今天我是少先队员

六一这天早上，妈妈把我校服领子翻了两遍，说今天领口要干干净净的，红领巾要来。

操场列队，队旗走在前头。队旗是红的，上面一颗五角星。老师说过，队徽上是五角星加火炬，五角星代表中国共产党的领导，火炬象征光明。我盯着队旗看，脖子都仰酸了。

大队辅导员念新队员名单。我的名字在中间，念到时我喊了一声到，声音比我预想的大，旁边同学笑我，我也笑。心口跳得像有鼓槌。

一个六年级的姐姐走过来，手里拿着红领巾。她先把它叠平，绕过我的衣领，左尖压右尖，右尖绕一圈，再从圈里抽出尖，一拉，一个结端端正正。她小声说：别弄歪了。我点头，手都不敢碰胸口。

姐姐系红领巾的时候说过一句话：红领巾是红旗的一角，红色是革命先辈的奋斗染成的。当时没全懂。宣誓的时候好像懂了一点——领誓人念一句，我们跟一句，右手握拳举在耳朵旁边，拳头手心都是汗。念到为共产主义事业而奋斗，我嗓门最大，因为后面几个字我练了一晚上。

宣誓完，那个姐姐回到台前，代表老队员讲话。她说她一年级入队时也紧张，红领巾戴反了三天才发现；她说红领巾不是好看，是提醒，提醒我们说话要算数，值日要认真，同学有困难要帮。她说：我们戴的是一样的红，你们从今天起也是护着它的人。

仪式结束回教室，同桌凑过来看我的结，说系得真平。我说是姐姐系的，她系了好几年了。

放学回家，我把红领巾解下来，摊平放在桌上，看了好几遍。妈妈要给我拍照，我把领子又抻了抻。照片里那个人腰挺得笔直，胸前的红平平展展。

晚上睡觉前我想，从今天起，我喊到的那一声、举起来的那只拳头、胸前这一角红，都是我自己的事了。

Today I Am a Young Pioneer

On the morning of June 1st, Mom turned up my school uniform collar twice, saying the collar must be spotless today, because the red scarf is coming.

Classes lined up on the playground, the team flag at the front. The flag is red with a five-pointed star. Our teacher once said the team badge bears a star and a torch: the star stands for the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the torch for light. I stared at the flag until my neck grew sore.

The instructor read the list of new members. My name was in the middle; when it was called I shouted Here, louder than I expected. The classmate beside me laughed, and I laughed too. My heart beat like a drumstick was at work.

A girl from sixth grade walked over with a red scarf in her hands. She first folded it flat, passed it around my collar, laid the left tip over the right, wound

the right tip around once, pulled the tip through the loop, and tugged - the knot sat perfectly straight. She whispered: don't let it tilt. I nodded and did not dare touch my chest.

While tying it, the girl said one thing: the red scarf is one corner of the red flag, and its red was dyed by the struggle of the revolutionary elders. I did not fully understand then. During the oath I think I understood a little - the lead recited a line, we repeated it, right fist clenched beside the ear, palm all sweat. When we reached fight for the cause of communism, my voice was the loudest, because I had practiced those last words all evening.

After the oath, the same girl returned to the stage to speak for the older members. She said she had been nervous at her own admission too, and had worn her scarf backwards for three days before noticing; she said the red scarf is not about looking good - it is a reminder: keep your word, take duty duty seriously, help classmates in trouble. She said: we wear the same red, and from today you are its guardians too.

Back in the classroom after the ceremony, my deskmate leaned in to examine my knot and said it was perfectly flat. I said the sister from sixth grade had tied it - she has been tying knots for years.

After school I went home, untied the scarf, spread it flat on the desk and looked at it over and over. Mom wanted to take my photo, so I straightened my collar once more. In the photo that person sits ramrod straight, and the red on the chest lies perfectly smooth.

Before bed I thought: from today, the shout I gave, the fist I raised, this corner of red on my chest - all of them are my own business now.