读给弟弟听，也读给自己

语文老师推荐我们读《学会骑车》。文章不长，讲一个男孩在村口的土路上学车，摔得膝盖全是血印，坐在土里哭了一场，哭完把车扶起来接着练，最后骑着车去镇上给奶奶送药。我在房间里读，读到男孩摔倒的地方，门外哄当一声，是弟弟连人带车摔在楼道里。

弟弟上四年级，这星期开始学车，爸爸扶了三天，他还骑不出直线。我拿着书出去，他坐在地上揉手腕，看见我就说，姐，书里那个人是不是也这样摔。我说摔了四回。他把揉手腕的手放下了，说，四回，那我还差得远。

我把书里那段念给他听。男孩摔倒以后，蹲在路边想，要是这条路再长一点，我就真的不骑了。可他看见远处的奶奶在门口张望，就扶起车继续蹬。弟弟听完，自己把车从地上拎起来，说，再来一圈。这一圈他骑出去十几米，车头晃，人没晃。

我靠在墙上看他练，忽然想起自己去年学车摔的那一下。手心蹭在水泥地上，破了巴掌大一片，血渗出来，我攥着拳头不敢张开。妈妈给我上药，疼得我直抽气。上完药我做的第一件事，是又出去骑了半圈。当时不明白自己为什么还要骑，现在读到了书里那句话，摔了以后还愿意再上去，原来那就是坚持的样子，不是喊口号，是上完药还肯出门。

弟弟练到天黑，能骑一小段了。收车的时候他问我，书里那个人后来怎么样了。我说，骑着车去给奶奶送药了。他想了想，说，那我明天学会了，骑车去给姥姥买她爱吃的桃酥。

晚上我把书放回书包，在页边写了一行小字：道理不在书里，在摔的那一下和爬起来的那一下之间。弟弟在客厅比划骑车的姿势，膝盖一高一低。我笑他，他不知道，他今天这一摔一爬，比我读十遍这篇文章学到的都多。

Reading It to My Brother, and to Myself

Our Chinese teacher recommended Learning to Ride to the whole class. The piece is short, about a boy learning on the dirt road at the village entrance, falling until both knees were covered in scabs, sitting in the dust and crying, then lifting the bike and practicing on, until at last he rode all the way to town to bring medicine to his grandmother. I was reading in my room when something crashed outside the door. My little brother had gone down with his bike in the hallway.

He is in fourth grade and started learning this week. Dad had held the bike for three days, and he still could not ride straight. I came out with the book. He sat on the floor rubbing his wrist, and the moment he saw me he asked, did the man in your book fall like this too. I said he fell four times. He lowered his hand from his wrist and said, four times, so I am still far behind.

I read that passage aloud to him. After the boy fell, he crouched by the road thinking, if this road were any longer, I would truly stop riding. Then he saw his grandmother peering out of her gate in the distance, so he lifted the bike and kept

pedaling. When my brother heard that, he hoisted his own bike off the floor and said, one more lap. This lap took him ten or fifteen meters out. The handlebars wobbled. He did not.

I leaned against the wall watching him practice, and suddenly remembered my own fall last year. My palm scraped across concrete, a palm-sized patch torn open, blood welling, and I kept my fist clenched shut, afraid to open it. Mom dressed the wound and I gasped with the pain. The first thing I did afterward was go out and ride half a lap. I did not know then why I still wanted to ride. Now I have read the line in the book, still willing to get back on after falling. That is what perseverance looks like. Not a slogan. Going out the door after the bandage goes on.

My brother practiced until dark and managed short stretches. As we parked the bikes he asked what happened to the man in the book. I said he rode to town with medicine for his grandmother. He thought a moment and said, then when I learn tomorrow, I will bike over to Grandma Liu's and buy the almond cookies she likes.

At night I put the book back in my schoolbag and wrote one small line in the margin: the lesson is not inside the book; it lives between the fall and the getting up. In the living room my brother was miming the riding posture, one knee higher than the other. I laughed at him. He does not know that today's one fall and one rise taught him more than my ten readings of that article.