

Neighbors

Death is not my lover
- that would be morbid -
nor even my best friend
- though some say he can be that -
He is merely become
my near neighbor
having taken up residence next door

We are friendly
in a cool sort of way
Sometimes we wave
when we are pulling out from our driveways
I off to my work
he off to... his

We both joined the local Neighborhood Watch
to guard against suspicious elements
so he keeps an eye on me
- and I on him

Every so often, he borrows a cup of sugar
(so old-fashioned!)
I do not borrow anything from him
as I do not wish to be in his debt

I admit to some of the usual prejudices
before I got to know him better
The skeletal hands hanging menacingly
from that creepy robe
The hood, the scythe – it was so over the top

But in person he is more ordinary
He doesn't even know *how* to play chess
and he is fond of gardening –
for which you must agree the scythe
makes some sense

In fact, as Miss Dickinson surmised,
he is a perfect gentleman
Although he works hard
he is never too busy to stop and chat
Do I think it looks like rain? he'll ask
Or have I heard our property taxes are going up...
again?

Nothing certain but death and taxes
he likes to joke

Of course, we have the occasional
neighborly dispute
- my hedge is grown too high
his dog leaves unwanted gifts on my lawn –
But we work it out
That's what neighbors do

And when at last I take that long trip
into eternity
I will have no qualms
about asking him to collect my mail

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