**The End and the Beginning**

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After every war

someone has to clean up.

Things won’t

straighten themselves up, after all.

Someone has to push the rubble

to the side of the road,

so the corpse-filled wagons

can pass.

Someone has to get mired

in scum and ashes,

sofa springs,

splintered glass,

and bloody rags.

Someone has to drag in a girder

to prop up a wall.

Someone has to glaze a window,

rehang a door.

Photogenic it’s not,

and takes years.

All the cameras have left

for another war.

We’ll need the bridges back,

and new railway stations.

Sleeves will go ragged

from rolling them up.

Someone, broom in hand,

still recalls the way it was.

Someone else listens

and nods with unsevered head.

But already there are those nearby

starting to mill about

who will find it dull.

From out of the bushes

sometimes someone still unearths

rusted-out arguments

and carries them to the garbage pile.

Those who knew

what was going on here

must make way for

those who know little.

And less than little.

And finally as little as nothing.

In the grass that has overgrown

causes and effects,

someone must be stretched out

blade of grass in his mouth

gazing at the clouds.