

# Spring for Poetry in Takoma Park

## Custodians

David Livewell

Retired from other trades, they wore  
Work clothes again to mop the johns  
And feed the furnace loads of coal.  
Their roughened faces matched the bronze

Of the school bell the nun would swing  
To start the day. They limped but smiled,  
Explored the secret, oldest nooks:  
The steeple's clock, dark attics piled

With inkwell desks, the caves beneath  
The stage on Bingo night. The pastor  
Bowed to the powers in their hands:  
Fuses and fire alarms, the plaster

Smoothing a flaking wall, the keys  
To countless locks. They fixed the lights  
In the crawl space above the nave  
And tolled the bells for funeral rites.

Maintain what dead men made. Time blurs  
Their scripted names and well-waxed floors,  
Those keepers winking through the years  
And whistling down the corridors.

*Bailey Cabrera, designer*



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