

Bay Windows

The damp wallpaper around the window frame is flecked
with black mould, stachybotrys chartarum.
A boy in red wellington boots splashes in puddles in the rain.

On the sill a porcelain Giselle dances arabesque.
I wonder can she reboot from beyond the grave?
Outside, the glare of a neighbour's security light,
black rain glistens on the tarmac.

Inside, the hum of the computer
and the monitor's familiar creak.
News travels fast along centrifugal wires,
amber warnings, second and third tiers in towns and villages.

Rain from the leaky guttering splutters
onto the cracked paving below.
I used to live in a house with a coal fire
and bay windows, in a place where horses ran wild

through postcode black spots, where children wept,
screaming naked, pressed against glass from abuse and neglect,
where no one brought you flowers unless they were nicked
from gravestones or some poor bastard's deathbed.

By Rachel Burns