

*Time*  
*New Year's Eve*

WE do not weep – that's no surprise –  
When ailing year gives up and dies.  
We do not mourn, December-end,  
As for the passing of a friend,  
But bury what was but at most  
A careless and unheeding host  
To some unwanted, fleeting fate  
Which, untimely, could not wait  
To snatch a soul, sweet-cherished, dear,  
Whose memory is all that's here,  
Now end-December ends the year.

And every year, since time began,  
Has been unkind to maid and man.  
What precious hearts can it consign  
To dust before its *Auld Lang Syne*?  
Who, now singing in the new,  
Will soon be dust and ashes, too?  
Whose *Auld Lang Syne* will be the last  
With which he'll bury twelve months past?  
Happily, it is not clear  
Who's laughing, singing, kissing here,  
Who'll be outlived by new-born year.

December-end, we cannot mourn  
A rotten year, but twelve months born.  
Twelve months, sweet England, is too old:  
In any case, the corpse is cold.  
It's six weeks since the *true* year died:  
It always does, self-shrouding, hide  
The loveliness that we have seen.

That's why, close-carpeted, its green  
Is leafy-bronzed and no bird's song  
Is heard again – so what goes wrong?

## *Time*

Each year, dear Lord, is just too long.

November trees, unsure between  
The full-robed loveliness we've seen  
    And naked winter, soon espouse  
    The first foreboding-finger boughs  
Which point bare-knuckled bleakly through  
What's left of glories we late knew  
    To dead December's cheerless days,  
Which *Auld Lang Syne* will not erase —  
    To barren greyness so forlorn.

For any year, the time to mourn  
Is when we sweep it off the lawn.

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