

**Mother Duck:** *Tony Kahn tells of a devoted mother duck who led her babies down the straight and narrow path – to disaster.*

Tony Kahn 讲述了一个用心的鸭妈妈，领着她的鸭宝贝沿着又直又窄的小径走过灾难的故事。

**Tony Kahn:**

Hi, I'm Tony Kahn, Producer and Director of *Morning Stories* on WGBH radio, Boston. Today's story is close to home for me. Well, actually it happened right on my front porch.

今天的故事离我家很近。实际上，正好发生在我家的前门廊。

**Tony Kahn:**

My wife and I took time off the other day to sit on our porch in the suburbs and watch the world go by. We were amazed at once by the sight of a mother duck leading her ten ducklings in an orderly waddle down to the pond at the bottom of the street. The other end of our block intersects the town's main commuter lane running east and west. To get this far, we'd realized, she'd had to negotiate four lanes of rush-hour traffic and the babies still couldn't fly.

一天我太太和我坐在位于郊区的我们家的前门廊里休息，看着来来往往的人和车。我们立刻被眼前的情景惊呆了——一个鸭妈妈带着十个小鸭子整齐有序，摇摇摆摆地走过位于街道尽头的池塘。我们街区的另一端和一条东西走向的，横穿我们这个小镇的重要车道相交。走到这么远，我们意识到鸭妈妈不得不和交通高峰期间的四条路较量，小鸭子还不能飞。

[Sounds of traffic] [车辆急驰而过的声音]

We were marveling at the accomplishment as she led her brood along the curb and over the grate of the gutter opposite our house. Three of the ducklings, no bigger than your palm, dropped right through the openings into the sewer. Sensing the loss, the mother stopped at once and, sweeping her babies behind her, retraced her steps up the street and back over the grate. In horror, we watched as the remaining seven ducklings, every last one of them, fell into the sewer, too.

当她领着她的一群儿女沿着路边，走过我们家对面的下水井盖的时候，我们惊叹她的成就。三个小鸭子，没有你的手掌大，刚好从井盖间的格子掉到下水井。感觉到丢失了什么，鸭妈妈立即停了下来，她用翅膀把小鸭子揽在身后，返身走回了那条街，然后回到下水井盖的地方。惨不忍睹的是，我们眼看着七个小鸭子，也一个不剩的掉到下水井。

It took the mother a moment to realize she was alone. In confusion, she looked first one way down the street, then the other. And then by instinct, up at the clouds -- the home of hawks and all calamity for a duck. And in a heart-rending shriek, she let out the cry of every mother who has ever seen her babies ripped by the sky or swallowed by the earth.

鸭妈妈很快意识到她的孤单无助。困惑的她，先看了看沿街的一条路，然后又看看了另一条路。然后，出于本能，她仰望着云之深处——鹰的家，对于一个鸭子来说那就是灭顶之灾。鸭妈妈发出了一阵令人心醉的尖叫，那是每一个曾看见过她的孩子被天所撕裂或者被地所吞噬的母亲所发出的哭嚎。

[Sound of a baby crying] [婴儿哭泣的声音]

My wife rushed inside to call the animal rescue league and I ran to the garage for an old golf driver to pry off the sewer lid. As the mother squawked in circles around me, I jimmied the club into the cast-iron opening and felt the shaft snap in my hands. In anguish, I looked up at the sky myself and saw two men approaching from the apartment across the street.

我太太冲到屋里给动物救援队打电话，我跑到车库去拿那个旧的高尔夫木杆来撬下水井的盖子。鸭妈妈围着我团团哭叫之际，我把木杆塞到铸铁制的下水井盖里，感觉木杆把断在我手里。痛苦万分，我抬头仰望着天，看见两个人从对面街道的公寓里走过来。

It's the cheapest rental property on the block. The two men were strangers to me, in their mid-forties their eyes red and bleary from a night of hard work or hard drinking. If I'd seen them---- coming any other time or place I'd have crossed to the other side of the street. I told them what happened and a second later we were on the ground, our thirty fingers wrapped around the grate and pulling hard. As the mother duck circled us, alternately squawking her encouragement and shrieking at the sky, we yanked off the lid and stared into the black, silent hole of the sewer. The taller of the two men, at around six feet, lowered himself into the hole, bracing himself against the sides. The sewer was about ten feet deep there and the ground around him relatively dry. He squatted slowly and felt around in the dark, and then gingerly he found and lifted every one of the lost ducklings up to us on the street.

那是这条街上最便宜的出租公寓。对于我来说，这两个人是陌生人。他们四十五岁左右。他们眼睛布满血丝，浑浊不清，可能是整晚辛苦的工作或者饮酒过度。如果我在别的时间或者别的地方看见他们走过来，我会穿过马路，走到街道的对面去。我告诉他们发生了什么事情，很快，我们来到现场，我们三十个手指拖住井盖，使劲地拉。当鸭妈妈围住我们的时候，她一会儿呱呱地叫着鼓励我们，一会儿对着天哀嚎。我们猛地拉开了井盖，盯着黑乎乎，死寂般的下水井。那个大约六英尺高的大个子，扶着井壁，下到排水井。下水井大约十英尺深，他周围的地面相对的干燥。他慢慢地蹲下来，在黑暗中摸索，然后小心翼翼地寻找，然后把每个丢失的鸭子递给站在街道上的我们。

As soon as their feet touched the ground, the ten cheeping babies plugged back into line behind their mother like an extension cord and without missing a beat resumed their trip to the pond at the bottom of the street.

这十个小鸭子的脚刚一挨地，他们就回到鸭妈妈的身后排成一行，就像一条(电源)延长线。没有片刻停留，他们继续着位于街道尽头的池塘之旅。

[Birds chirping] [鸟叫]

The three of us looked at each other in silence, stunned by our success and sudden bond. I noticed tears forming in the bloodshot eyes of the man who had gone into the hole. "I love animals," he said.

我们三个互相看着，沉默着，为我们的成功和突然的熟识而惊讶。我注意到那个深入到下水井的男人，布满血丝的眼睛里蓄满了泪水。他说，“我喜欢动物”。

[Birds chirping, and cars driving in the distance][鸟叫，远处汽车急驰而过的声音]

That evening I went back on the porch. The apartment across the street was dark and quiet again, but the incident that morning had left me with a gift; a temporary heightened sense of awareness that I was eager to experience before it faded away. Like an enhanced sense of touch it seemed to bring everything closer, opening a new dimension of sights and sounds hiding in the wrinkles of ordinary things. With it I could sense that the apartment across the street, though dark, was warm with life and the sky above me rippled with invisible wings and the pond at the bottom of the street, already thickening with cold, had a voice, speaking in short sounds and long silences of the vastness of the unknown and of small miracles at the dead end of the street.

那天晚上，我回到门廊。对面街道的公寓又恢复了黑暗和平静；但那天早上的事情却回赠给我一份礼物；在它消失之前，我渴望体验的一种短暂的，强烈的认知感。就像是放大的一种触觉，它似乎缩短了人和人之间，人和动物之间的距离；发现了藏在平凡事情瑕疵下的更深刻的视觉和听觉。有了它，我能感觉到对面街上的公寓，虽然黑暗，但却有着生命的温暖；有了它，我能感觉到鸟儿掠过天空的余痕；有了它，我能听到位于街道尽头，因天气变凉，日渐冻结的池塘里传来的短促的声音，和未知的，无边的，长长的沉默还有死胡同里小小的奇迹。

[Ducks squawking] [鸭子呱呱地叫]

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[End of recording] [录音结束]

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