She lengthily exhales and looks at me, 
With her eyes full of distance, saying 
In that incomparable voice of hers: 

"I was thinking about getting rid of you, 
Maybe, a week from Tuesday"

CONVERSATIONS & THE NEW POETICS

Koertge & I were born in little 
Illinois towns, so, whenever we 
happen to meet, we never discuss 
the ultimate wedding of literary 
politics & poetry; we talk about 
things like how far it is between 
Oak Park & Aurora, or, if one were 
in Streater, would Olney be closer 
than Ancona

-- Michael C Ford 
Westside Station CA

THE YEARBOOK

a box, a coffin full of garbage, junk 
left over from high school, and inside 
on top my senior yearbook like Halloween 
all the ghosts returned from the tomb 
screaming, bloody, and knocking about 
my brain. I never joined anything: not 
Latin Club, Spanish Club, History Club, 
Future Teachers, Junior Achievers, Rifle 
Club, Art Club, Science Club, stage crew. 
I never went to my high school proms, 
not a dance, not a hayride, or a basket-
ball game, not a football game, not 
a free night in the gym. I never 
went out for a sport: not swimming, 
wrestling, track, not football, basket-
ball, baseball, soccer or any of those 
boy games. my fellow students hated me, 
generously, and I hated them. I flip 
through the pages, glossy pages, they 
feel like a pornographic magazine. I
did not belong to a frat, or Glee Club, never helped out in the office, not in the school store, didn't write for the paper. I turn the pages, page after page of my class peers, pictures by the thousands, stacks and stacks all skulls like a European catacomb. yearbook faces: hungry and ignorant, optimistic, wanting the freedom and prosperity of American Ivory soap and Wonder bread. I was right about everybody, in their portraits I see: drug addicts, alcoholics, bureaucrats, divorcees, rapists, the murder of all life on the planet. I see suburbs and mortgages, two rusting cars, unemployment and unpaid bills, higher prices, wishes with broken spines, dreams in cold conversations over a second cup of coffee, ulcers, hernias, and ruptures, mastectomies, hysterectomies, wrinkles, psychosis, neurosis, schizophrenic eyes, open heart surgery, fat bellies, sagging tits, and one lousy poet.

STREET OF POETS

across the street lives a boy who never comes outside much and when he talks he chews his tongue. he never walks the dog. he never cuts the grass. he is a poet. and then there is the old woman with her blue hair, who is our block guard, who peeks through a crack in her drapes at every noise, at every car stopping, starting. she has the dirt on everybody. she's a poet. and then there is the immigrant man with his skin like dried clay who feeds the street's stray cats, and the divorced woman with her high high heels and the nut down the block who helps the garbage men heave the black Hefty bags full of vodka bottles, chicken bones, and moldy cucumbers: they are poets, waiting for the high point of the day: the mailman!