**This shy architect** *by Dena Fakhro*

Instead of ordinary walls

or even the yawning space of executive luxury

here stretches an iron-spoked umbrella bridging its back

from bank to bank;

a canopy with stone-carved wings fanned

onto a halo of Victorian architecture.

And bedded on straw at the end of this rainbow

is a ragged bather – sun-burnt but positioned in shade

and within spitting distance of some aluminium can-tabs

filters and butts that tell of both his

and others’ expended gratification

and which shimmering under lamp-light

might form the shells of his shore.

Here lives Leonardo; another shy architect

self-styled and while inspired by his namesake

both his own creator and the subject;

a Vitruvian man pinned onto slate like a star

though those under shelter see a vagrant born a snow angel

on winter nights when he is victim to the track

jolted and charged by a reverberation of trains

after drifting to dreams under the station clock.

When he wakes he witnesses the shape of things to come

for some days he even floats

and becomes a boat man passaging the living

but on fitful nights his clouded eyes part and note

with that unique sensibility gifted to those caught between worlds

those who won’t make the crossing.

He lives open plan, caged in plain sight

this home and garden cover-worthy

and buffeted by bubble wrap, discarded packaging, stained blankets

and mould on cartons that wrinkle at the prospect of rain.

One man among the homeless, he sits, sleeps, eats, reads about the big issues

and performs a litany of ablutions on or near an installation

that a Nordic lifestyle store might one day customise for city living;

at needle point he even speeds like German automation

drugged and stunned, never and forever moving

St Paul’s always in sight and the river bleeding to distance.

He lives where a platform camera turns on a dime

fine-tuning the station-keeper’s gaze with an intimacy or a daily reproach

– sharp, square-eyed, snapping him back into focus.