挂在枕头底下的纸奖牌

学校运动会上，同桌小虎脖子上挂了一枚跳绳比赛的铜奖牌，亮晃晃地晃了小明一整个星期。小明回家往沙发上一坐，说，爸爸，我也要奖牌。爸爸说，奖牌是比赛赢来的，不是要来的。小明眼珠一转，说，那我去比赛骑车！可他连自行车都不会骑。

爸爸没拆穿他，从杂物间推出家里那辆旧车，气有点足，链条油亮。父子俩来到小区后面的水泥小路上。小路旁边有个沙坑，是小孩子玩沙的地方，沙子晒得暖暖的。

练车的第一日，爸爸扶着后座，小明蹬得歪歪扭扭，像一条喝醉的小鸭子。到了第二日，爸爸的手偷偷松了半格，小明骑出了五米，正得意，车头一歪，哐当，连人带车栽进沙坑，嘴里灌进一口沙，咸的。

小明趴在沙坑里，半天没动。他吐着沙子，带着哭腔喊，爸爸，我的奖牌没了。爸爸走过来，蹲在沙坑边上，说，谁说的。摔跤的地方，就是练本领的地方。你看沙坑亲了你一口，是想记住你。

小明从沙坑里爬出来，头发里、耳朵里都是沙。爸爸给他拍沙，一边拍一边说，明天还来不来。小明把嘴里的沙子呸呸吐干净，说明天来，后天也来。

第三日，小明能骑到沙坑边上停住。第四日，他绕着沙坑骑了半圈。第五日的傍晚，他一口气从小路这头骑到那头，风在耳朵边呼呼地鼓掌。爸爸站在小路尽头，手里拿着一样东西，举得高高的。

走近了才看清，是一枚纸做的奖牌，红色的纸，剪成圆圆的，中间画着一颗五角星，底下用笔写着：骑车小能手，小明。绳子是爸爸用红毛线拧的。爸爸说，比赛还没开始，先发预赛奖牌。真正的铜奖牌，等你骑得够快，去跟小虎比，自己赢回来。

小明把纸奖牌挂在脖子上，骑在车上叮铃铃地绕沙坑转了三圈，每圈都冲爸爸喊一声。晚上他把纸奖牌压在枕头底下，怕它被妈妈洗掉。他跟爸爸说，等真的铜奖牌来了，就让这个纸的当爷爷。

后来小明真的在校运会骑车比赛里跑了第三名，领回一枚铜奖牌。他把纸奖牌和铜奖牌挂在一起，纸的挂在上面。他说，这是爷爷，爷爷最早。

The Paper Medal Under the Pillow

At the school sports meet, the copper medal of the rope-jumping contest hung on the neck of desk-mate Xiao Hu, and it dangled in front of the eyes of Xiao Ming for a whole week. When Xiao Ming got home he plopped onto the sofa and said, Papa, I want a medal too. Papa said medals are won in contests, not asked for. The eyes of Xiao Ming rolled, and he said, then I will enter a bicycle race. But he could not even ride a bicycle.

Papa did not expose him. He pushed the old family bicycle out of the storage room, its tires a little full, its chain shiny with oil. Father and son came to the

cement path behind the compound. Beside the path was a sand pit, where the little children played with sand, and the sand was warm from the sun.

On the first day of practice Papa held the back seat, and Xiao Ming pedaled crookedly, like a little drunk duck. On the second day the hand of Papa secretly loosened half a notch, and Xiao Ming rode five meters out. Just as he was pleased, the front of the bike tilted, there was a clang, and he and the bicycle fell into the sand pit, and a mouthful of sand poured into him. It was salty.

Xiao Ming lay prone in the sand pit and did not move for a long time. He spat out sand and shouted through his sobs, Papa, my medal is gone. Papa walked over and squatted at the edge of the pit, saying, who said that. The place where you fall is the place where you train your skill. Look, the sand pit kissed you once because it wants to remember you.

Xiao Ming crawled out of the sand pit, with sand in his hair and in his ears. Papa patted the sand off him, and while patting asked whether he would come tomorrow. Xiao Ming spat the sand out of his mouth clean and said, tomorrow I will come, and the day after tomorrow too.

On the third day, Xiao Ming could ride to the edge of the sand pit and stop. On the fourth day, he rode half a circle around the pit. On the evening of the fifth day, he rode the whole length of the path in one breath, and the wind clapped and clapped beside his ears. Papa stood at the end of the path, holding something in his hand, raised high.

Only when he came close could Xiao Ming see it clearly: a medal made of paper, red paper cut into a round shape, with a five-pointed star drawn in the middle, and under it written in pen, expert little cyclist, Xiao Ming. The string was twisted by Papa out of red wool yarn. Papa said, the race has not started yet, so here is the qualifying-round medal first. The real copper medal, when you ride fast enough, go race Xiao Hu and win it back yourself.

Xiao Ming hung the paper medal on his neck and rang the bell as he circled the sand pit three times on the bike, shouting one shout at Papa each round. At night he put the paper medal under his pillow, afraid his mother would wash it away. He told Papa that when the real copper medal comes, this paper one will be promoted to grandpa.

Later Xiao Ming really finished third in the bicycle race at the school sports meet and brought home a copper medal. He hung the paper medal and the copper medal together, the paper one on top. He said, this is Grandpa, and Grandpa came first.