九里土路，和我校门口的三百米

寒假那天我去图书馆写作业，写完在电子阅览室戴上耳机看片子，随机点开的就是《车轮上的童年》。我本来只想看几分钟，结果从头看到了尾。片子里那对兄弟，哥哥骑一辆补了又补的旧车，每天带弟弟去镇上上学，土路单程九里。

让我停下来的是一段清晨的路。天还没亮透，哥哥跨上车，弟弟坐在后座上背语文，背到一半打瞌睡，脑袋歪在哥哥背上。土路坑多，车轮颠一下，弟弟就醒一下，醒了接着背。两边的草叶上有露水，镜头离车轮很近，泥水溅上裤腿，谁也不管。

片中也有摔倒。弟弟下车自己练，在村口的土路上摔了，膝盖破了点皮，哥哥蹲下看了一眼，说能走就能骑，弟弟拍拍土上车，两个人一前一后骑回家。没有大人出现，旁白说他们的爸妈在很远的地方打工。

我在阅览室里摘下耳机缓了一会儿。我每天上学是爸爸骑电动车送，从小区到校门三百米，我还总嫌远，嫌风大，嫌坐得屁股凉。九里土路，天不亮就出发，颠一路，人家背完了一篇课文，我在三百米路上刷完了半首儿歌。

片子快完时有一组镜头：放学，哥哥的车后座换成书包，兄弟俩逆着夕阳往回骑，影子在土路上拉得很长。哥哥到村口把车停下，让弟弟先骑一段，自己在后面跑。弟弟骑得歪歪扭扭，哥哥在后面喊，眼睛看前头，别看脚。

我合上笔记本离开图书馆，外面下着小雨，爸爸骑电动车来接我。车过校门那三百米的路，我坐在后座上想起那条土路。雨点打在头盔上，我第一次没有嫌这段路短。九里和三百米不一样长，可我知道，总有一天我也要自己骑一段更远的路，眼睛看前头，别看脚。

Nine Li of Dirt Road, and Three Hundred Meters to My School Gate

On a day in winter break I went to the library to do homework. When I finished, I put on headphones in the e-reading room and clicked a film at random: Childhood on Wheels. I meant to watch a few minutes and ended up staying to the last frame. The two brothers in it ride one patched-up old bike, taking the younger one to school in town every day, nine li of dirt road each way.

What stopped me was an early-morning stretch. Before the sky fully lights, the elder swings on and the little brother sits on the back seat reciting Chinese. Halfway through he dozes off, his head tipping onto his brother's back. The dirt road is full of holes; every jolt of the wheels wakes the boy, and he picks up the recitation where he left off. Dew sits on the grass on both sides, the camera close to the wheel, mud-water splashing onto trouser legs, nobody minding.

There is falling too. The little brother practices on his own at the village

entrance and falls, scraping his knee. The brother crouches, glances at it, says if you can walk you can ride, and the boy pats off the dirt and mounts. The two ride home one behind the other. No adult appears; the narration says their parents work far away.

I took off the headphones in the reading room and sat for a while. Every day my dad shuttles me to school on an electric scooter, three hundred meters from our gate to the school gate, and I still call it far, too windy, the seat too cold. Nine li of dirt road, leaving before dawn, bouncing the whole way, and they finished a text recitation while I scrolled through half a song in my three hundred meters.

Near the end there is a sequence: school out, the back seat now holding schoolbags, the brothers riding home against the setting sun, their shadows stretched long on the dirt. At the village entrance the elder stops and lets the younger ride a stretch while he runs behind. The boy wobbles, and from behind his brother shouts, eyes on what's ahead, not on your feet.

I closed the laptop and left the library. It was drizzling outside, and Dad came for me on the scooter. Over those three hundred meters past the school gate, sitting on the back seat, I thought of that dirt road. Rain tapped my helmet, and for the first time I did not mind that the ride was short. Nine li and three hundred meters are not the same length, but I know one day I will ride a longer road myself, eyes on what's ahead, not on my feet.