

That time I said no

The car purrs to a stop, nudges kerb.
Passenger door swings open with a pretty click.
The man in the smart suit leans close, left hand
smoothing the chrome door handle, fingernails pruned
to the quick. His chin unstubbed, clean as boiled ham.
A smile scythes from cheek to cheek,
sweet with teeth. His gaze slips
from my school shoes, past my little knees,
grey pleated skirt, blazer, tiny hat.
Your mummy, he says, voice sticky
like the velvet curtain Dad left in the garage
that winter the wet got in. *Your mummy says*
for me to take you home.