Dead Ringer

Terry Rasmussen*
Dead Ringer

Since the day
knocking on wood
struck him as terribly ironic,
after the fact,
he finds gratitude in doorbells,
chimed introductions.

Relieved not to hear
the shuffling of small slippered feet
racing to answer the door,
he counts out the heavier steps
to clear his mind,
silently recites his message
(practiced often before a mirror.)
But his white, gold-trimmed uniform,
military cap in his hand,
always pre-empts his words.

He has no nightmares.
His dawn job
is real enough.

-Terry Rasmussen