



## 背影

### The View from the Rear

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我与父亲不相见已二年余了，我最不能忘记的是他的背影。那年冬天，祖母死了，父亲的差使也交卸了，正是祸不单行的日子。我从北京到徐州，打算跟着父亲奔丧回家。到徐州见着父亲，看见满院狼藉的东西，又想起祖母，不禁簌簌地流下眼泪。父亲说：“事已如此，不必难过，好在天无绝人之路！”

It has been two years and more since I saw my father. My most vivid memory of him is a view of him from the rear.

That winter, my grandmother had died, and my father's job had come to an end; our troubles truly did not come singly then. I left Peking for Xuzhou, to accompany my father home for the funeral. When I saw the household things strewn about the yard, and thought too of my grandmother, I wept copiously. Father said: 'What has happened has happened, you shouldn't upset yourself. Heaven helps those who help themselves.'

回家变卖典质，父亲还了亏空；又借钱办了丧事。这些日子，家中光景很是惨淡，一半为了丧事，一半为了父亲赋闲。丧事完毕，父亲要到南京谋事，我也要回北京念书，我们便同行。

When we got home, father paid back what was owed by means of selling and pawning things, and borrowed again to pay for the funeral. Those days at home were very gloomy, partly because of the funeral, partly because of father being out of work. Once the funeral was over, father decided to go to Nanjing to look for work, and as I was returning to Peking to study, we traveled together.

到南京时，有朋友约去游逛，勾留了一日；第二日上午便须渡江到浦口，下午上车北去。父亲因为事忙，本已说定不送我，叫旅馆里一个熟识的茶房陪我同去。他再三嘱咐茶房，甚是仔细。但他终于不放心，怕茶房不妥帖；颇踌躇了一会。其实我那年已

二十岁，北京已来往过两三次，是没有什么要紧的了。他踌躇了一会，终于决定还是自己送我去。我两三回劝他不必去；他只说，“不要紧，他们去不好！”

In Nanjing, friends wanted to take us sight-seeing, and that detained us one day. The next morning I was to cross the river to Pukou, where I would take the afternoon train north. Father had already declared he would not see me off because he had too much to do; he arranged for a houseboy he knew at our hotel to go with me. He gave the houseboy his instructions in great detail, and repeated them over and over again, but after all that still worried that the houseboy would prove unreliable, and could not finally make up his mind. Actually I was already twenty years old, and had made the trip to Peking two or three times, so it was no great matter. At last he decided to see me off himself. In reply to my protests that it wasn't necessary he just said, 'It's all right, I shouldn't leave it to them.'

我们过了江，进了车站。我买票，他忙着照看行李。行李太多了，得向脚夫行些小费，才可过去。他便又忙着和他们讲价钱。我那时真是聪明过分，总觉他说话不大漂亮，非自己插嘴不可，但他终于讲定了价钱；就送我上车。他给我拣定了靠车门的一张椅子；我将他给我做的紫毛大衣铺好座位。他嘱我路上小心，夜里要警醒些，不要受凉。又嘱托茶房好好照应我。我心里暗笑他的迂；他们只认得钱，托他们只是白托！而且我这样大年纪的人，难道还不能料理自己么？唉，我现在想想，那时真是太聪明了！

We crossed the river and went into the railway station. While I bought my ticket he looked after the luggage. The luggage was too much for us to cope with; we needed to pay some porters to get it on the train. So he started haggling over a price with them.

At that time I thought myself very clever, and didn't quite approve of the way he spoke to them, so I butted in, but in the end he agreed on a price with them, and saw me onto the train. He chose a seat for me next to the carriage door, and I spread the Persian lamb overcoat he had made for me over it. He told me to be careful on the journey, and told me to watch out at night in case I caught a chill. Then he instructed the car attendant to look after me well. I laughed to myself at his naivety: the only thing that mattered to them was money, it was a sheer waste of time to ask them to do a good turn! Besides, I was grown up. Couldn't I look after myself? Ah, when I look back now, I was really too clever for my own good!

我说道，“爸爸，你走吧。”他往车外看了看，说，“我买几个橘子去。你就在此地，不要走动。”我看那边月台的栅栏外有几个卖东西的等着顾客。走到那边月台，须穿过铁道，须跳下去又爬上去。父亲是一个胖子，走过去自然要费事些。我本来要去的，他不肯，只好让他去。我看见他戴着黑布小帽，穿着黑布大马褂，深青布棉袍，蹒跚地走到铁道边，慢慢探身下去，尚不大难。可是他穿过铁道，要爬上那边月台，就不容易了。他用两手攀着上面，两脚再向上缩；他肥胖的身子向左微倾，显出努力的样

子。这时我看见他的背影，我的泪很快地流下来了。我赶紧拭干了泪，怕他看见，也怕别人看见。我再向外看时，他已抱了朱红的桔子往回走了。过铁道时，他先将桔子散放在地上，自己慢慢爬下，再抱起桔子走。到这边时，我赶紧去搀他。他和我走到车上，将桔子一股脑儿放在我的皮大衣上。于是扑扑衣上的泥土，心里很轻松似的。过一会儿说，“我走了，到那边来信！”我望着他走出去。他走了几步，回过头看见我，说，“进去吧，里边没人。”等他的背影混入来来往往的人里，再找不着了，我便进来坐下，我的眼泪又来了。

I said, 'There is no need for you to wait around, dad.' He looked out of the window and said, 'I'll go and buy some oranges. Stay here, don't go away.' There were some hawkers waiting for customers behind the railings on the opposite platform. To get to that platform you had to jump down, cross the tracks, and climb up the other side. That would not be too easy for my father, seeing how fat he was. I volunteered to go myself, but he would have it his way. I watched him waddle over to the tracks, dressed in his black mandarin jacket and dark blue padded gown, with his black skullcap on his head. He slowly lowered himself down, which didn't prove too difficult. But climbing onto the other platform was a different matter. Supporting himself with both hands on the edge of the platform, he drew his feet up; then he inclined his body to the left and appeared to be making a strenuous effort. As I watched him from behind, my tears gushed out. I hurriedly wiped my face dry, afraid that he would see, afraid that others would see. When I looked up again he

was already on his way back with an armful of bright red oranges. To cross the tracks he first place the oranges on the ground, then slowly climbed down, then picked the oranges up again. I hurried to help him up when he got to my side of the track. He walked with me onto the train, plonked all the oranges down on my fur coat, and dusted himself off. Now seeming very relaxed, he said after a while, 'I' ll be off, then. Write to me when you get there.' I watched him leave. After taking a few steps, he turned his head and saw me. He said, 'You' d better go in, there' s no one looking after your things.' I waited until his retreating figure had been swallowed up in the throng before taking my seat. Then my tears came again.

近几年来，父亲和我都是东奔西走，家中光景是一日不如一日。他少年出外谋生，独立支持，做了许多大事。哪知老境却如此颓唐！他触目伤怀，自然情不能自己。情郁于中，自然要发之于外；家庭琐屑便往往触他之怒。他待我渐渐不同往日。但最近两年的不见，他终于忘却我的不好，只是惦记着我，惦记着我的儿子。我北来后，他写了一信给我，信中说道，“我身体平安，惟膀子疼痛利害，举箸提笔，诸多不便，大约大去之期不远矣。”我读到此处，在晶莹的泪光中，又看见那肥胖的，青布棉袍，黑布马褂的背影。唉！我不知何时再能与他相见！

In recent years, father and I have been on the move all the time, and our family fortunes have gone steadily downhill. He left home in his youth, stood on his own two feet, and did some great things. Being constantly reminded of his

failure, he was of course unable to control his feelings; as his depression mounted, he naturally had to give vent to it. Trivial family matters made him fly into a temper. He came to treat me differently from the way he had in the past. But in these two years we have been parted, he has finally forgotten my faults, and is only concerned about my well-being, and my son's well-being. After I came north he wrote me a letter, in which he said, 'I have reasonably well, it's just that my shoulder gives me a lot of pain, which makes it awkward for me even to eat with my chopsticks or write with my brush. Probably my final exit is not too far away.' When I read this I saw again, through glistening tears, that view from the rear of his fat shape, dressed in a long padded gown with a black mandarin jacket over it. Ah! When, I wonder, will we two be able to meet again?

(David Pollard 译)