

Decorum

by Gary Hardaway

The whiskey gives you something
pleasant to do while waiting to die.
It's not that you have to wait to die,
but choosing the time yourself
is frowned upon by most polite society.
It simply isn't done. It's déclassé.

In every way, it's cheating someone.
Mostly God, among the Catholics,
but also family and loved ones,
even among the faithless and apostate.
And though the Reformation took
the sting out of excommunication,
withholding hallowed ground still matters to some
who want to send you off with ceremony.

So, have your whiskey like a good son.
Wait your turn as anyone true
to good breeding would do.
Though death may be your birthright,
the when is not a choice
the thoughtful make themselves

