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.