

STRAW BROOM IN A CONVENT ●

Patrick Pfister

First thing. Before wakeful thought. A nun sweeps
cobblestones soon to be bathed in sunlight. The narrow
alley must be swept. Smooth stones reflect the day, the
dusty clouds. Faint shadow of a branch. Faint sound of
the broom. *whsk. whsk.* Her steps are light. She does not
yawn. Or she yawns immensely, like a baby. Bent bristles
gather grit and leaves. Small twigs too. First thing every
morning. The wooden handle against her calloused palms.
Cool air on her ruddy cheeks. Fragments of a dream,
perhaps a memory. Her family, perhaps her brother. No,
the neighbor boy. He had a sweet smile, a sweet nature.
Fragments dissolve into particles, into dust perhaps. A
tern flies by overhead. *Kee-arr. Kee-arr.* The call lingers,
fades. Is gone.