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.