Time traveller

She's ninety-one,
the woman in the next bed
an expert in time travel
who without warning flies away

to the family farm in a country parish
where, aged ten, she milks twenty cows
before school, helps her mother in the kitchen
loves learning the piano and singing.

She time travels back to the hospital ward
and sleep, wakes in the night to sing
"Que sera sera, whatever will be will be
the future's not ours to see...” In the past again

the Germans have arrived, changing everything
making rules, setting curfews, missing their children
crying for home and peace. “Come on my lovely,
my darling, shhh my sweetheart, poppet shhhh”

whispers the nurse who strokes the white hair
of the traveller who has been so far, seen so much
and now calls out to her mum and dad
“I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming, wait for me!”

Judy Mantle