

## Daybreak on 5<sup>th</sup> Street

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Shane Rhodes

Trying to avoid description,  
this morning too cold for words.  
Grass stiff with last night's frost.  
A woman across the street,  
in her balcony window,  
buttons the last buttons of her blouse.  
She has been practising work in her sleep.  
Today, cleaning faeces from a patient  
in intensive care, she will think of the sunrise-blue  
around the downtown towers.  
The way she stands in the window  
means she could go on fastening forever  
if only it subtracted from the balance of labour.  
This morning is like the quiet rain  
in Kurosawa's Seven Samurai  
before the last battle.  
A morning full of hooves  
galloping through deciduous forests  
which is the sound of bandits  
cocky but unsure about death  
by the hoes and rakes of peasants.  
They will gallop through the village gates,  
one by one, in cinematic splendour,  
as if death counted them out.  
As the last one falls beneath the solemn-faced samurai  
and is dragged through the dust by his stirrups,  
the movie will fade to burial mounds  
and the static grey of a blank tv.  
The woman, her blouse buttoned,  
tightens the belt around her skirt.

She is oblivious to old Japanese movies  
because there is already too much that needs.  
She eats porridge and cries  
at the kitchen table. She doesn't know  
what she thinks.