雪天的体育课

第三节课是体育课。铃响的时候天上还飘着雪，李老师却在体育馆门口说：今天不进馆，操场上课！

全班一阵欢呼。操场铺着厚厚一层雪，白白的，平平的，像一张刚摊开的大面饼，还没有人踩上去。李老师说：先热身，绕跑道跑两圈，不许抄近道。

雪地上跑步跟跑塑胶跑道不一样。脚踩下去咯吱咯吱响，像有人在耳朵边上咬薯片。冷空气往口鼻里钻，呼出来的气全是白烟，一排人跑过去，像一列突突冒烟的小火车。有人提议比谁跑得快，队伍一下子全加速，李老师也不拦，只在边上喊：别滑！

两圈跑完，外套敞开了，额头上冒热气，头发梢上挂着的小冰碴亮晶晶的。李老师拍拍手，宣布今天的主项：堆雪人比赛，四人一组，时间一节课，最后全班投票。

操场立刻变成热热闹闹的工地。有人滚雪球，有人拍底座，有人满操场找树枝和落叶。我们组决定堆一个三层高的雪人，最大的雪球坐在最底下。那个雪球太重，四个人推不上底座，脚底打滑，撞在一起两次，谁也没笑谁，弯下腰接着推。

隔壁组借给我们一根胡萝卜，还是他们组从食堂顺来的。有人解下自己的红围巾，给雪人围上。我们的雪人胡萝卜鼻子、煤渣眼睛、红围巾，站在操场正中间，威风极了。我们给它取了个名字，叫胖墩。

投票前还要检查。胖墩的胳膊是两根枯树枝，插得不牢，风一吹掉了一根，我们赶紧补插回去，还用雪把接口糊结实。旁边几组有的雪人脑袋歪了，有的肚子裂了缝，都手忙脚乱地修补，操场上一片蹲着跪着的身影。

快下课，李老师掏出手机：都集合，跟自己的雪人合影！我们挤在胖墩旁边，脸上沾着雪的也不抹了，手背上的雪水顺着指头滴。第一张，后排有人打喷嚏；第二张，胖墩的胡萝卜鼻子歪了。李老师说：来，第三张，都憋住气。咔嚓一声，定格了，连笑声都定格了。

回教室的路上，人人还在争论谁的雪人最可爱，都说自己的组该得第一。手是红的，指尖被雪泡得发白，可谁也不觉得冷。我望着窗外操场，胖墩还站在正中间，等着下课再去看看它。

下雪的体育课，比哪一节课都短，也比哪一节课都好玩。我把照片存进心里，把雪水留在鞋里，把这一节课记了很久很久。

The Snowy P.E. Class

Third period was P.E. class. When the bell rang, snow was still drifting from the sky, and Mr. Li said at the door of the gym: today we do not go inside, class on the playground!

The whole class cheered. The playground lay under a thick layer of snow, white

and flat, like a giant sheet of dough with no footprints on it yet. Mr. Li said: first the warm-up, two laps around the track, and no cutting corners.

Running on snow is different from running on the rubber track. Each step crunches, like someone biting a potato chip right beside your ear. Cold air rushes in through mouth and nose, and every breath turns into white smoke, so that when a row of us run past, we look like a little train puffing along. Someone suggested a race, and the whole line sped up at once. Mr. Li did not stop us; he only ran at the side shouting: do not slip!

Two laps done, coats opened, foreheads steaming, and the little ice crystals hanging on our hair tips glittered. Mr. Li clapped his hands and announced the main event: a snowman-building contest, four per group, one class period, and a whole-class vote at the end.

The playground became a bustling construction site at once. Some rolled snowballs, some packed bases, some roamed the whole field hunting for twigs and fallen leaves. Our group decided on a three-tiered snowman, the biggest snowball at the bottom. That ball was too heavy for four of us to push onto the base; our feet slipped, we bumped into each other twice, and nobody laughed at anybody. We just bent down and pushed again.

The group next to us lent us a carrot, which they had smuggled from the cafeteria. Someone unwound his own red scarf and wrapped it around the snowman neck. Our snowman had a carrot nose, coal-splinter eyes, and a red scarf, standing in the middle of the playground, looking very important. We gave it a name: Fatty.

Before the vote came the inspection. The arms of Fatty were two dry twigs, not pushed in deep, and one fell off when the wind blew. We jammed it back in at once and sealed the joint firmly with snow. In other groups one snowman head had tilted, another belly had cracked open, and everyone was scrambling to make repairs, the field full of crouching and kneeling figures.

Just before the bell, Mr. Li took out his phone: everyone gather, group photos with your snowman! We crowded in beside Fatty, and those with snow on their faces did not bother wiping it off; snowmelt dripped from our fingers. In the first shot someone in the back row sneezed; in the second shot the carrot nose of Fatty tilted. Mr. Li said: come on, third shot, everybody hold your breath. Click. The moment was fixed, and even the laughter was fixed with it.

On the way back to the classroom, everyone kept arguing about whose snowman was the cutest, each group sure it should win first place. Our hands were red, our fingertips whitened from the snow, yet nobody felt cold. I looked out at the playground, where Fatty still stood in the middle, waiting for us to come back and

visit after class.

This snowy P.E. class was shorter than any other class, and more fun than any other. I kept the photo in my heart, left the snowmelt in my shoes, and remembered that class for a very long time.

操场上的白噪音

我不太喜欢体育课。人太多，哨子太响，跑步的时候我总落在队伍尾巴上。可今天的体育课不一样，因为下雪了。

李老师说绕跑道跑两圈热身。我还是落在后面。雪踩上去咯吱咯吱的，我一个人听着这个声音，觉得像有人在雪里走路，专门走给我听。前面的人呼出的白气连成一串，我落在白气后面，倒像是跟着一列火车走。

跑到第二圈，同桌陈笑放慢脚步，回头等我。她喊：别老一个人走，来我们这排。我就小跑几步，挤进队伍里。风灌进袖子，可旁边有人，风好像就没那么冲了。

堆雪人比赛开始，我们组分了工：陈笑和胖子滚雪球，大志拍底座，我负责找眼睛。我蹲在操场边上翻雪，雪底下露出几棵枯草，我挑了两粒最圆的干草籽，又捡了一片黑树叶当嘴巴。找东西这件事我擅长。教室里找丢失的橡皮，从来都是我找到的。

雪人的身子堆起来了，三层，晃晃的。大志的手太大，安眼睛总把眼窝戳塌。我接过那两粒草籽，屏住气，按进去，刚刚好。陈笑说：你手真稳。我说，我找到的，当然我来安。

投票结果出来，我们组的雪人排第三。第一名是隔壁组那个戴篮球网帽子的大家伙。陈笑有点不服，胖子说第三就第三，反正胖墩——我们给雪人起的名字——眼睛最精神。我看了看胖墩，它站在雪里，黑树叶嘴巴微微翘着，确实挺精神。

李老师举着手机喊合影。我们挤到胖墩跟前，陈笑把我往中间拉，说安眼睛的站中间。我站到了正中间，雪落在眉毛上，我没敢动。咔嚓一声，李老师说好，再来一张。我后来在班级相册里看到那张照片，我在正中间，笑得有点僵，但是是真的在笑。

回教室，脖领里化了一点雪，凉丝丝的。我把那半片没用的黑树叶夹进文具盒。下节是数学课，黑板上全是数字，可我盯着文具盒想：原来人群中间也有一个位置，是留给会找草籽的人的。

放学时雪又下了。我背着书包走在雪地里，咯吱，咯吱，像体育课上的声音跟在我后面。我放慢脚步，让它多跟一会儿。

White Noise on the Playground

I do not much like P.E. class. Too many people, the whistle too loud, and when we run I always end up at the tail of the line. But today's P.E. class was different, because it had snowed.

Mr. Li said two laps around the track to warm up. I stayed at the back again. The snow crunched under my feet, and I listened to that sound alone, as if someone were walking through snow just for me to hear. The white breath of the runners ahead strung together in a chain, and I trailed behind the white breath, like following a train.

On the second lap, my deskmate Chen Xiao slowed down and turned back to wait for me. She called: stop walking alone, come into our row. So I jogged a few steps and squeezed into the line. Wind poured into my sleeves, but with someone beside me, the wind did not seem so fierce.

When the snowman contest began, our group divided the work: Chen Xiao and Fatty Pang rolled snowballs, Da Zhi packed the base, and I was in charge of finding eyes. I crouched at the edge of the playground digging through snow. Under the snow a few withered grasses showed, and I picked out two of the roundest dried grass seeds, plus one dark leaf for a mouth. Finding things is my strong suit. In the classroom, when an eraser goes missing, I am always the one who finds it.

The snowman body rose in three wobbling tiers. Da Zhi's hands were too big; every time he set the eyes he collapsed the sockets. I took those two grass seeds, held my breath, and pressed them in. Perfect. Chen Xiao said: your hands are so steady. I said: I found them, of course I set them.

The vote came out: our snowman placed third. First place went to the big one next door wearing a basketball-net hat. Chen Xiao was a little unconvinced. Fatty Pang said third is fine, and anyway Fatty, our snowman's name, has the sharpest eyes. I looked at Fatty. It stood in the snow, its dark-leaf mouth turned up slightly. It really did look sharp.

Mr. Li raised his phone and called for the group photo. We crowded up to Fatty, and Chen Xiao pulled me toward the middle, saying the one who set the eyes stands in the middle. I stood right in the center, snow landing on my eyebrows, and I did not dare move. Click. Mr. Li said good, one more. Later, in the class photo album, I found that picture: me in the middle, smiling a little stiffly, but really smiling.

Back in the classroom, a little melted snow trickled down my collar, cool and tingling. I tucked the unused half of the dark leaf into my pencil case. The next class was math, the blackboard full of numbers, but I kept staring at the pencil case

and thinking: so there is a spot in the middle of the crowd, reserved for the person who can find grass seeds.

When school let out, it snowed again. I walked home through the snow with my schoolbag on, crunch, crunch, as if the sound of P.E. class were following me. I slowed my steps, to let it follow a little longer.

记分员的一天

我是五（3）班的体育委员。平地上课，整队、报数、喊一二一，都是我的活儿。今天下雪，李老师说操场开课，他多看了我一眼：今天你领队热身，顺便帮我盯着各组。

两圈热身跑，我跑在最前面压速度。不敢快，雪地上快了要出人命——我们班的刘大壮去年就在冰上摔过，尾椎骨疼了一个月。我故意把步子踩得又碎又稳，身后四十个人照着踩，咯吱声连成一片，像一列长长的雪橇队。

跑完，李老师宣布堆雪人比赛，四人一组自由组合。我掏出铅笔和积分册，站在操场中间喊：组好队的到我这儿登记！一会儿工夫，我本子上多了十个组名，什么复仇者队、汤圆队、胖虎队，写得我手都僵了。李老师把秒表交给我：下课前十分钟我喊停，你记各组的完成时间。

于是这一节课我满操场跑腿。三组问胡萝卜去哪儿借，我领他们去找食堂张师傅；七组的底座塌了，我帮着扶正；九组非要在雪人胸口写班训，我提醒他们先投票再写。我自己那一组呢？我组员全在等我，组长赵小磊喊：记分员回来堆雪人了！我喊回去：你们先滚雪球，我记完就来！

下课前十分钟，李老师喊停。我举着秒表一组一组看过去，报完成时间，顺手给每个雪人打分：眼睛歪不歪，底座牢不牢。走到我们组跟前，我的雪人只堆了两层，脑袋还没安上，可它的眼睛用的是十粒瓜子仁，排成一圈，全场独一份。我给我自己组打了八分，手有一点点抖。

投票、颁奖，汤圆队第一，胖虎队第二，我们组第三。合影的时候，李老师招呼全班到获奖的雪人前面。我站在边上整理队伍，李老师说：记分员，过来，也拍。我摆手说不用，赵小磊一把拽住我，咔嚓，我半张脸进了照片，帽子上顶着一坨雪。

回教室清点人数，四十个，一个不少。我坐在座位上脱鞋，袜子湿得能拧出水，鞋印在地板上踩出一串小地图。同桌凑过来看我的积分册，说你这节课比谁都忙。我想了想，是啊，我两圈都跑完了，十个组都帮过了，还给自己组的雪人安了瓜子眼睛。

放学路上雪又下了。我边走边想下雪天体育课的记分员手册——其实没有手册，就是嗓子喊哑一点，手冻红一点，鞋湿透一双。可下次还下雪的话，我还领队，还记分。谁让我是体育委员呢。

A Day as the Scorekeeper

I am the P.E. monitor of Class 3, Grade 5. On ordinary days, lining up the class, reporting numbers, and shouting the cadence are my jobs. Today it snowed, and Mr. Li announced class on the playground. He gave me an extra look: today you lead the warm-up, and keep an eye on the groups for me.

Two laps of warm-up running, and I led at the front, holding the pace down. I did not dare go fast. On snow, going fast can hurt somebody. Liu Dazhuang from our class fell on ice last year, and his tailbone ached for a month. I deliberately took short, steady steps, and the forty people behind me stepped the same way, the crunching running together into one long sound, like a long line of sleds.

After the run, Mr. Li announced the snowman contest, teams of four, free to form. I took out my pencil and scorebook and stood in the middle of the playground shouting: groups that have formed, come register with me! In no time my book held ten team names: Avengers, Tangyuan, Fatty Tiger, and more, and my hand went stiff from writing. Mr. Li handed me the stopwatch: I will call time ten minutes before the bell, and you record each group's finishing time.

So for the whole class I ran all over the playground. Group 3 asked where to borrow a carrot, and I led them to find Chef Zhang at the cafeteria. Group 7's base collapsed, and I helped prop it straight. Group 9 insisted on writing the class motto on their snowman's chest, and I told them to vote first, then write. And my own group? All my teammates were waiting for me. Our team leader Zhao Xiaolei shouted: scorekeeper, come back and build! I shouted back: roll the snowballs first, I am coming as soon as the times are recorded!

Ten minutes before the bell, Mr. Li called time. I held up the stopwatch and went group by group, calling out finishing times, scoring each snowman on the way: are the eyes straight, is the base firm. When I reached my own group's snowman, it had only two tiers, its head not yet attached, but its eyes were made of ten sunflower seeds arranged in a ring, the only such eyes in the whole contest. I gave my own group eight points, and my hand trembled just a little.

Voting, awards: Team Tangyuan first, Team Fatty Tiger second, our group third. For the group photo, Mr. Li gathered the class in front of the winning snowmen. I stood at the side getting the line in order, and Mr. Li said: scorekeeper, come over, you are in the photo too. I waved him off, but Zhao Xiaolei grabbed me. Click. Half my face made it into the picture, a lump of snow riding on my hat.

Back in the classroom I counted heads: forty, not one missing. I sat down and took off my shoes, and my socks could be wrung out; my wet footprints left a little map across the floor. My deskmate peered at my scorebook and said I had been busier

than anyone in that class. I thought about it: yes, I ran both laps, helped all ten groups, and even attached the sunflower-seed eyes to my own group's snowman.

On the way home it snowed again. I walked and thought about writing a scorekeeper's handbook for snowy P.E. classes. Really there is no handbook: just a slightly hoarse voice, slightly red hands, and one pair of soaked shoes. But if it snows again, I will still lead the line and still keep score. After all, I am the P.E. monitor.