从山里转来的同学

五年级下学期，班里转来一个山里来的同学，叫石头。石头个子高，力气大，单杠一口气拉八个，可开学第二周我们就知道他的短处：他不会骑车。全班都会，就他不会。有人笑他，他红着脸不说话。

放学我跟他顺路，他走路，我骑车。有一回他忽然说：你教我骑车吧，我拿我教你翻跟头换。我说行。第二天他真在操场垫子上给我翻了两个标准的侧手翻，我摔得屁股疼，他稳稳落地。公平交易，我认。

教石头比教别人难，不是他笨，是他太稳。山里走惯了山路，他上身纹丝不动，车反而站不住。我喊歪了就扭回来，他扭得慢半拍，人车一起躺倒。他摔了十几次，一次没吭声，拍拍土上来接着练。我倒是先急了，他反过来安慰我：没事，我们山里人摔习惯了。

转折在一个周六。我让他别看车，看前头二十米，把山路上的步子挪到蹬腿上。他忽然就直了，从操场这头骑到那头，越骑越快，风把他校服吹得鼓起来。他在操场边上刹住，回头看我，脸上还是没什么表情，可眼睛亮得吓人。他说了句：原来骑车就是走路，就是换了一条腿走路。

后来石头学会了带人，学会撒把，学会下坡不捏死闸。暑假他回山里，开学回来给我带了一兜野核桃。他跟我说，山里现在也修了水泥路，他堂弟们都会骑车了，就他爸还不会，回去他教他爸。他说这话的时候特别认真，像在给一个任务立项。

毕业那年我们不同校，渐渐少了联系。前年我在城里地铁站口看见他，他骑着共享单车来接人，动作利索。他认出我，按了一声铃，说了句当年那句话：骑车就是走路，换一条腿走路。我站在原地笑了。石头，你后来肯定也教会了你爸，山里人学什么都快，因为不怕摔。

The Classmate Who Came from the Mountains

In the spring term of fifth grade a transfer student from the mountains joined our class. We called him Stone. He was tall and strong, eight pull-ups on the bar in one breath, yet by the second week everyone knew his weakness: he could not ride a bicycle. The whole class could, only he could not. Some laughed, and he turned red and said nothing.

After school our ways overlapped; he walked and I rode. Once he suddenly said: teach me to ride, and I will teach you somersaults in exchange. I agreed. The next day he really did two proper cartwheels for me on the playground mat; my backside hurt from my own clumsy try while he landed steady. A fair trade, I admitted.

Teaching Stone was harder than teaching others. Not because he was slow, but because he was too steady. Used to mountain paths, his upper body would not sway at all, and the bike could not stand. I shouted to twist back when it leaned, but he twisted half a beat late, and man and bike toppled together. He fell more than ten times without a sound, dusted himself off, and got back on. I was the one who got

flustered first, and he ended up comforting me: it is fine, we mountain people are used to falling.

The turn came on a Saturday. I told him not to watch the bike but twenty meters ahead, and to move his mountain steps into his pedaling legs. Suddenly he went straight, riding from one end of the playground to the other, faster and faster, the wind ballooning his uniform. He braked at the edge, turned to look at me, his face still showing little, but his eyes shining fiercely. He said one sentence: so riding is just walking, only walking on one leg switched.

Later Stone learned to carry a passenger, to ride no hands, and to ease rather than clamp on downhill. That summer he returned to the mountains and brought me a bag of wild walnuts when school reopened. He told me cement roads had reached the village, his cousins all rode now, only his father still could not, and he would teach him when he went back. He said it with great seriousness, like signing up for a mission.

We went to different schools after graduation and lost touch. The year before last I saw him at a subway entrance in the city, picking someone up on a shared bike, moving deftly. He recognized me, rang once, and repeated the line from those days: riding is just walking, walking on one leg switched. I stood there smiling. Stone, you surely taught your father too. Mountain people learn anything fast, because they are not afraid to fall.