**The End and the Beginning**

*Wislawa Szymborska*

**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.**