

walking on the path through the park in a straight line
is fine

but playing footy on the grass with some mates and some others
who asked if they could join in and sliding in to beat the keeper to
the ball and tuck it just inside the goalpost which is really
someone's sweater

is better



when I was thirteen
it was my overween-
ing ambition
to **win** a painting competition

but having a suspicion
that being deficient
in the talent department
might be to my detriment
I opted to **attack**
the canvas in an abstract
style, using a stick
to flick
gobs and dollops of paint
without restraint
or reason
or accuracy

mum said 'there's more
on your **clothes**
and on the **floor**
than on your picture'

'perhaps you should enter your **shirt**'
so I did and guess what?
i came second

but that's still better than anyone reckoned
i would





at four twenty-three
(approximately)
on the first afternoon of the summer holiday
Jonathan appeared at the back door
he'd gone out of two hours before
to play

when his mother clocked him
to use a metaphor
she hit the ceiling
though in reality she didn't leave the floor

'look at the state of you'
she said
'whatever have you been up to?'

'when you went out
you didn't have a hair out of place
your face was clean
your shirt pristine
your trousers too
and your shoes
were buffed
and unscuffed
and here you are now
looking exactly the same'

'get back out there son
and have some fun
and don't darken that doorstep
on which you're stood
until you can darken it with mud'

