那一段没有人扶的下坡

上周电影课放的那部成长片，我到现在还记得那个长镜头。片里的男孩住在一个坡多的镇上，他学骑车没人教，自己推着车一遍遍走上坡，再松脚滑下来。有一段是他终于敢踩踏板冲下坡，镜头从侧面跟着他，风把他洗得发白的衬衫灌成一个鼓，他的脚蹬得飞快，脸上不是笑，是一种咬紧了的认真。

全班都在为那段下坡欢呼，我却想起自己的摔车。学骑车那年夏天，小区旁边有一条新铺的路，我骑上去逞快，前面突然窜出一只猫，我一捏闸，车一歪，连人摔进路边的花坛里。膝盖磕在水泥沿上，血珠渗出来，裤子磨破了一大块。我坐在花坛边没哭，先去看车——车把歪了一点，轮子还转。那一刻我居然松了口气，比关心自己的腿还先。

后来我在那条路上接着练，摔了再扶起来，膝盖上的痂结了又裂。电影里的男孩比我更早明白一件事：下坡的时候，喊救命没有用，眼睛要看坡的尽头，身子往后坐，闸一下一下点着捏。这些没人教他，是摔出来的。

影片后半段我看得很安静。男孩的爸爸一直在远处看着，从不追上来。有一段爸爸终于走到他跟前，只说了一句，明天帮我送信到镇上。原来这孩子练车不是为了玩，是为了替家里跑腿。他冲下坡的那股认真，是有理由的。

散场时我在楼梯间想，我学车的时候，爸爸的手一直扶着车座后边，扶了整整两个星期，有一天他悄悄松了手，我骑出去二十米才发现，回头看他，他站在原地，手还保持着扶车的姿势。成长大概就是这样：那段下坡终究没有人扶，但身后那只手松开之前，已经扶了很久。

回家路上我特意绕到小区那条新铺的路边。花坛还在，水泥沿上有一小块磨掉皮的旧痕，不知道是不是我的。我站了一会儿，风过来，我好像又听见链条哗啦哗啦响，一个十三岁的自己蹬着车，冲下坡去。

The Downhill Nobody Held

The coming-of-age film shown in class last week — I still remember its long take. The boy in it lives in a town full of slopes. Nobody teaches him to ride; he pushes the bike up each hill on foot, then coasts down. One stretch is him finally daring to pedal down a long slope. The camera tracks him from the side, wind filling his washed-out shirt like a balloon, his legs spinning fast, his face not smiling but set in a clenched seriousness.

The whole class cheered for that downhill, but I remembered my own crash. The summer I learned, there was a freshly paved road beside our compound. I went too fast showing off, a cat darted out ahead, I squeezed the brake, the bike wobbled, and I tumbled into the flower bed by the curb. My knee hit the concrete edge, beads of blood came out, a big hole worn in my trousers. I sat by the bed and did not cry; I checked the bike first — the handlebar bent a little, the wheel still turned. In

that moment I felt relief for the bike before I felt it for my own leg.

Afterward I kept practicing on that road, getting up after every fall, the scab on my knee forming and splitting again. The boy in the film understood something sooner than I did: on a downhill, shouting for help is useless; eyes on the bottom of the slope, weight back, squeeze the brake in taps. Nobody taught him. The falls did.

I watched the second half quietly. The boy's father always watched from afar and never caught up. Near the end he finally walks over and says only: deliver letters to town for me tomorrow. So the boy practiced not for play but to run errands for the family. That seriousness on the downhill had a reason.

At the end, in the stairwell, I thought: when I learned, Dad's hand stayed on the back of my seat for two whole weeks. One day he quietly let go, and I only noticed twenty meters out. I turned to look — he stood in place, his hand still shaped as if holding. Growing up is like that: the downhill ends with nobody holding, but the hand behind you held for a long time before it let go.

Walking home I detoured past that new road. The flower bed is still there, with a worn patch of scraped concrete on the edge — maybe mine. I stood a while. The wind came, and I could almost hear the chain clattering again, a thirteen-year-old me pedaling hard, charging down the slope.