After a day of keeping up the shtick,
As a colleague calls it, all the backslapping
And one-liners that put the staff at ease,
Dodging comebacks of passing gas and napping,
The old clichés of caring for the sick
While saving lives and stamping out disease,

I settle in for an all-night case on call
And let myself consider the surreal:
Some sorry bastard known as Stat Unknown
Who passed out, I am told, behind the wheel
And managed to steer straight into a wall
Of the courthouse, no less, has now been flown

Here to purgatory, his position
Suspended somewhere between life and death.
That colleague told me once a good physician
Is sometimes right, sometimes wrong, never in doubt.
Sobered with that thought, I draw a breath,
Hold it for a moment, let it out,

And bow my head to pray with all my might,
One sinner for the next, that I am right.