泡汤的足球赛

十二月九号，星期三，大雪。

今天早上五点我就醒了，眼睛一睁就再也睡不着。今天本来有大事：区小学足球联赛的决赛，我们校队要对实验一小。我摸黑把球衣套在身上，短裤、球袜、护腿板，一样一样码进书包，码完坐在床边听窗外的雪。雪还在下，沙沙的，像有人在窗外撒盐。我心想，下吧下吧，球场边线埋了也没关系，裁判会重新画的。

六点半，妈妈在厨房喊我吃早饭。我咬着包子刷班级群，想看看集合时间改了没有。群里班主任的消息刚跳出来：因暴雪橙色预警，今日全校停课，联赛延期，具体时间等通知。

我把那行字读了三遍。包子不香了，球衣在身上突然变得很别扭，像穿错了衣服。实验一小的前锋有多厉害我都知道，我练了半个月的边路传中，就等着今天用。完了，全完了。我把自己摔进沙发，球袜从书包里滚出来，滚到雪堆一样的鞋边。一整个上午我都在生气，生雪的气，生通知的气，也生裁判的气——延期算什么，改到明天也行啊，为什么是等通知。

中午妈妈敲我房门：生气归生气，今天的自学任务还在。班级群早发了清单：数学卷子一张，英语单词两个单元，语文读《冬》那篇散文写批注。我本来想耍赖，可看着清单上数学卷子最后一道大题——上次月考就是这种题扣的分——忽然动了别的心思：要是今天把它啃下来，下次考试就不怕了。足球赛延期我说了算不算，卷子我可说了算。

于是我把球衣挂回衣柜，坐到书桌前。卷子做了两小时，最后一道大题真让我啃出来一半，步骤写得密密麻麻。英语单词背到第二个单元时，奶奶送进来一碗姜汤，说外面雪下得更欢了。我一边喝一边背，snow，snowstorm，blizzard，这三个词今天算是用身体记住了。

傍晚我趴在窗上看雪。小区的空地上雪堆得厚厚的，有几个小孩在楼下打雪仗，笑声隔着玻璃都听得见。我有点羡慕，又有点想笑——他们不用等通知，他们的比赛说打就打。

晚上群里通知：联赛改到下周六。我一下子从椅子上蹦起来，把球袜塞回书包，又检查了一遍护腿板。今天这场大雪打乱了我的计划，可它没把我的计划毁掉，只是往后挪了七天。这七天，我要把边路传中再练熟一点，把数学卷子剩下的一半啃完。

雪还在下。我听着窗外的沙沙声，第一次觉得它也没那么讨厌。它不过是把我的决赛，先存起来了。

The Football Match That Got Away

December 9th, Wednesday, heavy snow.

This morning I woke up at five. The moment my eyes opened, sleep was gone. Today was supposed to be a big day: the final of the district primary school football league, our school team against Experimental No. 1 Primary. I dressed in the dark,

pulling the jersey over my body, then packing shorts, socks, and shin guards into my bag one by one. After packing I sat on the bed and listened to the snow outside. It was still falling, a soft rustle, like someone scattering salt beyond the window. Let it fall, I thought. Even if the sideline gets buried, the referee will redraw it.

At half past six, Mother called me to breakfast from the kitchen. Bite after bite of my steamed bun, I checked the class group chat, wondering whether the meeting time had changed. The message from our homeroom teacher popped out: because of the orange blizzard warning, school is canceled today, the league match is postponed, and the new time will be announced later.

I read that line three times. The bun lost its flavor, and the jersey on my body suddenly felt awkward, as if I had put on the wrong clothes. I knew well how strong the striker of Experimental No. 1 was. I had practiced crossing from the wing for half a month, waiting to use it today. It was all over, all gone. I threw myself onto the sofa. A football sock rolled out of my bag and stopped beside my shoe, next to the pile of snow on the mat. All morning I stayed angry: angry at the snow, angry at the notice, even angry at the referee. What good is a postponement? Move it to tomorrow, fine, but why must we wait for an announcement.

At noon Mother knocked on my door: be angry if you want, but the self-study tasks for today are still there. The class group had received the list early: one math test paper, two units of English words, and reading the essay called Winter with notes written in the margins. I wanted to throw a tantrum, but then I looked at the last big problem on the math paper. That is exactly the kind of problem that cost me points in the last monthly exam. A different thought moved in: if I chew through it today, I will not fear it in the next exam. Whether the match is postponed is not my call, but the test paper is.

So I hung the jersey back in the wardrobe and sat down at the desk. The paper took two hours. I did solve half of that last problem, my steps written row after row, packed tight. When I reached the second unit of English words, Grandma brought in a bowl of ginger soup and said the snow outside was falling even harder. I drank and recited at the same time: snow, snowstorm, blizzard. Today I memorized those three words with my whole body.

At dusk I lay on the windowsill watching the snow. In the open ground of our compound the pile had grown thick, and several children below were throwing snowballs at each other; their laughter came through the glass. I felt a little envious and a little amused. They do not wait for any announcement. Their match begins the moment they decide.

In the evening the group chat announced the new time: next Saturday. I jumped up from my chair and stuffed the socks back into my bag, checking the shin guards once

more. Today the heavy snow scrambled my plan, yet it did not destroy it, only moved it seven days back. In these seven days I will practice the wing crosses until they are sharper, and finish the other half of that math problem.

The snow is still falling. Listening to the rustle outside, I thought for the first time that it is not so hateful after all. It has simply put my final match into storage for a while.

大雪替我挡了一劫

十二月九号，星期三，雪大得像倒。

说实话，今天早上我是踩着雪点去窗户边的。昨天放学我一路都在算今天：第一节课数学，单元测验，应用题占四十分。我昨晚把三道典型题做到十点半，还是没吃透，速度和时间总是对不上。我妈说我是平常不烧香，临时抱佛脚。佛脚没抱热，今天就要上刑场了。

结果一拉开窗帘，我愣住了。外面白得跟发了洪水一样，雪片子一片一片横着飞，楼下的车全成了白面包。我的心跳得比眼睛还快，手攥着窗帘角不敢动，心里有个声音小小的、不敢大声地说：停了吧？要不今天停了吧？说完我自己都脸红——盼停课这种事，传出去我还做不做人了。

七点二十，班级群炸了：暴雪预警，今日停课，测验顺延。我盯着那行字，在床上蹦了三下，又怕被妈妈听见，把脸埋在枕头里笑。早饭我吃得飞快，妈妈纳闷，说我今天包子怎么吃了三个。我哪敢说实话——我盼的雪，替我挡了一劫。

可停课不等于放假。班主任在群里发了自学安排：完成数学练习册两页，复习应用题，下午两点群里随机抽人讲题。我看到随机抽人四个字，刚才的得意漏了一半气。躲得过测验，躲不过抽人。下午两点，我的手机放在桌上，像放了一颗定时炸弹。

没办法，学吧。我把练习册摊开，应用题一道一道重做。做到第三道，忽然有点不对——昨晚死活绕不过去的那个弯，今天自己通了：设未知数的时候别设问的东西，设中间量，方程一下就顺了。我愣了半天，又往后做了两道，全对。原来不是题难，是我昨晚太慌，慌得脑子不转。

下午两点，老师抽了四个学号，没抽到我。我在群里听别人讲题，讲得磕磕巴巴的，我心想这题我会，我在心里跟着讲了一遍，讲得比谁都顺。

傍晚雪小了些。我在阳台上收了半天衣服，雪水把袖子洇湿了一截。说实话，今天这场大雪替我挡了一劫，可真正把我从应用题坑里拽出来的，不是雪，是下午那两小时。躲掉的测验还会来，顺延只是多给我几天。今晚我把错题本上应用题那一页重新抄了一遍，抄完在页脚写了四个字：下次不慌。

明天不知道还下不下雪。下也好，不下也好，测验反正跑不了。不过我现在不怕它了——连大雪都帮过我了，我总得给它争点气。

The Snowstorm That Saved Me

December 9th, Wednesday, the snow fell as if someone were pouring the sky out.

To be honest, this morning I went to the window on tiptoe, stepping on the tips of my toes. After school yesterday I kept counting the day ahead all the way home: first period math, unit test, word problems worth forty points. Last night I worked on three typical problems until ten thirty and still could not master them; speed and time never matched up. My mother says I never burn incense on ordinary days and only grab the Buddha by the feet at the last moment. The Buddha feet never got warm, and today was the execution ground.

Then I pulled open the curtain and froze. Outside was white as a flood, snowflakes flying sideways in sheets, every car downstairs turned into a white loaf. My heart ran faster than my eyes. I clutched the corner of the curtain, not daring to move, and a small voice inside me said, quietly, not daring to speak up: cancel it? How about canceling school today? After saying it my face burned by itself. Wishing for a day off, if that got out, would I still have a face to show anyone.

At 7:20 the class group chat exploded: blizzard warning, school canceled today, the test postponed. I stared at that line and bounced three times on the bed, then buried my face in the pillow to keep the laughter from reaching Mother. I ate breakfast at record speed. Mother wondered aloud how I could finish three buns today. I dared not tell the truth. The snow I had wished for had just taken a blow meant for me.

But a canceled school day is not a holiday. Our homeroom teacher posted the self-study plan in the group: finish two pages of the math workbook, review word problems, and at two in the afternoon the teacher would call on random student numbers to explain problems. When I reached the words random calling, half of my triumph leaked out. You can dodge a test but not the roll call. At two in the afternoon my phone sat on the desk like a ticking bomb.

No way out, so I studied. I spread the workbook open and redid the word problems one by one. On the third one, something suddenly shifted. The turn I could not get around last night cleared by itself today: when setting the unknown, do not set what the question asks; set the middle quantity, and the equation straightens out at once. I sat stunned for a while, then did two more behind it, all correct. It was not that the problems were hard. Last night I was too panicked, and panic stopped my brain from turning.

At two in the afternoon the teacher called four student numbers. Mine was not among them. I listened in the group as others explained their problems, stumbling and hesitating, and I thought: I can do this one. I explained it through in my head, and

my version ran smoother than anyone.

By evening the snow lightened. I spent half an hour bringing the laundry in on the balcony, and snow water darkened my sleeves. Honestly, today the heavy snow took a blow for me, but what really pulled me out of the hole of word problems was not the snow. It was those two hours in the afternoon. The postponed test will still come; a postponement only lends me a few more days. Tonight I recopied the word-problem page of my mistake notebook, and at the bottom of the page I wrote four characters: next time, no panic.

I do not know if it will snow tomorrow. Snow or no snow, the test cannot run away either way. But I am not afraid of it now. Even the great snowstorm has been on my side. I owe it a good showing.

没赶上的科技馆

十二月九号，星期三，大雪。我记这个日子，是因为我盼了一个星期的科技馆研学，泡汤了。

昨天下午放学回家，我就把书包收拾好了：水壶灌满，两个面包，一包纸巾，还有老师说要带的记录表，我夹在硬纸板上压平。晚上我把校服熨了，鞋擦了，闹钟定在六点。躺下以后翻来覆去，脑子里全是馆里那个静电球——手放上去头发会一根根立起来。我同桌去过，他说他头发立起来像海胆，全班笑趴了。我今天也要立一次。

早晨六点我就到了窗边。雪下得正紧，我一开始根本没往坏处想，雪越大越好玩，大巴车上的游戏环节会更热闹。我吃了两碗粥，六点四十出门，伞都懒得打，顶着雪往学校走，雪落在睫毛上，我一路都在笑。

校门口围了一圈人。值班老师举着手机喊：停课！都回去！大巴不来了！我站在雪里，书包带还勒在肩上，人没回过神。旁边五班一个女生直接喊出声：啊？我离得近，看见她眼圈一下就红了。我也难受，难受得说不出话，雪顺着脖子往里钻，我都没管。那个静电球，我连摸都没摸到。

回到家我把湿书包往地上一放，回屋关门。妈妈在门外说饭在桌上，我应了一声没动。群里老师发了自学任务：科学课预习第七单元，火山喷发那一课，读完做课后实验，拍照片发群里。实验？我坐起来。书上写的：小苏打、白醋、洗洁精、红墨水。这些我家厨房全有。

我翻出一个小玻璃瓶，装了两勺小苏打，滴洗洁精，又拿红墨水调了一杯红红的醋。倒进去的那一瞬间，红色的泡沫呼啦一下涌出瓶口，顺着瓶壁往下爬，真像岩浆。我哇地叫出来，跑到客厅喊我妈来看，我妈看了三遍，比我还兴奋，说再试一次换大碗。我们试了四次，厨房台面黏糊糊一片，我妈一边擦一边笑，说这是她今年看过最好的实验。

晚上我把实验照片发进群里，配了一行字：科技馆去不了，火山在家喷了。老师回了一个大

拇指，同学们排队点赞。同桌私信我：你的火山比我的头发好看。

躺在床上的时候，我还是有点想那个静电球，想得心口发酸。但我又想起今天红色的岩浆爬下瓶壁的样子。计划被大雪没收了，可乐趣没被没收，它自己从厨房里长了出来。老师说研学顺延到一月。行，那就一月见。在那之前，我家的火山还想再喷几次。

The Science Museum I Missed

December 9th, Wednesday, heavy snow. I remember this date because the science museum field trip I had longed for all week fell through.

Yesterday after school I packed my bag right away: water bottle filled, two buns, a pack of tissues, and the record sheet the teacher told us to bring, pressed flat between two pieces of cardboard. At night I ironed the uniform, polished my shoes, and set the alarm for six. After lying down I tossed and turned, my head full of the static ball in the museum. Put your hand on it and every hair stands up. My deskmate has been there. He said his standing hair looked like a sea urchin, and the whole class collapsed laughing. Today I was going to stand up too.

At six I was already at the window. The snow was falling hard, and at first I did not think of any bad possibility. The heavier the snow, the more fun, I thought; the games on the bus will be livelier. I ate two bowls of porridge, left at 6:40, could not be bothered with an umbrella, and walked to school under the snow. It landed on my eyelashes, and I kept smiling the whole way.

A ring of people stood at the school gate. The teacher on duty held up a phone and shouted: school canceled, everyone go back, the buses are not coming. I stood in the snow with the bag straps still on my shoulders, not back in my body yet. A girl from Class 5 nearby cried out loud: what? I was close enough to see her eyes go red all at once. I felt bad too, too bad to speak. Snow slid down my neck into my collar and I did not even care. That static ball, I did not even get to touch it.

Back home I dropped the wet bag on the floor and shut my door. Mother said dinner is on the table; I answered and did not move. Then the teacher posted the self-study tasks in the group: preview Unit 7 for science, the lesson on volcanic eruptions, read it and do the experiment after the lesson, take a photo and send it to the group. Experiment? I sat up. The book listed: baking soda, white vinegar, dish soap, red ink. My kitchen had every one of them.

I found a small glass bottle, put in two spoons of baking soda, added dish soap, and mixed a cup of red vinegar with red ink. The instant I poured it in, red foam surged out of the bottle mouth and crawled down the glass walls, just like lava. I

shouted wow and ran to the living room to drag Mother to look. She watched it three times, more excited than me, and said try again with a bigger bowl. We tried four times. The kitchen counter turned sticky everywhere, and Mother wiped it while laughing, saying this was the best experiment she had seen all year.

In the evening I sent the photo into the group with one line: museum canceled, volcano erupted at home. The teacher replied with a thumbs-up, and classmates lined up to like it. My deskmate messaged privately: your volcano looks better than my hair.

Lying in bed I still missed that static ball, missed it with an ache in my chest. But then I remembered the red lava crawling down the bottle today. The snowstorm confiscated my plan, yet it did not confiscate the joy. Joy grew out of my own kitchen. The teacher said the trip is postponed to January. Fine, see you in January. Until then, the volcano at my home wants a few more eruptions.