

God Bless Thee, Bartleby

by Harry Brown

“I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been
filled with a profound conviction that the easiest
way of life is the best.”

—Narrator of Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener”

You died to thrive in the guilty soul
Of Herman’s careful lawyer who tried
To pay you off and float up just.
But you refused his best-denied
His soul its good when he had passed
Us all, a patient man indeed.
Almost any short of Christ
Had quickly booted you, not moved.
But still you stayed, later refused
In prison his visits and his food,
Then turned shade to pry him
From his easy chair and haunt his heart.
He tells his tale
Like a mystified
Mariner.
Melville set you
On our trail.
Hound our hearts, too.