

POST SCRIPTS

Ex Libris

ONLY a thief, in my belief,
 Would filch what wasn't hisn.
 Whoever absconds with gilt-edge bonds
 Belongs by rights in prison.
 People who steal, or pick a purse,
 Are justly considered crooks;
 But the honor system goes into reverse
 When it comes to borrowing books.

A friend who'd quail at robbing the mail
 And cavil at graft or bribery,
 Will look at your shelf and help himself
 To a tome from your slender liberry.
 "I'll give it the best of care," says he,
 "And hurry it back tomorrow,"
 But that is the last you'll ever see
 Of the book you let him borrow.

It's never the type of ephemeral tripe
 You'd lose of your own volition,
 It's part of a set or, sadder yet,
 A limited first edition.
 Perhaps it's the Kelmscott Faerie Queene,
 An autographed work by Austen,
 A Gutenberg Bible, spotless clean,
 Or a novel they banned in Boston.

Who steals my purse steals trash, or worse,
 As somebody told Othello,
 But to swipe a tome from a friend's own home
 Is the mark of a caddish fellow,
 For duller than people who don't read books
 And viler than those who burn them
 Are the barefaced, smiling gentleman crooks
 Who borrow and don't return them.

—NORMAN R. JAFFRAY.

Loose Item