

The Piano: a narrative based on the animation by Aidan Gibbons.

Precious memories flood my heart and pulse through my veins as I sit down to play my beloved grand piano. The very thought of the music I'm about to play invokes a river of nostalgia - the room seems to echo with my life's most vivid moments. Erupting within me, I encounter tangible visions amid the melodies.

Firstly, her ghost resonates in the corner of my eye as my fingers glide over the keys. She's here with me - in a spiritual duet - I know it! Countless moments shared while alive means I can't mistake her presence now, or the mellow feelings of serene peace she brings me.

As my tender wife fades and the warm tunes come back into sharp focus, a new, almost opposite vision consumes me.

Putrid smoke fills the air, a burst of rapid-fire surrounds us, sirens wail and low-flying planes swoop in to drop their hot destruction. We hide behind a still-standing wall and await our fate.

The next moment feels like it's happening all over again: bravely, my war time comrade moves into the open, 'crack,' a single crystal-clear shot rings out. He's hit; he's down - never to awake! Cradling him in my arms leads me to the awareness of my fingers - they continue to express the sounds of my haunted soul.

Hitting another melancholy note, I'm instantly transported - like wind flowing through an open window - back to my very own childhood.

Crouching low, spirits high, I fumbled to open the gift before me. What could it be? Finally cracking open the box; I released pure joy as I beheld a new toy horse. Its green-glass-eyes still shimmering in my mind ... I watch myself parade him around the room blissfully.

It is the very same wooden hobby-horse that my grandson now rides up to me as I continue to play this melody. His clothing may look different to mine at that age, but I know the depths of our feelings are repeated equally.

Beside me as we complete the tune together, my grandson hits the final note. Certainly I understand that the rhythms of life: love, death and birth will always go on - even after my hands have played their last.