

Bach to the future

The boy peeked through the window
nodding to himself,
noting the half-empty whisky bottle
and the last century headphones
and the old man's arms waving rhythmically,
and the wooden spoon in hand
and the closed eyes
and the knitted brow
like furrows in a ploughed field.

On the side table sat an ashtray
full of forbidden butts,
an empty glass,
a tattered paperback
with a chocolate wrapper as a bookmark,
and a filing-cabinet wallet.

On the floor,
a half-eaten bowl of pasta, abandoned,
congealing,
with a sprinkling of tobacco ash.

The boy slid silently
through the always unlocked door of yesteryear,
emptied the wallet of all its cash,
bar twenty dollars,
and padded, in his stolen Nikes,
into the welcoming night.

As Bach's 'Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor'

faded into the applause of The Proms audience,

the old man stirred,

re-filled his glass,

lit a cigarette,

and hoped the boy

would spend some of the money on food.