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.