

Zhefen Chen

Professor Wood

English 1301

February 01, 2017

A Second-Hand Bike

It was Friday morning. My husband had already left to work, and I had just taken my curious son to the baby sitter's house and returned home. The house was so quiet I even heard my heart "pu-tong, pu-tong" beating, but it was my favorite moment to enjoy the peace. I was sitting on the brown comfortable couch in the living room, looking at the calendar that I was holding in my left hand, and talking to my blooming belly, "I will see you in one month." Yes, I could feel he was trying to move himself to connect the spot where I put my right hand. "Ding-Ding-Ding," the phone on the corner of the end table rang. I looked at the number on the monitor. It was the number I have called a million times and that crossed the Pacific Ocean to reach me. I picked up the phone. "Hi, Mom."

"Hi, Fen." It was not the same voice I had talked to every week and expected. A deep, hoarse, interrupted voice appeared in my ears. It was my brother. "Dad, last night, he. . . ." Tears filled my eyes and ran down to my chin. There was a voice deep in my heart that refused this. "No, no, no, I promised to take two grandsons to see you in summer. Why don't you wait? Don't give up."

I was born in a bicycle kingdom, especially the small town where I grew up. After I finished elementary school, it was time for me to have a bike to commute to middle school. On a hot summer afternoon, the sky was bright, blue and cloudless. My friends and I were playing

jumping rope under the shade of a big tree. “Ding-Ding-Ding” went the sound of the bicycle bell behind me. I turned around and saw my dad was pushing a bike toward me. “This is for you,” said Dad. “For me?” I looked down the bike and opened my mouth widely. It was not the one I imagined, bright and shiny with curved frame. It was a second-hand dark green bike with a cross top tube. For a small sized girl, it is hard to get on the bike with a cross top tube. There were some brown rusty spots on tubes near the chain wheel; touching it, it felt like blackish avocado skin. A silver steel chromed bell was about one thumb length away from the plastic cover on the right side of the handlebar. But there was one thing on the top of the seat that grabbed my attention, a cherry red thick cloth with parallel raised lines on the outside cover of the saddle. I stared at it like a disconnected old friend had appeared in front of me, I could not recognize her, but the smell of soap reminded me that we knew each other very well. Dad told me that my mom recycled my unused cloth and sewed that one for me. From then on, this bike accompanied me until I graduated at high school.

On a Saturday morning, an alarm like a big bump exploded near me, dragged me out from my dream. I struggled to get out of my bed. It was time for Dad, brother and me to go to the bike race. We got on our bikes and rode on a bumpy country road toward the field. There was a big rock in the middle of the road. I tried to avoid it, but somehow I still hit it and fell down. I scratched my hand and knee. I thought it was a good reason to ask Dad to go home. Dad looked at the scratch on my hand and knee, and said “You will be fine. We are almost there and you can make it.” Dad always told us that life was alike bicycle race: one can only go forward. We do not know what conditions are ahead of us. It could be rolling lands that make us exhausted, it could be going down hills feeling like angels are carrying us in the sky, or it

could be bumpy roads like we are pushing a power drill into concrete. We are the racer. The only way to reach the finish line is keep pushing pedals, never give up.

In my adulthood, the second-hand bike that my dad bought for me became a symbol that encouraged me when I was having hard time or struggling. Every time I think of it, it is like my father is sitting next to me and telling me, "You are the racer, don't give up, you can do it." It helped me get rid of my fear of driving after having a car accident. It helped me pass my GED test after falling many times. It helped me through the hard time when my husband was deployed. It will continue to encourage me in my life whenever I need support.

My bike is more than just a second-hand bicycle. It is something significant to me. Yes, the racer's attitude my dad taught us, "Don't give up, you can do it," helps me grow and become a stronger person. It is the legacy my dad passed to us. It will be kept deeply in my heart, and I will pass the racer's attitude on to my sons to help them grow stronger in the future.