

Diligent

By Alison Manning

Most mornings he emerges
To little fanfare,
An unassuming older gentleman,
Flat cap, white hair, cheerful smile,
And a high vis vest for safety,
Armed with the implements
Of his voluntary vocation,
Bucket grasped in one hand
Grabber in the other
He roams the streets
Collecting other people's litter.
Packaging dropped thoughtlessly,
Rubbish dumped deliberately,
Cigarette ends,
Precariously placed glass bottles
(with just a few last dregs
Of the night before),
Lost items drifting
In the breeze,
He patiently picks it all
With his picker stick
and drops it in the bucket
For later safe disposal.
He works methodically,
Step by slow step,
Seeking no reward
For his selfless actions
Other than the satisfaction
Of a job well done
A knowledge that he's made the world,
At least his little bit of it,
A nicer place for now.