排练那晚，诗自己长出了手

班主任在群里通知，下周的亲子朗诵节目要交名单。我在报名表上填了名字，回头看见女儿趴在饭桌上，面前摊着一张作文纸，标题写了又划，划了又写。

她说：妈，我们朗诵西瓜，可是切瓜那一段怎么念都不像诗。我坐下来看她写的：西瓜圆圆，刀切两半，一人一半，甜在心间。她自己也觉得干巴，笔杆顶着下巴。

我说别写了，去把冰箱里那只瓜抱来。她抱着瓜回来，我拿刀，她说念到哪儿切到哪儿。西瓜圆圆，她念，刀尖搭上去。刀切两半，咔嚓一声，瓜自己裂开，比她念的还响。她眼睛亮了：妈，它自己会响！

于是那一段改成了她现编的：刀还没用力，瓜先笑了，笑声是咔嚓，甜是回声。她念这句的时候手还按在瓜上，像按着一件刚醒的东西。

排练分角色。她念孩子的句子，我念大人的句子。她那句咬一口，夏天在嘴里化开，念得太快，像赶作业。我让她咬真的瓜，慢慢咬，汁水顺着下巴滴，她抬头念，声音自己就慢了，软了。我那句留最甜的一块给你，起头太硬，她嫌我像念通知。我重来，把声音放低，像夜里给她掖被角那样念，她点头。

分瓜那段，我们排到一半卡住了。她突然说：妈，最后一句别用你写的，用我们刚才吃饭时说的。上午她给爷爷送瓜，回来跟我说，爷爷那块最甜，因为爷爷先想着我。我把这句添进诗里：最甜的一块，先递给心里有别人的人。念完这句，她补了一句自己的：比如先递给妈妈。我的鼻子有点热，没让她看见。

正式演出那晚，她穿白裙子，我穿蓝的。报幕员念到我们的题目，她的小提琴伴奏没响——音响师忘了。她看了我一眼，我们干脆清诵，瓜裂开那声咔嚓，她用嘴学出来，全场笑，接着鼓掌。下台她问我：诗里那句先递给妈妈，是真的吗？我说真的。她说那就好，诗不能骗人。

回家路上她牵着我的手，手心还出汗。她说下次还要写，写秋天的橘子，剥皮要慢慢剥那种。我说好。路灯把我们的影子拉长，她一边走一边小声背那句：笑声是咔嚓，甜是回声。诗在自己长出手，牵着她往前走。

That Rehearsal Night, the Poem Grew Its Own Hands

Our homeroom teacher posted in the class group that the parent-child recitation list was due. I signed us up, then saw my daughter at the dining table, a composition sheet spread out before her, the title written, crossed out, written again.

She said: Mom, we are reciting about watermelon, but the cutting part never sounds like a poem no matter how I read it. I sat down and looked at her lines: Watermelon round, cut in two with a knife, one half each, sweetness in the heart. She thought it dry herself, the pen against her chin.

I said, stop writing, go fetch the melon from the fridge. She came back holding

it. I took the knife, and she said to cut exactly where the poem reaches. Watermelon round, she read, and the knife tip rested on the skin. Cut in two with a knife, and with a crack the melon opened by itself, louder than her reading. Her eyes lit up: Mom, it makes its own sound!

So that part became something she made up on the spot: The knife had not yet pushed, the melon laughed first, its laugh is a crack, its sweetness is the echo. She read this with her hand still on the melon, as if pressing something that had just woken up.

We split the roles. She read the child lines, I read the adult lines. Her line, One bite, and summer melts in the mouth, came out too fast, like hurrying through homework. I made her bite real melon, slowly, juice dripping to her chin, and when she looked up to read it, her voice slowed and softened by itself. My line, I keep the sweetest piece for you, began too stiff, and she said I sounded like reading a notice. I started over, lowering my voice the way I say goodnight when I tuck her blanket, and she nodded.

The dividing part stalled halfway. She suddenly said: Mom, do not use your last line, use what we said at breakfast. That morning she had taken melon to her grandfather, and came back telling me his piece was the sweetest, because he had thought of me first. I added it to the poem: The sweetest piece goes first to whoever carries someone else in the heart. After that line she added one of her own: For instance, it goes to mom first. My nose stung, and I made sure she did not see.

On the performance night she wore a white dress, I wore blue. When the announcer read our title, her violin accompaniment did not sound, the technician had forgotten. She glanced at me, and we simply recited a cappella. For the crack of the melon she used her own mouth, the hall laughed, then applauded. Off stage she asked: Was that line about giving it to mom first true? I said yes. She said good, a poem must not lie.

On the way home she held my hand, her palm still damp. She said we would write again, about autumn oranges, the kind you peel slowly. I said all right. The street lamps stretched our shadows, and she walked murmuring that line: its laugh is a crack, its sweetness is the echo. The poem had grown hands of its own, and led her forward.