On the first day of our village school in Japan, there was a boy missing. He was found hidden away in the dark space underneath the schoolhouse floor. None of us knew him. He was nicknamed Chibi because he was very small. Chibi means “tiny boy.”

In the village school of Japan, on the first day, a boy was missing. He was found hidden away under the schoolhouse floor. None of us knew him. He was nicknamed Chibi because he was very small. Chibi means “tiny boy.”
This strange boy was afraid of our teacher and could not learn a thing. He was afraid of the children and could not make friends with them at all.

उस अजीब से लड़के को हमारे टीचर से बहुत डर लगता था, इसलिए वो कुछ नहीं सीख सका. उसे बच्चों से भी डर लगता था, इसलिए उसने किसी से भी दोस्ती नहीं बनाई.

He was left alone in the study time.

पढ़ाई के समय उसे अकेले छोड़ दिया जाता था.
He was left alone in the play time.

खेल के समय भी वो बिलकुल अकेला बैठा रहता था.

He was always at the end of the line, foot of the class, a forlorn little tag-along.

वो बच्चों की लाइन में हमेशा सबसे पीछे रहता. वो किसी से मिलता-जुलता भी नहीं था.
Soon Chibi began to make his eyes cross eyed so that he was able not to see whatever he did not want to see.

जल्दी ही चिबी ने अपनी आँखों को ऐंचना (क्रॉस करना) सीख लिया. ऐसा करने से वो जो चाहता, केवल वही देखता, बाकी और कुछ नहीं.
And Chibi found many ways, one after another, to kill time and amuse himself. Just the ceiling was interesting enough for him to watch for hours.

The wooden top of his desk was another thing interesting to watch.
A patch of cloth on a boy’s shoulder was something to study.

किसी लड़के की कमीज़ पर छपा हुआ नमृता भी चिबि को बहुत आकर्षक लगता था.

Of course the window showed him many things all year round.

ख़िड़की के बाहर तो चिबि पूरे साल भर मज़ेदार चीज़ें देखता रहता था.

Even when it was raining the window had surprising things to show him.

बारिश में भी उसे ख़िड़की से आश्चर्यजनक चीज़ें दिखती थीं.
On the playground if he closed his eyes and listened, Chibi could hear many different sounds, near and far.

खेल के मैदान में चिबि अपनी आँखें बंद करके बैठा रहता और दूर-पास की अनेकों आवाजें सुनता था.
And Chibi could hold and watch insects and grubs that most of us wouldn’t touch or even look it.

So that not only the children in our class but the older ones and even the younger ones called him stupid and slowpoke.
But, slowpokes or not, day after day Chibi came trudging to school. He always carried the same lunch, a rice ball wrapped in a radish leaf.

Even when it rained or stormed he still came trudging along, wrapped in a raincoat made from dried zebra grass.

चाहें वो बुद्ध हो या नहीं, चिबि हर दिन पैदल स्कूल आता था।
उसका रोज दोपहर का खाना था - भात की एक गेंद, जो मूली के पत्ते में बंधी होती थी।

चाहें तेज़ बारिश हो या तूफान, चिबि स्कूल ज़रूर आता।
बारिश में वो ज़ेबरा घास के रेनकोट को लपेटकर आता।
And so, day by day, five years went by, and we were in the sixth grade, the last class in school.

Our new teacher was Mr. Isobe. He was a friendly man with a kind smile.
Mr. Isobe often took his class to the hilltop behind the school.

He was pleased to learn that Chibi knew all the places where the wild grapes and wild potatoes grew.
He was amazed to find how much Chibi knew about all the flowers in our class garden.

स्कूल के बाग में फूलों के बारे में, चिबि को इतना ज्ञान हुआ था यह जानकार भी टीचर को बहुत ताज्जुब हुआ.

He liked Chibi’s black-and-white drawings and tacked them up on the wall to be admired.

टीचर को चिबि के बनाये काले-सफेद चित्र भी बहुत पसंद आए और उन्होंने उन्हें क्लास में लटकाया.

He liked Chibi’s own handwriting, which no one but Chibi could read, and he tacked it up on the wall.

चिबि जो भी लिखता उसे केवल वो ही पढ़ पाता. पर टीचर को चिबि की लिखाई इतनी पसंद आई कि उन्होंने उसे दीवार पर टांग दिया.
And he often spent time talking with Chibi when no one was around.

जब क्लास में अन्य बच्चे नहीं होते तो टीचर, चिबि से घंटों बात करते रहते थे.

But, when Chibi appeared on the stage at the talent show of that year, no one could believe his eyes.

“Who’s that?” “What can that stupid do up there?”

Until Mr. Isobe announced that Chibi was going to imitate the voices of crows.

“Voices?” “Voices of crows?” “Voices of crows?”

उस साल स्कूल के “प्रतिभा-शो” में जब चिबि स्टेज पर हाज़िर हुआ तो किसी को अपनी आँखों पर यकीन नहीं हुआ. “वो कौन है?” “वो बुजू भला वहां क्या कर रहा है?”

तब मिस्टर इसोबे ने घोषणा की कि चिबि कौवों की आवाजों की नक़ल करेगा.

“आवाजें?” “कौवों की आवाजें?”

“कौवों की आवाजें?”
“VOICES OF CROW.”
First he imitated the voices of newly hatched crows.
And he made the mother crow’s voice.
Then he imitated the father crow’s voice.

“कौवों की आवाजें?”
सबसे पहले चिब्ब ने नवजात कौवे के बच्चे की आवाज़ निकाली.
फिर उसने माँ-कौवे की आवाज़ निकाली.
फिर पिता-कौवे की आवाज़ की नक़ल की.
He showed how crows cry early in the morning.
He showed how crows cry when the village people have some unhappy accident.
He showed how crows call when they are happy and gay.
Everybody’s mind was taken to the far mountainside from which Chibi probably came to the school.

उसने सुबह तड़के कौवे की आवाजें निकालीं। गाँव में हादसे के समय कौवे कैसी आवाजें निकालते हैं? वो भी सुनाई। जब कौवे खुश और मस्त होते हैं तो वे कैसी आवाजें निकालते हैं, वे भी सुनाईं।
उसके बाद हरेक का ध्यान उस दूर-दराज़ के पहाड़ी इलाके की ओर गया जहाँ से चलकर चिबि रोज़ स्कूल आता था।
At the end, to imitate a crow on an old tree, Chibi made very special sounds deep down in his throat. “KAUUVVATT! KAUUWWATT!”

Now everybody could imagine exactly the far and lonely place where Chibi lived with his family.

Then Mr. Isobe explained how Chibi had learned those calls – leaving his home for school at dawn,
And arriving at sunset,

और सूरज ढलने के बाद ही वो घर वापिस लौटता था.

Every day for six long years.

पूरे छह साल तक चिबि ने यह किया था.
Every one of us cried, thinking how much we had been wrong to Chibi all those long years.

यह सब सुनकर हम में से हरेक छात्र रोया – पिछले कई सालों में हमने बिचारे चिबि को कितना परेशान किया था, कितना सताया था !
Even grownups wiped their eyes, saying, “Yes, yes he is wonderful.”

Chibi was the only one in our class honored for perfect attendance through all the six years.
After school was over, the big boys would often have work to do in the village for their families.

स्कूल ख़त्म होने के बाद बड़े लड़कों को गाँव में अपने परिवार के लिए भी काम करना पड़ता था.

Sometimes Chibi came to the village to sell the charcoal he and his family made.

कभी-कभी चिबि अपने परिवार द्वारा बनाये कोयले को बेंचने के लिए गाँव आता था.
But nobody called him Chibi anymore. We all called him Crow Boy. “Hi, Crow Boy!”

पर अब उसे कोई चिबि कहकर नहीं बुलाता था.
हम उसे “कौवा लड़का” बुलाते.

Crow Boy would nod and smile as if he liked the name.

चिबि को “कौवा लड़का” नाम पसंद आया.
नाम सुनकर वो अपना सर हिलाता और मुस्कुराता.

And when his work was done he would buy a few things for his family.

काम ख़त्म होने के बाद वो अपने परिवार के लिए कुछ चीज़ें खरीदता था.
Then he would set off for his home on the far side of the mountains, stretching his growing shoulders proudly like a grown-up man. And from around the turn of the mountain road would come a crow call – the happy one.

फिर सामान को लादकर वो दूर-दराज़ की पहाड़ियों में स्थित अपने घर की ओर चल देता. अब उसके कंधे किसी बड़े आदमी जितने चौड़े हो गए थे. दूर पगड़ण्डी पर जब वो पहाड़ी की ओर मुड़ता तो हमें एक कौचे की ख़ुशी-ख़ुशी की आवाज़ ज़रूर सुनायी देती।

End