车座磨出的形状

爷爷那辆二八大杠，后座弹簧断了一根，坐上去硌。我爸说，这车他骑了十一年上下班，链条都没换过几根。

我十岁生日，我爸问想要什么。我说想要学骑车。他没买新车，擦了擦车铃，说，就它。我不高兴，觉得同学骑的都是亮闪闪的新车，这辆黑漆斑驳，车梁上还缠着一圈旧胶布。我爸也不劝，把车推到墙根，支好，说，先擦一遍再骑。我赌着气拿抹布擦，擦到车铃，铃铛底下刻着一行小字，锈住了，看不清，我爸凑过来看，说那是厂名，他这辆车是他爸给他的，他爸用报纸包着车把运回来的。

学是在河堤后头的空地上学的。我爸扶着后座，话特别多，比平时翻了一倍：背挺直，眼看远处，脚画圆。我嫌他啰嗦。骑顺了以后他越说越少，最后只剩一句：骑吧。傍晚的空地上有风，车骑过去，两边的蒿子往后倒。我忽然明白他为什么不买新车——这车的座垫磨出的形状，正好是他坐过的形状，我坐上去，严丝合缝。

摔过一次，在拐弯的地方，前轮别了一下道牙，人和车往一边去，我用脚撑住了，没倒。我爸惊了一下，过来检查车，先捏前轮，再看车圈歪没歪，半天才问我一句：人没事吧。我说没事。他哦了一声，把车把正了正。

学会那天，我爸让我骑回家，他在后头步行。从河堤到家，四里地，我骑了二十分钟，中间下来歇了两回。进院门的时候，天刚擦黑，车灯还没装，前叉上别着爷爷当年用的那盏旧马灯，玻璃罩里积着陈年的油灰，没点过，但一直别在那儿。

现在那辆车挂在储藏室的钉子上。我上了初中骑新车，偶尔擦它的时候，车铃铛一按，还是响，比新车脆。我爸说，这铃铛是原装的，五十多年了。铃声响起来那几秒，我总觉得车后座还站着一个人，手虚虚地悬着，没碰，也没走。

The Shape Worn Into the Seat

Grandpa old twenty-eight frame bike had one broken spring in the rear seat; sitting on it pressed the bone. Dad says he rode it eleven years to work and back, and barely changed the chain.

On my tenth birthday Dad asked what I wanted. I said I wanted to learn to ride. He bought no new bike, polished the bell, and said, this one. I was unhappy. My classmates all rode shiny new bikes, while this one wore mottled black paint and an old tape band wound around its frame. Dad did not argue. He pushed the bike to the wall, propped it, and said, wipe it down before riding. Sulking, I took the cloth. When I reached the bell, under it was a line of tiny characters, rusted over, unreadable. Dad leaned in and said it was the factory name. This bike had been given to him by his own father, who had brought it home with its handlebars wrapped in newspaper.

We learned on the empty lot behind the river embankment. Dad held the rear seat and talked twice as much as usual: back straight, eyes far away, feet drawing circles. I found him wordy. Once I rode smoothly he spoke less and less, until only one line was left: ride. In the evening lot there was wind; the bike passed through it and the wormwood on both sides bent away. I suddenly understood why he bought no new bike — the seat had worn into exactly the shape of his body, and when I sat down, it fit as if made for me.

I fell once, at the bend, where the front wheel caught the curb and man and bike tipped sideways. I braced with my foot and it did not fall. Dad startled, came over to inspect the bike first, pinched the front wheel, checked whether the rim was true, and only after a long while asked: you all right? I said fine. He grunted and straightened the handlebars.

The day I learned, Dad let me ride home while he walked behind. Four li from the embankment to the gate; I took twenty minutes and stopped twice. When I rode through the courtyard gate the sky was just going dark. We had no lamp fitted, but clipped to the front fork was the old kerosene lamp Grandpa once used, its glass chimney holding years of oil grime, never lit, always clipped there.

Now that bike hangs on the nail in the storage room. In middle school I ride a new one, and when I occasionally wipe the old bike down, one press of its bell still rings, brighter than a new one. Dad says the bell is original, more than fifty years old. In those seconds after it rings, I always feel someone still standing behind the rear seat, hand hovering, not touching, not leaving.

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