土路上的车轮，和我的橡胶轮胎

星期五的观影课上，老师放了一部纪录片，叫《车轮上的童年》。片子里拍的是山里的孩子学骑自行车。镜头跟着一个瘦瘦的男孩，他的车是那种老式的二八大杠改小的，挡泥板缺一块，后座用铁丝绑过。路是村子里的土路，一下雨就成泥，晴天一层白灰。

片子里有一段我看了两遍。男孩学车摔了，车头一歪，连人带车翻进田埂边的草沟里。我以为他要哭。他从沟里爬出来，先扶车，再拍头发上的草，裤腿上的泥他随手抹了一把，然后跨上车接着蹬。镜头没有停，他晃晃悠悠骑远了，扬起一路白灰。旁白说，那条土路他每天走两趟，去镇上上学，单程九里。

坐在放映教室里的我，脸有点热。我学车是在小区的塑胶广场上，地面平得像桌面，爸爸扶着，妈妈在旁边递水，摔了最多蹭红一点皮。那个男孩摔进的是草沟，爬起来第一眼看的是车坏没坏，不是自己疼不疼。

纪录片后半段，男孩学会了，每天骑车驮着妹妹上学。有一段拍他从土坡上冲下来，旧车的链条哗啦哗啦响，两边是麦子。他的背挺得直直的，车把握得稳稳的。我忽然明白，他那辆车为什么看起来那么破，却骑得那么稳。因为会骑车的人不是车给的，是那条土路摔出来的。

我想起自己学会骑车那天，在塑胶广场上，风一吹我就觉得自己飞起来了，得意了一整个星期。可那个男孩的得意藏在别的地方，藏在冲下土坡时挺直的背上。我们都在学骑车，只是我的路上有人扶着，他的路上只有他自己。

观影结束，灯亮起来，屏幕暗下去之前，定格在男孩的车轮上，轮胎磨得平了，花纹快没了。我低头想了想自己那双崭新的运动鞋，还有楼下那辆一摔就喊停的车。这部纪录片没讲什么大道理，它就让我看见，同样的年纪，有的孩子的车轮是滚在土路上的，滚得又稳又远。

Wheels on the Dirt Road, and My Rubber Tires

At the movie class on Friday, our teacher showed a documentary called Childhood on Wheels. It follows children from the mountains learning to ride bicycles. One camera trails a skinny boy on an old-style bike shrunk down to his size, one fender missing, the back seat bound with wire. The road is the village dirt road, mud when it rains, a layer of white dust when it is clear.

There is a scene I watched twice. The boy falls while learning, the handlebars twist, and man and bike tumble into the grassy ditch beside the ridge. I thought he would cry. He climbs out, lifts the bike first, then pats the grass from his hair, wipes the mud off his trouser leg with one swipe, swings back on, and keeps pedaling. The camera does not cut. He wobbles away, raising a trail of white dust. The narration says he walks that dirt road twice a day to school in town, nine li each way.

Sitting in the screening room, my face felt hot. I learned on the rubber-tiled

plaza in my neighborhood, flat as a tabletop, Dad holding, Mom passing water, and a fall meant a red scrape at worst. That boy fell into a ditch, and the first thing his eyes checked was whether the bike was broken, not whether he hurt.

In the second half, the boy has learned and bikes his little sister to school every day. One shot films him charging down an earthen slope, the old chain clattering, wheat on both sides. His back is straight, his grip on the handlebars steady. I suddenly understood why his bike looks so beat-up yet rides so sure. The rider is not given by the bike. He is knocked into shape by that dirt road.

I remembered my own day of learning, on that rubber plaza, convinced I was flying when the wind blew, proud for a whole week. The boy's pride hides somewhere else, in the straight back as he charges down the slope. We both learned to ride. Mine had a hand holding me; his road had only him.

When the lights came on, the last frame before the screen went dark was the boy's wheel, the tire worn smooth, its tread nearly gone. I thought of my brand-new sneakers and the bike downstairs that I stop crying over at every fall. This documentary preaches no grand lesson. It simply shows that at the same age, some children's wheels roll on dirt roads, and roll steady, and far.