



# Poetry 180

a poem a day for american high schools

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**002** *This is a poem not about heroes, but their sidekicks.*

## Sidekicks

*Ronald Koertge \**

**They were never handsome and often came  
with a hormone imbalance manifested by corpulence,  
a yodel of a voice or ears big as kidneys.**

**But each was brave. More than once a sidekick  
has thrown himself in front of our hero in order  
to receive the bullet or blow meant for that  
perfect face and body.**

**Thankfully, heroes never die in movies and leave  
the sidekick alone. He would not stand for it.  
Gabby or Pat, Pancho or Andy remind us of a part  
of ourselves,**

**the dependent part that can never grow up,  
the part that is painfully eager to please,  
always wants a hug and never gets enough.**

**Who could sit in a darkened theatre, listen  
to the organ music and watch the best  
of ourselves lowered into the ground while  
the rest stood up there, tears pouring off  
that enormous nose.**

from *Life on the Edge of the Continent: Selected Poems*, 1982  
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\* pronounced KUR-chee

