

THE GOOD CITIZEN

Stephen Baily

I rise at dawn, retire at eight.
I never pay the mortgage late.
I don't abuse my credit card.
The boss is thrilled to see how hard
I work. The neighbors think it's great
The way I manicure my yard.

I slake my thirst with sips, not slugs.
You couldn't pay me to try drugs
Again. I'd sooner cut my throat
Than fail to exercise the vote.
Come spring I rid my plants of bugs,
Come fall my flue of creosote.

My children listen to their teachers
And don't have sex beneath the bleachers.
My wife packs gauze for cancer patients
And much abhors abortifacients.
My dog barks only at swart creatures
Like Asians, Mexicans and Haitians.

When I'm around, your jewels are safe—
Your daughters also. Though I chafe
At taxes, it's not my intent
To overthrow the government.
A friend to widow and to waif,
I tithe, and skip lunchmeat for Lent.

I am in other words the kind
Of person you'd be glad to find
Next door. I honor flag and nation,
Eat bran to forestall constipation
And—sound of body as of mind—
Do not indulge in masturbation

Too much. True, some nights when I wake
And see the moon above the lake
And hear the wind rough up the trees
As if to shake loose mysteries
It seems to me there's some mistake.
But I digress. Forgive me, please.

I have no use for mysticism.
To me it's kin to communism.
You do it if you're crazy—brave
The rage incurred by those who rave.
You go and court McCarthyism.
I'm out of here. I need a shave.

"The Good Citizen" © 2007 by Stephen Baily

Contemporary Rhyme Vol. 4 No. 3 2007