Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Ron Koertge: "The Streetsweeper" & "Grand Avenue"

Ron Koertge · Thursday, February 16th, 2012

Ron Koertge has received many honors, including a fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts and a California Arts council grant.
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The Streetsweeper

goes by at 1:00 a.m. two nights of the week. I can
hear the feather whoosh of his machine and see
one red light.
I believe that the streetsweeper lives alone,
sleeping
through the cold days, waking clear-eyed and deft
as the sun goes down.
I believe that he works steadily without a portable
radio or a reading light or a nap. When he pauses
it is to stare placidly into
the potent night.
For reasons too numerous to mention, I think
about the
streetsweeper often and about the singular,
provident
cadence of his life.
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Grand Avenue

When the Lexus hit that pigeon, he lay there
beating his one good wing against the curb
like he was trying to put out a fire.
My wife asked me to do something, so I
turned his head clockwise until I heard
a click. Then darkness poured out
of the small safe of his body.
That is when I realized I used to
merely love my wife.

Now I would kill for her.

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