我害怕那个高高的车座

语文课上，老师发了一篇小故事，讲一个姐姐学骑自行车。故事里有一处我读得特别仔细：姐姐第一次站到车边，车座高高的，她的脚尖只够到地，她心里怕，怕摔，怕疼，怕别人笑。她攥着车把，手心出汗，可是她没有走开。她对自己说，就上去坐一下，一下就行。

读到这里，我的脸有点红，因为那个姐姐就是去年的我。

去年夏天，爸爸给我买了一辆蓝色的自行车。车推回家那天，我围着它转了三圈，就是不敢坐上去。车座太高了，我跨上去脚尖点地，身子晃，像踩在冰上。爸爸说要扶着我练，我摇头。我说我再看看。我看了一个星期，每天放学都去楼道里看那辆车，看完就回家写作业。

故事里的姐姐后来是怎么学会的呢？她先把车放低，把坐垫降到最低，脚掌整个踩在地上，然后一只脚踩脚踏，慢慢滑。滑了三天，她敢蹬了。她摔过两回，坐在地上揉一揉，又上去。她不是胆子大，她是一点点把害怕磨小的。

第二天，我也让爸爸把我的坐垫降到最低。我的脚掌能整个踩到地了。我照着故事里的样子，先滑，不蹬。第一天滑，第二天滑，第三天我试着蹬了一圈。车还是晃，可我攥着车把没撒手。第五天傍晚，爸爸在后面松了手，我自己骑出去好远，风呼呼地吹，我笑得停不下来。

现在我终于懂了故事里那个姐姐。她最了不起的地方，不是后来骑得多好，而是那天她手心出汗，也没有走开。害怕这个东西，你不理它，它自己会变小。勇敢不是不害怕，是害怕着，还把脚放上了脚踏。

我把那篇小故事要了过来，夹在语文书里。每次读到姐姐攥着车把那一句，我都会想起自己那辆蓝色的车，和那个在楼道里看了一个星期、终于肯上车的我。

I Was Afraid of That Tall Bike Seat

In Chinese class, our teacher handed out a little story about a girl learning to ride a bicycle. One part I read very carefully: the first time the girl stood beside her bike, the seat was tall, only her toes touched the ground, and she was scared inside, scared of falling, of pain, of people laughing. She gripped the handlebars, palms sweating, but she did not walk away. She told herself, just get on and sit for a moment, just one moment.

Reading that, my face went a little red, because that girl was me last year.

Last summer, Dad bought me a blue bicycle. The day it came home, I circled it three times and did not dare sit on it. The seat was too high. When I swung over, only my toes reached the ground and my body swayed as if I were standing on ice. Dad said he would hold me while I practiced. I shook my head. I said I would just watch a little longer. I watched for a whole week, going downstairs after school to look at

the bike, then going home to do homework.

How did the girl in the story learn? First she lowered the seat all the way down so her whole feet could stand flat, then put one foot on the pedal and pushed along slowly. She slid for three days before she dared pedal. She fell twice, sat on the ground, rubbed the hurt, and got back on. She was not brave by nature. She just wore her fear down, little by little.

The next day I had Dad lower my seat to the lowest too. My whole feet could reach the ground. I did what the girl in the story did: glide first, no pedaling. Day one I glided, day two I glided, and on day three I managed one lap. The bike still wobbled, but I kept my grip and never let go. On the fifth evening, Dad let go behind me, and I rode out far on my own, the wind rushing past, laughing too hard to stop.

Now I finally understand the girl in the story. Her greatest moment was not riding well later. It was that day when her palms were sweating and she still did not walk away. Fear, if you pay it no mind, shrinks by itself. Bravery is not being unafraid. It is being afraid and putting your foot on the pedal anyway.

I asked to keep that little story, and it lives in my Chinese textbook now. Every time I reach the line about her gripping the handlebars, I think of my blue bicycle, and of myself standing in the hallway watching it for a week before finally getting on.

书里的熊也怕松手

上个星期，妈妈给我读了一本绘本，叫《小熊学自行车》。书里的熊爸爸扶着小熊的后座，绕着树桩一圈一圈走。走到小熊忘了爸爸还在扶的时候，熊爸爸悄悄松了手。小熊回头一看，身后空空的，一慌，车一头扎进路边的草堆，四脚朝天。

读到这里我笑了，笑完又觉得脸上发烫。因为我学车的时候，跟小熊一模一样。

爸爸扶我练的那个星期，我最怕的就是松手。每骑十几米，我就扯着嗓子问，扶着没有。爸爸总说扶着呢。有一回他答慢了半拍，我耳朵里嗡的一声，脚一软，车歪进了花坛。坐在花坛边上我还嘴硬，说是花坛自己长出来的。爸爸没拆穿我，把我拉起来，拍拍土，说再来。

绘本里，小熊摔进草堆以后，熊妈妈没有扶它，只说了一句话：眼睛看前面，一直蹬。小熊从草堆里爬出来，头上顶着一根草，重新上车。这一回它不回头了，眼睛盯着前面的大树桩，一圈，两圈，它自己骑下来了。书翻到下一页，小熊骑得飞快，耳朵后面的毛都被风吹起来了。

那天晚上我躺在床上想，小熊不是不怕，它是把回头的劲儿省下来蹬车了。我总问爸爸扶没扶，其实是把眼睛长在了后面。第二天练车，我学着小熊的样子，眼睛死死盯着前面的路灯，心

里数着圈。骑到平时该问的那几步，我把嘴闭得紧紧的。风起来了，我还在蹬。等我到路口刹住车，才发觉爸爸已经落在后面好远了。

我学会了。那天回家的路上，我给妈妈讲绘本里那根顶在小熊头上的草，讲我自己闭着嘴数圈的那个傍晚。妈妈笑，我也笑。原来书里的小熊和小孩，学的是同一件事：别老回头看，眼睛看前面，一直蹬。

The Bear in the Book Was Afraid to Let Go Too

Last week, Mom read me a picture book called Little Bear Learns to Ride. In it, Papa Bear holds the seat behind Little Bear, walking lap after lap around a tree stump. When Little Bear forgets Papa is still holding, Papa quietly lets go. Little Bear glances back, sees nobody behind him, panics, and the bike dives headfirst into the grass by the road, wheels in the air.

I laughed at that page, and then my face felt hot, because when I learned to ride, I was exactly like that bear.

During the week Dad held me while I practiced, the thing I feared most was him letting go. Every ten or fifteen meters I would shout, are you still holding. He always said, holding. Once he answered half a beat late. My ears buzzed, my legs went soft, and the bike veered into the flower bed. Sitting on the edge, I still talked tough and said the flower bed had grown out of its own accord. Dad did not expose me. He pulled me up, patted off the dirt, and said, again.

In the picture book, after Little Bear tumbles into the grass, Mama Bear does not help him up. She says one sentence: eyes forward, keep pedaling. Little Bear crawls out with a blade of grass on his head and gets back on. This time he does not look back. His eyes stay locked on the big stump ahead. One lap, two laps, and he rides it all by himself. On the next page he is flying, the fur behind his ears blown up by the wind.

That night in bed I thought: the little bear was not unafraid. He simply saved the energy of looking back and spent it on pedaling. I kept asking Dad whether he was holding, which was like growing my eyes on the back of my head. The next day I copied the bear, staring hard at the streetlight ahead, counting laps in my head. At the spot where I would normally shout the question, I kept my mouth shut tight. The wind picked up and I kept pedaling. Only when I braked at the corner did I notice Dad had fallen far behind.

I had learned it. On the walk home I told Mom about the blade of grass on the bear's head, and about my own evening of counting laps with my mouth shut. She

laughed, and I laughed. It turns out the little bear in the book and children learn the same one thing: stop looking back, eyes forward, keep pedaling.

读书角里那页卷边的故事

教室后面有个读书角，铁皮箱里放着旧杂志。翻旧杂志的时候，我翻到一页卷了边的故事，讲一个孩子学骑自行车。那个孩子最怕车把。他说车把像有自己的主意，往左躲人，往右躲狗，他越攥它越晃。就是这一句，让我把那一页读了三遍。

因为我的同桌也说过一模一样的话。上个星期同桌跟我说，他放学看见同学骑车，心里痒，可他不敢，车把在他手里不听话，他爸扶着他都摔过。他说完还学了一下摔的样子，两只手往前一伸，人往旁边一歪。我看着他，想起我自己学车头几天，也是这样，车把一歪我就整个人跟着倒，像车驮着一个不倒翁。

故事里后来发生了什么，我记得很清楚。孩子的爷爷教他，别跟车把较劲，手放松，眼睛找远处一样东西盯着。孩子盯住了三十步外的一棵柳树。他晃晃悠悠骑过去，绕柳树回来，居然没倒。爷爷在门口抽烟，烟都忘了吸。故事结尾，孩子能骑去镇上买酱油了，瓶子上拴在车后座，一路叮当响。

我把这一页讲给同桌听，讲到爷爷忘了吸那口烟，同桌笑得趴在桌上。笑完他说，那周末咱俩也去练？我说去。我想起自己学会骑车那天，也是先盯住了远处一样东西，我们楼下的绿色邮筒。我一路晃着骑到邮筒跟前，手心里全是汗，可我没倒。那一刻我忽然不怕了。原来害怕这个东西，盯着远处就不见了。

这周我们班的读书分享，我讲了这页卷边的故事。讲完老师说，好，就讲你怕什么、后来怎么过去的。我说我怕车把，后来我盯住了一个邮筒。教室里笑了一片，同桌笑最大声。下课后他在我胳膊上写了一个日期，是周末练车的日子，字写得歪歪扭扭，像车把画的。

那页故事我还留着，夹在语文书里。它卷了边，可它让我明白：害怕车把的不止我一个，同桌不是胆小，我也不是。我们只是还没盯住那个邮筒。

The Dog-Eared Page in the Reading Corner

There is a reading corner at the back of our classroom, an old tin box full of used magazines. While leafing through them, I found a dog-eared page with a story about a child learning to ride a bicycle. That child feared the handlebars most of all. He said the handlebars seemed to have minds of their own, dodging people to the left, dogs to the right, and the harder he gripped, the more they shook. Just that line made me read the page three times.

Because my deskmate once said almost the same thing. Last week he told me he watches classmates bike home after school and itches to try, but he does not dare. The handlebars refuse to obey him, and even with his dad holding on he has fallen. He even mimed the fall, both arms shooting forward, body tipping sideways. I looked at him and thought of my own first days of learning, when every wobble of the handlebars took me down with it, the bike carrying a tumbling tumbler doll.

I remember exactly what happens later in the story. The child's grandfather tells him not to wrestle with the handlebars: loosen the hands, find something far away, and stare it down. The child fixes his eyes on a willow tree thirty steps off. He wobbles toward it, circles it, comes back, and does not fall. The grandfather stands in the doorway with his cigarette, forgetting to smoke. At the end of the story the child rides to town to buy soy sauce, the bottle tied to the back rack, clinking the whole way home.

I told this page to my deskmate. When I reached the part about the grandfather forgetting his cigarette, he collapsed on the desk laughing. When he finished laughing he said, so this weekend, we practice? I said, deal. I remembered my own day of learning, when I too had fixed on something far away, the green mailbox downstairs by our building. I wobbled all the way to that mailbox, palms soaked, but I did not fall. In that moment the fear simply left. It turns out fear disappears once you stare at something far off.

This week our class has a reading share, and I am presenting this dog-eared story. The teacher said, good, tell us what you feared and how you got through it. I will say I feared the handlebars, and then I fixed on a mailbox. The classroom will laugh, and my deskmate will laugh loudest. After class he will write a date on my arm, the day we practice, the numbers crooked as if drawn by a handlebar.

I still keep that page, tucked in my Chinese textbook. Its corner is bent, but it taught me this: I am not the only one who feared the handlebars. My deskmate is not a coward, and neither am I. We just had not found our mailbox yet.

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