SONATA No 2, Op 35

(Chopin’s ‘Marche Funebre’ played by Vladimir Ashkenaz)

This piece on the piano’s slick keys stroked so assiduously, oh yes, strikes down into the listener’s heart. Eight minutes closer to death, we end the pounding threnody, eight measured minutes disposed, tugged closer by a skeleton hand at the graveside. How submissive is that, then, dear friend? Chopin and Ashkenazy each take an elbow of us and ease both onwards for eight minutes and twenty seconds (to be precise, my friend), steady beside us mentally measuring the weight and length of us recumbent, unresisting, as notes pound us with the music’s spell. And you, my time traveller, were taking the eight minutes as well. 2008