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Love Thy Neighbor?

Robert L. Gockman
College of DuPage

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Who is this bitter old woman with hate in her squinty eyes and arms crossed over her chest as if trying to hold in all of the venom she contains and not let a single drop escape?

Why does she engage in scandalous mischief, befriending children so she might gossip about family secrets innocently shared with this grandmotherly Judas?

Why does she spend her time peeking behind curtains listening to other peoples’ conversations muttering curses under her breath and damning everyone to hell?

Is she angry with her God because her forty-year old bachelor son is lazy and pays her no mind or, because her older son had lost his arm in the war?

Should I try harder to love my neighbor when our every meeting results in glares, accusations and insults?

Today, twenty years removed from my neighbor’s view, I read her obituary in the daily paper and find that I am better able to love my neighbor — dead.

— Robert L. Gockman