雪中上学路

今天早上我一开门，世界就变成了一块撒了糖粉的蛋糕。对面车棚的顶全白了，院子里的槐树枝头压着雪，压得低低的，像是也怕冷。

爸爸要骑电动车送我到校门口，我没同意。我都四年级了，下雪天要自己走。妈妈把我的围巾绕到只露出眼睛，在后面三步远的地方喊：慢点，慢点。

人行道上的雪只有薄薄一层，被人踩过的地方化成了雪水，又冻成一层薄冰。井盖特别亮，像一面面镜子扣在马路上。斑马线更危险，红色的漆面蒙着冰，滑溜溜平展展。我学着电视里滑冰的样子往前出溜，脚刚飞出去，身后就落下来一个严厉的声音：不许滑。我回头，妈妈的眉毛上已经落着雪了。

最险的是校门口那段斜坡。斜坡冻成了一整块冰，好几个孩子走在上面像企鹅，横着挪。我踩上斜坡，脚底一歪，书包从肩膀上滑下来，两只手不由自主地张开——就在这时，后面有人一把拽住了我的书包带，一只手扶住了我的胳膊。是我们班的王小武。

他说，这段坡最滑，他去年就在这儿摔过，摔了个屁股墩儿。他要替我背书包，我说不用，自己的书包自己背。他说那咱们背贴着背走，谁摔了另一个能顶住。于是我们俩就像两只企鹅，一步、一步，挪到了坡顶。

校门口，值日老师站在雪里，提醒大家走慢点，别跑。雪落在她的帽子上，她也不掸。我想，她天天站在这儿，今天地上更滑，她站得更辛苦。

一进教室门，我就摘了帽子抖雪。哗啦一下，雪花飞起来一团，前排的女生打了个喷嚏。同桌递给我纸巾，我掸掸肩膀，又落下几片雪，落在地上，化成一个个小水点。

早读开始了，大家读书的声音特别亮。我的手还是红的，贴在脸颊上，又凉又烫，分不清。我又想起坡上那一下，想起那只拽住书包带的手。要是没有它，我的屁股墩儿就要跟地上的冰作个伴了。

下雪的上学路真滑。可是我回到座位上，又觉得它挺暖。窗外雪还在下，教室里的热牛奶很香。

The Snowy Walk to School

This morning when I opened the door, the world had become a cake dusted with powdered sugar. The roof of the shed across from our building was all white, and the branches of the locust tree in the yard were loaded with snow, hanging low, as if they too were afraid of the cold.

My father wanted to take me to the school gate on the electric bike, but I did not agree. I am already in fourth grade; on a snowy day I must walk by myself. My

mother wrapped my scarf until only my eyes were left, and called from three steps behind: walk slowly, walk slowly.

The snow on the sidewalk was only a thin layer. The parts people had walked on melted into slush and froze again into a thin sheet of ice. The manhole covers were especially shiny, like mirrors laid on the road. The zebra crossing was more dangerous still, its red paint covered with ice, smooth and flat. I tried to imitate the skaters on television and slide forward, my feet barely flying out, when a stern voice fell on my back: do not slide. I turned around, and snow had already landed on my mother's brows.

The most dangerous place was the slope in front of the school gate. The slope had frozen into a whole sheet of ice, and several children walked on it like penguins, moving sideways. I stepped onto the slope, my feet slid out, my schoolbag slipped off my shoulder, and both my hands flew open by themselves. Just then, someone behind grabbed my schoolbag strap hard, and a hand supported my arm. It was my classmate Wang Xiaowu.

He said: this slope is the most slippery; I fell here last year too, a good hard fall on my tailbone. He tried to carry my schoolbag for me. I said no, my own bag I can carry myself. He said: then walk with our backs close to each other, so if one falls the other can hold. So the two of us walked penguin-style, one step after another, all the way to the top of the slope.

At the school gate, the teacher on duty stood in the snow, reminding everyone: walk slowly, do not run. The snow kept landing on her hat, and she did not brush it off. I thought: she stands here every day, and today the ground is even more slippery, so she has it even harder.

The moment I entered the classroom, I took off my hat and shook the snow off. Whoosh, a cloud of snow flew up, and the girl in the front row sneezed. My deskmate handed me a tissue, and I brushed the snow off my shoulders. A few more snowflakes fell onto the floor and melted into small dots of water.

Reading aloud began, and everyone's voices rang very bright. My hands were still red. I pressed them against my cheeks, cold and hot mixed together, hard to tell apart. I thought again of that moment on the slope, and of the hand that had grabbed my schoolbag strap. If that hand had not been there, my tailbone would have kept company with the ice on the ground.

The snowy walk to school is really slippery. But walking back to my seat, I also felt it was warm. Outside the window the snow kept falling, and the hot milk inside the classroom smelled wonderful.

坡上的那双手

雪是夜里下的，早上出来一看，马路两边全白了。可最麻烦的不是雪，是雪底下那层冰。雪被前面的行人踩化，一到冷天又冻上，人行道变成了一面灰白色的大玻璃，亮晃晃的，专等人不注意。

我走在上学的路上，尽量踩别人踩出来的脚印。脚印一个挨一个，像一条歪歪扭扭的路标。我忽然发现，走别人走过的路最稳，因为那些脚印已经替我们试过滑不滑了。

快到校门口的斜坡，我看见前面有个小小的身影忽然坐到了地上。是个一年级的小弟弟，书包甩在一边，两只手撑着冰，想爬起来，脚底下却打滑，越撑越起不来。他周围的大人脚步很快，谁也没停。

我跑过去。其实我也怕滑，跑到他跟前时自己差点也出溜一下，还好我一把抓住了路边的护栏。我把他的手拉起来，帮他捡起书包，拍掉他手套上的雪。他帽子上全是雪，鼻尖红红的，小声说了句谢谢哥哥。

我问他是几班的，他说一（2）班。正好顺路。我对他说，这段坡邪门，你踩着我的脚印走。于是我在前面走，把每一步踩实了，他在后面照着踩。走到坡中间，他脚又晃了一下，我反手拉住他的手腕，拉稳了，继续走。

说实话，我的手也凉，手套是去年买的，有点薄。可是我心里热得很。去年冬天，我也是在这条斜坡上摔的，书包里的卷子撒了一地，是一个六年级的哥哥帮我把卷子一张一张捡起来，还扶我到坡顶。他叫什么我忘了，只记得他袖口上有一块蓝墨水的印子。我一直记得。今年，我四年级了，我也成了扶别人的那个人。

到了教室门口，我们互相帮忙掸雪。我摘了他的帽子，帮他把后背的雪拍掉，他帮我把围巾上的雪一片一片摘下来。他抖雪的时候抖出一头碎冰碴，叮叮咚咚掉在地上，像下了一场小小的冰雹。我们俩都笑了。

早读铃响了。他跑回一（2）班，跑之前回头冲我挥了挥手。我回到自己的座位上，把手贴在嘴边哈了哈气，手是凉的，心是热的。

窗外的雪还在下。我想起去年那个袖口有蓝墨水印子的哥哥，不知道他上几年级了。明年冬天，也许一（2）班这个小弟弟也会四年级，也会去扶下一个坐在冰上的人。这样一想，这条滑溜溜的上学路，好像也没那么难走了。

The Hands on the Slope

The snow fell during the night. Coming out in the morning, both sides of the road were all white. But the real trouble was not the snow, it was the layer of ice under it. People in front had trodden the snow into slush, and the cold froze it again, so the sidewalk became one huge sheet of grayish glass, gleaming, just waiting for

someone to be careless.

On my way to school I tried to step in other people's footprints. The footprints followed one another, like a crooked row of road signs. I suddenly realized that walking in the path others had walked was the steadiest way of all, because those footprints had already tested the ice for us.

Near the slope at the school gate, I saw a small figure ahead suddenly sit down on the ground. It was a first-grade little boy, his schoolbag flung aside, both hands propped on the ice, trying to get up, but his feet kept sliding and he could not rise. The grown-ups around him walked fast, and nobody stopped.

I ran over. Honestly I was afraid of slipping too; when I reached him I nearly slid myself, but luckily I grabbed the railing by the road. I pulled him up by the hand, picked up his schoolbag, and brushed the snow off his gloves. His hat was covered with snow, his nose tip red, and he said quietly: thank you, big brother.

I asked him which class he was in. He said Class 2, Grade 1. It was on my way. I told him: this slope is wicked, step in my footprints. So I walked in front, pressing each step firm, and he followed, stepping where I stepped. In the middle of the slope his foot wobbled again, and I reached back and caught his wrist, steadied him, and kept walking.

To tell the truth, my hands were cold too. My gloves were bought last year and a little thin. But my heart was warm. Last winter I also fell on this very slope. The papers in my schoolbag scattered all over the ground, and a sixth-grade big brother picked them up sheet by sheet and walked me to the top of the slope. I forgot his name; I only remember a blue ink stain on his cuff. I have remembered it all along. This year I am in fourth grade, and I have become the one who helps others up.

At the classroom door we brushed the snow off each other. I took off his hat and patted the snow off his back, and he picked the snowflakes off my scarf one by one. When he shook his snow out, a headful of little ice pellets fell tinkling to the floor, like a tiny hailstorm. We both laughed.

The morning reading bell rang. He ran back to Class 2, Grade 1, and before running he turned and waved at me. I returned to my seat and breathed on my hands. My hands were cold; my heart was hot.

Outside the window the snow kept falling. I thought of that big brother last year with the blue ink stain on his cuff. I wonder what grade he is in now. Next winter, maybe this little boy from Class 2 will be in fourth grade too, and will help up the next person sitting on the ice. Thinking of it that way, this slippery walk to school does not seem so hard after all.

我和小禾的雪地行军

昨晚睡前我就把明早的闹钟上了两遍。妈妈说，看这架势明天雪小不了。我躺在床上想，要是雪下得大，我就叫上小禾一起走。小禾住在我们巷子口，是我同班同学。我们俩平时什么都比，比谁算得快，比谁跳绳多，上周还比谁能单手转笔，结果两人都把笔甩到了黑板槽里，谁也没赢。

早上七点一出门，雪已经停了，可地上全是雪。我在巷子口学了一声猫叫，这是我们约好的暗号。小禾披着羽绒服出来了，他妈妈在后面喊：路上不许打闹。

我们一开始还走得规规矩矩。人行道上的雪被踩实了，一层冰壳子亮晶晶的，踩上去咯吱咯吱响。小禾说，咱们比踩影子，谁的影子被踩到谁输。我低头去踩他的影子，脚下一滑，整个人往前出溜，好容易站住了，鞋尖正好停在他的影子上。我大喊：我赢啦！小禾不服，说那是滑的，不算，重新来。

重新来不要紧，他退后助跑，冲过来踩我的影子，结果他自己脚下一滑，哧溜一下出溜出去，一屁股坐进了路边的雪堆里。我伸手去拉他，没想到他力气大，一把拽住我，我脚底本来也踩着冰，被他带得也坐了下去。两个人并排坐在雪堆里，雪灌进后脖领，凉得缩脖子。我们你看看我，我看看你，忽然都笑得直不起腰。笑完了，谁也不笑话谁，爬起来拍拍雪，接着走。

到了校门口那段斜坡，谁也不敢比了。斜坡冻成一面亮冰，上面有昨天留下的扫帚印。小禾说，这次搀着走。我们俩一人抓住对方一只胳膊，像抬一桶水那样，横着往坡上挪。坡不长，我们走了好半天。旁边一个家长看见了，说这俩孩子倒会互相照顾。我们嘴上说才没有，是怕摔，耳朵都有点热。

值日老师在校门口数迟到的同学。我们从坡上下来，书包上、帽子上、肩膀上全是雪。进教学楼前，我们互相帮忙抖雪。我给他拍后背，他给我扫帽子，抖下来的雪在门口积了一小堆。路过一年级那边，几个小同学看着我们笑，说我们俩像两个雪人。

坐到座位上，我发现手套湿了一角，头发里还藏着几片没抖干净的雪。小禾隔着过道冲我比了个手势，是早上那个猫叫的手势。我忍住笑，翻开语文书。

早读的声音响起来，特别齐，特别亮。窗外又飘起雪来，一片一片落在操场边上。我想起坐在雪堆里的那一下，后脖领还凉着，心里却热热的。下雪的上学路，滑是真滑，可我跟小禾这一路，比平时哪一天都长，也都好。

My Snow March with Xiaohe

Before bed last night I set my morning alarm twice. My mother said: from the look of it, tomorrow’s snow will not be small. I lay in bed thinking: if the snow falls big, I will call Xiaohe and walk to school together. Xiaohe lives at the mouth of our lane, and he is my classmate. Usually we compete about everything: who calculates faster, who jumps rope more. Last week we competed at spinning a pen with one hand,

and both of us flung our pens into the blackboard groove, so neither won.

At seven in the morning, when I went out, the snow had stopped, but the ground was full of snow. At the lane mouth I imitated a cat call, our agreed signal. Xiaohe came out in his down jacket, his mother calling behind him: no roughhousing on the road.

At first we walked properly. The snow on the sidewalk had been trodden firm, a shell of ice glittering, creaking under our feet. Xiaohe said: let us compete at stepping on shadows; whoever's shadow gets stepped on loses. I lowered my head to chase his shadow, my foot slid out, my whole body skidding forward. I barely stayed standing, and my toe stopped right on his shadow. I shouted: I won! Xiaohe refused to accept it, saying that one was a slide and did not count, do it again.

Doing it again was a mistake. He backed up, took a run, charged at my shadow, and his own foot slipped. He skidded and landed seat-first in the snowbank by the road. I reached out to pull him up, but I did not expect him to be so strong: he grabbed me in one pull, and my feet were on ice too, so he dragged me down as well. We sat side by side in the snowbank, snow pouring down our collars, making us shrink our necks with the cold. We looked at each other, and suddenly both laughed so hard we could not straighten up. When the laughing ended, neither one teased the other. We got up, patted off the snow, and kept walking.

At the slope in front of the school gate, neither of us dared compete anymore. The slope had frozen into a sheet of bright ice, marked with yesterday's broom strokes. Xiaohe said: this time we walk arm in arm. Each of us grabbed one of the other's arms, like carrying a bucket of water between two people, and shuffled sideways up the slope. The slope was not long, but it took us a long time. A parent nearby saw us and said: these two boys really know how to look after each other. We said no, we were just afraid of falling, but our ears went a little hot.

The teacher on duty at the school gate was counting late students. Coming down the slope, we were covered with snow on our schoolbags, hats, and shoulders. Before entering the teaching building we helped each other shake off the snow. I patted his back, he swept his hat, and the shaken-off snow piled into a little mound at the door. Passing the first-graders' side, several small students looked at us and laughed, saying we looked like two snowmen.

Sitting down at my desk, I found one corner of my glove was wet, and a few snowflakes still hid in my hair, unshaken. Xiaohe flashed me a gesture across the aisle, the cat-call gesture from this morning. I held back a laugh and opened my Chinese textbook.

The sound of morning reading rose, very even, very bright. Outside the window

snow began drifting again, flake after flake landing on the edge of the playground. I thought of that moment sitting in the snowbank. The back of my neck was still cold, but my heart was warm. The snowy walk to school is truly slippery, but this road Xiaohe and I walked was longer than any ordinary day, and better.