那辆推不出院门的旧自行车

爸爸把那辆二八大杠从杂物间推出来的时候，车座上还落着一层灰。那是他上中学时骑的车，链条锈得发暗，脚蹬子转起来咯吱作响。我围着它转了一圈，车座比我的腰还高，我踮起脚也只能够到车座尖。爸爸说，先把车推到巷子口的空地上，别急着骑。我双手攥住车把，用力往前推，车轮压过门槛时猛地一歪，车把往左一别，我整个人被带得撞在门框上，胳膊肘生疼。那辆车比我还沉，我推着它，它推着我，一路歪歪扭扭，巷子里的狗都躲在门缝后面看我的笑话。

到了空地，爸爸让我坐上去，他在后面扶着后座。我两只手死死钳住车把，手心全是汗。脚蹬子踩下去半圈，车身晃了一下，我赶紧把脚落在地上。再来。这一次车轮转起来了，风从耳朵边上过去，我眼睛只盯着前轮前面那一小块地，不敢抬头。骑出去十几米，前面有一块松动的砖，我下意识一捏闸，前轮一别，整辆车横着甩出去，我连人带车摔进路边的草堆里，膝盖磕破了皮，裤子蹭上一层绿草汁。我坐在草堆里，扶着车把不肯起来，说再也不骑了。爸爸把车扶起来，拍拍我身上的草屑，说摔过的车把才握得稳。

第二天傍晚他又把我带去了空地。上车，蹬踏，车身晃，但这一次晃了两下居然稳住了。我越骑越快，巷子两边的白杨树往后倒，风灌进我的校服，把衣角吹得鼓起来。拐过院门口那个弯的时候，我听见后面有人喊，声音远得像是从另一个地方传来的。我扭过头，看见爸爸站在离我几十米外的地方，两只手插在裤兜里。他不知道什么时候松的手。我一点都没察觉。那一刻我没害怕，反而把腰直了起来，眼睛看向更前面的路。车把不再跟我较劲了，它顺着我，我顺着它，轮子碾过路面，发出细细的沙沙声，像有人在很远的地方鼓掌。

后来我骑过很多路，上学路、河堤路、长长的柏油马路。可我记得最清楚的，还是那个傍晚，爸爸站在几十米外，我浑然不觉地骑过去。学会骑车不是哪一秒突然会的，是摔进草堆又爬起来的那些傍晚，一格一格把胆量垫高的。现在每次经过院门口那块松动的砖，我都会绕开它，然后直起腰，往前骑。

The Old Bicycle That Would Not Go Through the Gate

When my father pushed the old heavy bicycle out of the storage room, a layer of dust still sat on the seat. He had ridden it in middle school. The chain had turned dark with rust, and the pedals groaned when they turned. The seat was higher than my waist, and even on my tiptoes I could only reach its tip. My father told me to push it to the open ground at the mouth of the lane first, and not to hurry. I gripped the handlebars with both hands and pushed. When the wheel hit the door threshold, the bike jerked sideways, the handlebars twisted left, and my whole body was carried into the door frame. The bike was heavier than I was. All the way down the lane it pushed me as much as I pushed it, and the dogs in the lane hid behind half-closed doors as if laughing at me.

On the open ground my father held the rear seat while I sat on the bike. My hands

clamped the handlebars, wet with sweat. The wheel turned, the bike wobbled, and I put a foot down. Again. This time the wheel kept turning and wind passed by my ears. Ten meters ahead there was a loose brick. I squeezed the brake, the front wheel slid, and the whole bike swung sideways. I fell with it into a pile of grass by the road, scraping the skin of my knee. I sat in the grass and refused to get up, saying I would never ride again. My father lifted the bike, brushed the grass off my clothes, and said that handlebars which have fallen are held more firmly.

The next evening he took me back. I got on, pedaled, and the bike wobbled twice but stayed up. I rode faster, the poplars along the lane falling backward, wind filling my school uniform. As I turned the corner by the courtyard gate I heard someone shout far behind me. I turned my head and saw my father standing tens of meters away with both hands in his pockets. He had let go at some point, and I had not felt it at all. I straightened my back and looked at the road ahead. The handlebars no longer fought me. The wheels whispered over the ground like applause from far away.

I have ridden many roads since then, but what I remember best is that evening, my father standing far behind while I rode on without knowing. Learning to ride did not happen in one second. It was built evening by evening, each fall a step placed under my courage.

后轮离地的那三秒

如今我骑车从河堤的大坡上冲下来，两只手稳稳搭在车把上，风把刘海吹成一条线。可每次下坡，我总会想起后轮离地的那三秒。

那年我上六年级，小区里的小伙伴一人一辆车，只有我站在单元门口看。舅舅把他那辆山地车借给我，车身高，横梁硌腿。出门就出了洋相：电梯里车把卡住门，楼道太窄，前轮先撞在消防栓箱上，哐的一声，整层楼的声音都醒了。我推着车跟在舅舅后面，车往东我往西，像牵一头不听话的牛。邻居开门探头，我赶紧把车把往怀里收，耳朵烫。

小区后面的水泥坪上，舅舅扶着后架。我蹬起来，车头就开始画龙。左边晃一下，我往右掰，右边晃回来，我又往左掰，越掰越厉害，车把像有了自己的主意。舅舅喊，别乱掰，眼睛看远处。我盯着远处的电线杆，车头却越晃越大，最后猛地一歪，后轮翘起来，离了地。就那三秒，我觉得自己腾起来了，肚子磕在横梁上，脚蹬子空转，然后连人带车侧着倒下去，小拇指蹭掉一块皮。水泥坪上留下一道黑黑的刹车印。

舅舅没扶我，只说，再来一遍。我扶正车，把手掌在裤子上蹭了蹭，重新坐上去。一遍，两遍，十遍。中间歇了一次，我坐在长椅上，看舅舅把那道黑黑的刹车印用脚蹭了蹭，没蹭掉。他递给我一瓶水，说脚蹬子要踩圆，别踹。我把水放下，没喝，又上车了。手掌心磨得有点发热，

指头缝里全是水泥坪上的灰。不知道第几遍的时候，晃动感忽然变轻了，像车把上的弹簧被谁拧紧了。我骑到水泥坪尽头，捏闸，下车，腿有点抖，但是笑着。舅舅在长椅那边按了一下手机，说拍到了，我学会的那一遍，从头到尾没晃。

现在想起那三秒，我还是会摸一下小拇指上那道浅浅的印子。它不疼，也不显眼，可它提醒我，有些时刻看着是摔下去，其实是离地的那一下。第二天我把车骑去了学校，锁在车棚里，车把上还留着我手心蹭上去的汗印。

The Three Seconds the Rear Wheel Left the Ground

Now I ride down the long slope of the river dike with both hands steady on the handlebars, the wind combing my bangs into a line. But every time I go downhill I remember the three seconds when my rear wheel left the ground.

That year I was in sixth grade, and every kid in our compound had a bike except me, standing at the building entrance just watching. My uncle lent me his mountain bike, tall enough for the crossbar to press my leg. Getting it out was a disaster: the handlebars caught the elevator door, the corridor was too narrow, and the front wheel banged into the fire hydrant box, one clang waking the whole floor. I pushed it behind my uncle, the bike going east while I went west, like leading an ox that would not obey. When a neighbor opened a door I pulled the handlebars close to my chest, my ears burning.

On the concrete pad behind the compound my uncle held the rear rack. As I pedaled, the front wheel began to weave. I corrected left, then right, then worse, as if the handlebars had a mind of their own. My uncle shouted that I should stop twisting and look far ahead. I stared at a distant pole, and the wobble grew until the bike lurched, the rear wheel rose off the ground, and for three seconds I felt I was flying, my stomach hitting the crossbar, the pedals spinning empty. Then I fell sideways and scraped the skin off my little finger. A black brake mark stayed on the concrete.

My uncle did not help me up. He only said, once more. I righted the bike, wiped my palms on my trousers, and sat on again. Once, twice, ten times. In between I rested once on the bench and watched my uncle try to rub the black brake mark off the concrete with his foot, without succeeding. He handed me a bottle of water and said the pedals should be pushed in circles, not kicked. I put the water down, did not drink it, and got back on. My palms were warm from friction, and the gaps between my fingers were full of concrete dust. Somewhere among the tries the wobbling grew light, as if a spring on the handlebars had been tightened by someone. I rode to the end of the pad, braked, and got off with shaking legs, smiling. My uncle pressed his

phone on the bench and said he had filmed it, the run when I learned it, steady from start to finish.

Even now I touch the pale mark on my little finger when I think of those three seconds. It does not hurt and it is hardly visible, yet it reminds me that some moments which look like falling are really the moment your wheel leaves the ground. The next day I rode the bike to school and locked it in the shed, my palm prints still on the handlebars.

爷爷扶过的车把

爷爷是在院子里看着孙女学骑车的。那辆粉色的小车是奶奶赶集时买回来的，车把上系着一根红绳。孙女站在车旁边，车座已经调到最低，脚尖才点着地。爷爷弯腰把红绳的结重新系紧，说，先推车，绕院子走两圈。孙女推着车走，第一圈还稳，第二圈车把一歪，前轮轧上砖缝，车往她身上压，她哇地叫了一声，扶住了墙。爷爷伸手要扶，孙女摆手，自己把车把正过来，接着推。爷爷的手停在半空，又收回去，在裤腿上蹭了一下。

第三圈孙女跨上车，爷爷在后面扶着后座。车轮慢慢转起来，爷爷弯着腰跟着，他的腰本来就不好，走几步就要直一下。孙女问，爷爷你扶稳了吗。爷爷说，扶着呢。其实他的两根手指只是虚搭在座垫边上。车晃起来，前轮往花坛那边去，爷爷喊，捏闸。孙女没捏，反而把脚往地上杵，人歪了，车压在她腿上。爷爷赶紧过去把车抬起来，孙女的眼泪在眼眶里转，就是不哭出来，说，再来。

歇晌的时候，孙女坐在台阶上啃黄瓜，小车立在院子当中，红绳在风里一动一动。爷爷蹲在车旁边，拿螺丝刀把后座的螺丝又拧了半圈，再把车座往下按了半分，试了试高度，用袖口把车把上的灰擦掉。孙女啃完黄瓜，拍拍手站起来，说再骑。爷爷直起腰，扶着后座又走了两圈，趁孙女骑直了，他悄悄松了手，站在原地。粉色的小车晃晃悠悠往前去，红绳在车把上飘。孙女骑到院门口，回头喊，爷爷你松手了。声音里没有怕，全是喜。爷爷背过身去假装看菜地，抬手在眼睛上抹了一下。院墙外有邻居经过，爷爷大声说，会骑了，明天就能自己上学了。

第二天清早，孙女自己骑车出了院门，红绳在车把上一颠一颠。爷爷站在门口看，直到那抹粉色拐过街角看不见了，才转身进院，把地上那辆小车压过的砖缝又踩了踩平。他不知道，孙女到了学校跟同学说，我会骑车了，是我爷爷教的。爷爷要是听见这句话，腰大概能直一整天。

The Handlebars Grandfather Held

Grandfather watched his granddaughter learn to ride in the courtyard. The little pink bike had been bought at the market by grandmother, with a red string tied to the

handlebars. The seat was lowered to its last notch, and she could only touch the ground with her toes. Grandfather bent down to retie the knot of the red string and told her to push the bike around the courtyard twice first. The first round was steady. On the second round the handlebars tilted, the front wheel caught a gap between bricks, and the bike fell toward her. She cried out and grabbed the wall. Grandfather reached for it, but she waved him off, straightened the handlebars herself, and kept pushing. His hand stopped in the air, then withdrew and brushed against his trouser leg.

On the third round she climbed on and grandfather held the rear seat behind her. The wheel turned slowly and he followed, bent at the waist, which had never been good, straightening it every few steps. She asked whether he was holding firmly. He said he was, while in truth only two fingers rested lightly on the edge of the seat. The bike swayed toward the flower bed. He shouted, squeeze the brake. She did not. She stabbed a foot at the ground, leaned, and the bike fell across her leg. Grandfather lifted it off her. Tears rolled in her eyes without falling, and she said, once more.

During the midday rest the granddaughter sat on the steps eating a cucumber, the little bike standing in the middle of the courtyard, its red string stirring in the wind. Grandfather crouched beside it, turned the rear seat screw another half turn with a screwdriver, pressed the seat down a little more, tested the height, and wiped the dust off the handlebars with his sleeve. When she finished the cucumber the girl clapped her hands clean and asked to ride again. Grandfather straightened up, held the rear seat for two more rounds, then let go quietly while she rode straight, and stood in place. The pink bike rolled forward unsteadily, the red string fluttering on the handlebars. At the courtyard gate she turned and called out that grandfather had let go, and there was no fear in her voice, only joy. Grandfather turned away toward the vegetable plot and wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. When a neighbor passed outside the wall he said, loudly, that she could ride now and would ride to school by herself tomorrow.

Early the next morning she rode out of the gate alone, the red string bouncing on the handlebars. Grandfather watched until the pink of it disappeared around the corner, then went back in and stamped the brick gap the little bike had crossed, pressing it level. He did not know that at school she told her classmates she could ride, and that grandfather had taught her. If he ever heard that sentence, his back would probably stay straight all day.