

Door to Door

He strode up as I was mowing
with his clipboard swinging
and pressed shirt gleaming
and an amiable, persistent,

self-deprecatory manner
of “Look at me being all persistent!”
an apologetic, explanatory
appeal for understanding

as in “This is what I’m doing.”
And I wasn’t rude, just firm,
cutting off every sentence
with “No thanks, not today,

gotta get this done,”
until he stepped back
with his hands held up
in an *I’m leaving you alone* sign,

feigning fear
of my feigned mowing intensity.
Why wouldn’t I see
before he turned away

how he’d ironed the shirt,
practiced the spiel,
and I was who knows which
number asshole on his route?

Only later, in the almost dark,
closing my living room drapes
did I see—
him coming back

up the middle of the street,
white shirt still aglow,
a touch of jauntiness still there,
but not much.