, my deskmate asked whether the us of twenty years later would really open that box. I said I don't know, but the writing was already finished the moment it was done — in the second we wrote it down, the nine-year-old us had already stood before the grown-ups and handed over childhood. Wind came across the playground, stirring the hems of our uniforms in the line. Not a single person joked that day. Inside, each of us had saved a letter for ourselves.

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