

Discipline

By Glenn Currier

I'm waiting in the checkout line
a woman her face brown and crinkled
with her frail body inclined
and on the floor her coins tinkle

from her worn paisley purse
she, slowly searching for coupons there
and me, suppressing a curse
with one warming milk and a pear.

Patience, patience.

He has this habit of mumbling
and my old ears do not hear
if he's happy or grumbling
if his mind is far or near

is he is talking to me,
self reflecting, asking or saying
something big or something wee
is he pleading or softly praying?

He sniffs and coughs and spits
Why does he do this so much?
This nasty habit gives me fits
so I try to find a softer touch

in my voice - with no edges,
use tones that do not betray
the judgment my mind alleges
about this brutish display.

How many moments like this
how many people have a trait
that tempts you to hiss
and puts you in a testy state?

But no one can make me feel
or think or act in an evil way
it's up to me to grasp my ideal
to stop and think and weigh:

"quirky" or "weird" are in my mind.
So stay calm, pause, and reflect
stop that judgment and be kind
and give the other a little respect.

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