

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.

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.

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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