

No Sneezing in Public

How terrible!
But I handle it better, I
perfectly predictably behave
perfectly (as I always do)

Anyone not I, well-
they had it coming
A deep breath in a crowded aisle
A final breath in an empty room

No innocent victims!
Those who fall did not trip
My last sanctimonious cries-
Before the sneeze I let escape.

And then I wash my hands
And sanitize them, too-
But as I wash off germs
the germs are mine, too.

And so I turn away-
From these words, not from you
Compassion welcomes me
Your eyes smile when your mouth cannot.