

Not yet written

It's midnight. You're washing dishes
for the third time today;
touching the sharp point of nothing.
A pathetic breeze leaks
through the window, crickets grate.

You've been watching TV all night.
Documentaries—death
Of the Koorong, the Exxon oil spill
and men who have sex
with blow-up dolls. Then

when you switch off,
you sit in the dark, head going
into noughts and crosses.
There is a world inside you.
It is over-populated, and

things are dire. Millions cry out
in tongues you cannot understand.
And so here you are,
sweating into the sink,
cleaning it all away. Later

you will go outside, with the air
hanging down on you like a wet towel.
You will throw your food scraps
on to the lawn. It will be gone
by morning, to God knows.

And there you will stand.
In the outside lights, your shadow
will cast many angles.

Do not be afraid. All we need
is for you to give us the word.
Because no matter what you claim,
or disown, a poem will be written
and it will be in your hand.

Paul South