

WINTER WILD



Wendy Webb

WINTER WILD

Wendy Webb

This collection is dedicated to Norfolk Poets & Writers

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SPARKLING HOAR

See dripping, sipping sunlight, moisture lost.
See flintstone tower, a folly of pure mud.
Slip-slide in sludging sod of scrunching frost.
Slip hoary footsteps, breathing where I stood.

Slow rage again, to Blickling's crackling bricks.
Slow darting kingfisher blue of reed-sung lake.
Stark light and deepest sky brush barren sticks.
Stark honking greylag geese splash amber wake.

Sweeping air and earth round frozen pool.
Sweeping, flocking water walks to scene
reflections of a landscape, trusting, cool.
Reflections of a landed past; serene.

Brake sparkling hoar of Babylon's release.
Brake, cracking to clay pigeon-warning peace.

Break; cracking to clay pigeon-warming peace.
Break, sparkling hoar of Babylon's release.

Reflections of a landed past, serene.
Reflections of a landscape, trusting, cool.
Sweeping, flocking water walks to scene
sweeping air and earth round frozen pool.

**Stark honking greylag geese splash amber wake.
Stark light and deepest sky brush barren sticks.
Slow darting kingfisher blue of reed-sung lake.
Slow, rage again to Blickling's crackling bricks.**

**Slip hoary footsteps, breathing, where I stood.
Slip-slide in sludging sod of scrunching frost,
see flintstone tower, a folly of pure mud.
See dripping, sipping sunlight, moisture lost.**

STOPPING BY AT CHRISTMAS

**It was that happy time of year
when gifts provided Christmas cheer
and wrongs forgotten for a time
when sibling love held nothing's fear.**

**It was that season so sublime
when spirits rose like pantomime
and snow's imagination fell
to deep and crisp and eventime.**

**It was a feast when all looked well
in understated personal hell
and mistletoe brought friendly cheek
with long-forgotten tales to tell.**

**It was a gift: meek, mild and weak
abreast with flurried berried beak
and left my heart too soft to speak,
and left my heart too soft to speak.**

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

We've had a family time
it's over now
until another year that we can celebrate
and how we hope this one will fly
with more of joy and so much less of pain
for me, for you, for all the world
we hope
and fear in equal measures.
Until then
we wish you well
as we did in our card
or gifts or news
where less is more, and more we bid farewell
to hopes and dreams best left to the TV.

Our young loved everything, but soon forgot
and hope that adults do all necessary chores
to ensure the same again.
They love in the same measure that they get
and so do we,
for seeing you, or hearing of your year
cheers us to face it all
what New Year brings.
And if we did not hear this time,
we hope
for better news and post and focused sights,
for love is what we need, the credit crunch
would leave us poorer yet, with all of earth,
except your axis tipping to the sun.

FROZEN LAKE

Cold lake
that harps my thoughts
to fretting half the past,
disguising breezy chill. Depths lie
frozen.

WHAT HAVE THEY GOT TO LOSE...?

This winter, long as childhood days
in, oh, so many ways.
Yet will not fall
as fun and laughter, long grown tall.

This winter drags to spring's release
when slippings, slidings cease.
Yet, oh, the joy
of endless sledging space, to toy.

This winter chill, inflexible,
joints unreliable
as sunshine, rain
and will this big freeze come again?

This winter, foxes scream too close.
What have they got to lose
but spine-chilled dreams?
And feather-down that breathes, or seems...

SPARK OF HONEY BEES AND STRAWBERRIES

**We sing of ploughing fields, though senses thrill.
Bled bright and falling spoils then race to keep
such future depths within our rising chill
of goodness, rouged to earth within each heap.**

**Bled bright and falling spoils then race to keep
no mellow fruitfulness along our route
of goodness, rouged to earth within each heap.
For now is timely harvesting of fruit.**

**No mellow fruitfulness along our route.
It's ripened like brash strawberries of youth.
For now is timely harvesting of fruit
left trampled, eaten, spoiled within each truth.**

**It's ripened like brash strawberries of youth,
to nurture flesh and soil and honey bees;
left trampled, eaten, spoiled within each truth,
where compost is the good the gardener sees.**

**To nurture flesh and soil and honey bees,
the cold is rising denser into dark;
where compost is the good the gardener sees,
as germinating seeds await fresh spark.**

**The cold is rising denser into dark.
Such future depths within our rising chill,
as germinating seeds await fresh spark.
We sing of ploughing fields, though senses thrill.**

BLUE PARADISE

*I see below my morning drive, to moor
this winter, safely harboured in its cleft:
from Laugharne, through Cheddar /
cream teas, to High Soon
when my heart rocks and rolls to
Dartmoor's fall.*

*I see no blue in morning linen, tossed
aside, beside the purple heather; sheep
wedged on the winding route that takes me
home,
past rolling bales, blue skies, to Cromer's
crease
of land and sea that folds all sheaves as brutes.*

*Ice words' autismal stalactites now break
and break again, the panes of absent palms,
as loveliness undresses naked mist
that barely brushes earth to lift her air
to pony tails, all stamping meadowed breath
of wild and dark: Like Soxx, all-snuffling way-
marks' ogred breath.*

*Spice blue, more shades of
moorings into drift,
to melt my winding snowman back
to Devon;
all chilblains by a crackling
Autumn flame.*

*So tender, brushing warmth and prickling sweat
of morning flanks, all damp from rising mist;
to twin-burst sun-cloud strugglings to undress
the blue of Aphrodite's scalloped Moor.
Beneath a paradise of latent skies;
there in wordy words, in wounds pressed dry.*

*Ice Boudicca's of nice to raging woad,
all safely learned at Laugharne, to clavicle
in softest clefting skull on shoulder's palm*

swan-resting Caribbean sands, to warmth
of bathing pools; of milk and coconuts.

No robin rests in *ice blue markings*' still
of bark to bare, to winter as hearts may
raise garden blossom, trumpets, cups
to rest: a Tess, or Guinevere, to hardy
verse.

Necklace wordy wounds to daisy
chains
and love me, love me not, to
chilling pearls,
on *ice blue morning's* paradisal
pity.

DECREPIT SCRUNCH

**I poured freshly squeezed lemons, fizzing, into a beer
to shandy the credit crunch in poetic licence.**

**3 for 2? Half price? Fuelled insanely to the East,
where miles away, when I was young,
served freshly squeezed Jaffa oranges in the shade,
no blues descended like Last Judgement.**

A Sistine Chapel moment?

Arabs. Camels. Starlight. A grave garden.

**And in that 'Touch Me Not', I was as young as faith;
or Elizabeth, combing the goatskin head of a Baptist.**

**Now my pen Concordes me slower than death,
higher than love; always, the sonic boom of rejection.
Pull your Soxx up.**

Fear the dreams of Minor Poets!

My canary sings itself to sleep.

**Rock me in the Boat House, where I learn
to sex up death and religion
before that final mask; or penny eyes.**

**No flicker of misunderstanding;
mist on a mirror's exhaling breath.**

**I drink to live; my coins are spent.
This rolling stone speeds down rejection's route;
or I am stoned away.**

**All screeching bats or banshees down your dark.
So field your bloody silver coins,
while I swing on these words, all Bible-black:
On food. On meds. On fear of fear itself.
Then bury this round pain in wordy words
or cast my boat adrift, to sink or bay,
where I am hounded wordless into womb.**

DEGREES OF WARMTH

**Dropping by degrees, intelligent car
cruising through fog; early morning tractors;
road signs, lampposts, lined up like protractors
of distant angled light, to travel far.**

**My radius and ulna twitch to write
of moonscape Fenland madness, frosting dawn.
A nacre'd paradise, all lost, forlorn;
where Phoebus ghosts in clouds of glistening light.**

**By degrees, from 5 to freezing, we slow down
to superstore, as Sat Nav says, 'Turn round.'
Shivering tramp – salt grit lies on the ground –
leans on the wall, with warming soup. The town**

**awakens by degrees of fog, to thrill.
They shop, we teashop: all have had their fill.**

FROSTED FLOCK

The golden, golden sun rising with Midas' touch
on a fresh crisp morning paved with thick frost,
to hazard lights flashing warning, as vehicles
litter the nearside with compassion,
lorry driver striding to a banked car
horror-wrenched in unnatural parallels.

And one smashed car facing oncoming traffic
in parallel dreams of a moment frozen in time.

Enough help in helplessness, awaiting paramedics,
to drive on, on... police,
where spotlight seagulls – hundreds - against blue
flock in upon the frosted fields among pigs and sties, sky,
as the beaming golden sun refracts in the rear-view,
mirroring another flight in time's harsh passage at
dawn.

EPIPHANY

Late at night and I'm not sleeping, when the wider
world is weeping
bombs and wars and floods that never can run dry.
Though our Christmas tree is gorgeous, tour of duty
troops courageous,
I cannot think of angel choirs, but sigh.
And all the patience of angel choirs sigh.
The angels of Christmas Eve.

Late at night, cold souls are passing and new
rumoured wars amassing,
we can barely grieve the flood that've gone before.
The cold turkey's plucked, defrosted; we're not
stuffed and too congested
to fill our plate too late with sad remorse.
Not too late to feel the sadness of remorse.
Of angel flocks on Christmas Eve.

Late-night hills are chill and frosty, shepherd-breath
all storm and dusky,
as the shooting star beams brightly in the dark.
Magi camels dune so wisely as their burdened beasts,
so lively,
like three Eastern ships, all silhouette and stark.
I Saw Three Ships, all silhouettes and stark.
Epiphany of angels.

Late-night gifts look so appealing, as massed choirs
and bells concealing
the royal blue of crowning gift of birth.
Sweet-death myrrh and incense rising and the gold of
heaven comprising
the Godhead fleshed in angel-holy mirth.
Straw-gold as Godhead fleshed in holy mirth.
Epiphany of angels, Christmas Morn.

EVE

As bright angel skies are winging and school children
carols singing
in the chill and icy weather where an infant swaddles
round.
There Nativity is playing, multi-cultured themes are
swaying;
melting frost to shine so lightly where all stabled
stalls are found.
And brash-golden straw is scratching as late mangy
herds are found
today, with her, in Paradise.

From hillside fleecing Bethlehem, as bright
moonbeams flock around them,
dancing Glorias of vestments where the light of
heaven comes down.
Suckling Milky Way is bringing lunar breasts: sweet,
lingering
in the royal liquefaction of a Virgin in a gown.
Sing, Magnificat! The Lady of the Rocks wears blue-
sky gown,
to days with her in Paradise.

Such Far Eastern stupefaction, when they see her
liquefaction
of pure flesh to melt and, lily, pout to flesh from
petals' fleur.
Such a breath of panting; birthing; to a sweat of death
in mirthing;
where the Magi pause to give her gift-gold
frankincense and myrrh.
For this birth of death and death in birth were scented
in foul myrrh.
To daze with her in Paradise.

And while Christmas hurdy-gurdy leaves loud
absence wordy-wordy:
like moored Godhead of the Boat House spreading
light across the bay.
Then John's bells are pealing, roundly, for those
carollers so soundly,
like the clappers (*without stops*) – appealing - laud to
Christmas Day;
when fat congregations laud: to laud the Lord of
Christmas Day.
To gaze with her in Paradise.

Such sad and wondering ages, palm to palm to
ringtone sages,
to Hosannas at the Golden, at the gate, Jerusalem.
Such a Raleigh cloaking heaven, proofed to bake and
break to leaven
in the puddle of humanity's shot star from
Bethlehem.
Rocked, O Little Town of rockets; rock of earth, of
Bethlehem.
Too dazed, with her in Paradise.

Such a garden kiss, at parting, such betrayal's
 hangman smarting,
 such dark dropping silver pieces swinging wait to
 lunar smile.
 Bolting doors of sickle ferry, lest cloud galleon
 broadsails wherry,
 to the howl of Black Shuck hanging: to hear voiced his
 master's style.
 For the fiend of Norfolk shades, to lick the palm voice-
 over style.
 Too glazed – with her – in Paradise.

**Weep not, Mother, with a brother, nor with
sister/lover bother,
for the breaking Milky Way, unrobed, to quake the**

breast of earth.
Weep with angel-wonder rages, at the God-death
Rock of Ages
where white fleur-de-lys is dropping petals of Pieta
worth.
There a mother wraps cold flesh of flesh: Pieta stars
of worth.
Too grazed, with her, in Paradise.

No more tears and no more crying, where bright
cherubim, confiding,
Ark to glory of the Mercy Seat. To drum the lost souls
in.
Ring full peal, St Giles of Norwich, wake rust-ancient
bells of Dunwich;
for each Christmas cherub palms – all ringtone bright
– and wondering.
Guardian angels, ring Shekinahs, with each seraph
wondering.
Too dazzled within Paradise.

PAINTING THE TOWN WHITE

**There's a man who paints in my town,
all the city up and down.
He's like that Dulux TV dog
that drips and paws a paint-shaped log.
He paints each wall and chimney pot
all white and such a lot
of blobs beside each lamp post.
He really works the most.
We know he will be painting**

**beside the bus stop, waiting
until those shoppers, tucked in bed,
dream paint, all white, inside their head.
They wish upon a star and then
before they wake, get dressed, just when
they 'paint the town all red', not white,
they wake for work with such a fright.
The man has painted snow in town,
all the city up and down.**

SLAVER SOFTLY

I should have looked after my dentist,
I really didn't help him at all.
He injected my gum,
I said it was numb.
He extracted his drill bit from the wall.

I should have looked after my dentist,
I hadn't a clue what could fail.
He said, 'Open wide',
I spread them with pride.
His hand shook as he turned rather pale.

I should have looked after my dentist.
What could possibly ever go wrong?
He told me to bite,
he fainted outright.
The assistant let him lie there too long.

So now I'm too cramped for the dentist,
but next time I'll be very good.
I will sit still and smile,
let him slumber awhile,
then pay him on time, as I should.

SPINNING IN THE HILLS

**He myrrhs eight legs to spin himself to death
and weave a net of life into next spring,
on baby legs, all cruciform, all spread
to web the earth in futures of all spin.**

**He censers to the gods of gossamer,
an angel visitation on a stage
of pantomime, in shades of dames and dudes
that dress in foreign flowing desert sands.**

**His time is short, to feast his offspring stars,
that grail to life the blood of winter prey;
while donkeys snort and stamp sweet breath to lie
all wriggings and all scurries into dark.**

**An unfamiliar cry bleats into dawn
to break the flimsy flurries of pure fall
and stretch out harping flesh of female flow
to colt in swaddling hay where stone is raised:**

**to henge Apollo in the gleam of straw.
His gold is spun to crown and orb new day.
Discarded in his web, the spider breaks
at coming springing frankincense , to other,**

**the Shekinah of a desert-Arking cloud
that lies in tears and pain beneath this web.
None mourn his passing. Gone.
A spider's silk; and now the fire's lit, to spreading
smoke**

in the hills of Bethlehem.

TWILARK

**It is not God you hear along the breeze;
serene in flurried lively tones of birds.
It is the resonance of souls that slow,
for twilight's falling on the fields in sleep.**

**It robs no blissful Eros, joy's ascent
in dawning chorus full of flight-flushed breast.
This is the summons of all fleshly sense,
for twilight's falling on the fields in sleep.**

**Alluring Midas touch. All luminous
as angel incandescent raptured blue.
This English wavespan, golden gravelled shores,
of twilight falling on the fields in sleep.**

**Resplendent feet of New Jerusalem,
immersing white horse grief in sun-speck jewels.
In lyre breath, dusking skylark rises: sloth
as twilight falling on the fields in sleep.**

A ROBIN RONDEL

**Still robin has the reddest breast of all
to cheer the Christmas season, wrapped in snow;
he darts into bright scenes, his music's flow
of hallowed piping from a distant stall.**

**Deep winter drifts in monochrome's nightfall
and Christmas lantern berries bleed below.
Still, robin has the reddest breast of all
to cheer the Christmas season wrapped in snow.**

**So tinsel's fairy lights and themes recall
camp shades of vibrant pantos and bestow
on city nights brash stars' dame-studded show;
bold harmonies blend every concert hall.
Still robin has the reddest breast of all.**

ANGEL OF THE MORNING

**I am the angel of the pine-dressed tree
singing Magnificat eternally,
as Mary kneels annunciation here
where God is fed in flesh in Christmas cheer.**

**My light beams from the heavens' starry globe
where God wraps flurried snow-fall in his robe.
There is no warmth in purity of shine
and yet the Logos came as Sarx-poured wine.**

**All Glorias arise as needles fall
to carpet spinning wheel's enchanting pall.
My prince left his fine castle in the sky
to teach the fairy forest how to fly.**

**The Falling Star of night prick-ploughed his route
to sleeping rooms of stone where he held suit,
until a hundred pauses captured breath
and he was kissed by angels loosing death.**

**And now his princess aureoles her dress,
yet hides her forest bloom in flower press.
Distracted by the fairy-dance at dawn,
she grasps at falling stars that now adorn**

**the festive, Yuletide season, berry-bright,
while Morning Star fades into darker night.
So Eros flies, while Psyche treads the earth,
until her Joy shines fresh in manger-birth.**

BENEATH A BEDOUIN MOON

See, hear the pouring vat of fresh new wine
that saps the grape press, hosting to a potter,
wrapping hands around fresh virgin clay
to flood annunciation into bliss
of messenger's descent from paradise,
all twinkling in the comet-rising moon.

See newly-weds' pressed lips of burka moon
unveiling desert-sands in blood-red wine,
to raise a spectral camel's paradise
in bonding earth, all-fingered by a potter,
massaging woman's breasts to camp in bliss
of emptied goatskins sapping into clay.

See dust to ashes blooming from fresh clay
that sickles dunes to stars beyond the moon,
where infancy is lauded into bliss
of Mamre's skins, blend-bursting oak's new wine.
Where shards are stars smashed by an ageful potter
beyond the knocking door to paradise.

See natal comet curding paradise
of flesh and flatbread kneaded back to clay,
where the wheel's a-spinning at his feet: the Potter
raising whey-new day bled from the moon.
He spills upon a spindle tree, all wine
pressed back to grapes, all heady, all of bliss.

See shittim wood, that arks from Ishmael's bliss,
where Sarah laughs her Sheikh to paradise
in pouring out of ancient olive wine
bled fat to Isaac, plumped from altered clay.
Where three Wise Men sail camels through the moon:
the axle of the earth spun through the potter.

**See, swaddled infant Bedouin, such potter
gurgling sheep and donkeys, brayed to bliss
within the straw, beneath a Gabriel moon,
where wheels are spun to pouring paradise.
For skins are new-filled, clacking loud as clay
parched into bricks, baked bread, fermenting wine.**

**See here in dust, the potter's paradise
of drunken bliss poured into human clay.
Star-shine beneath the moon, pressed fresh as wine.**

FLUTTERLINGS

The souls of flylings round the flower bed,
as we roll in and out of sleep and dreams.
They catch us in the corners of their many eyes,
until we daydream flightings in our waking hours.

They never leave the edges of our outside thoughts
and in a moment's vision they are tamed
into captured net of fluting breath,
as silver dust from nectar of the gods.

Though wingless at the feet and shoulder blades,
they rise like shoots when we kneel close to earth
and feel the flutter-beat of nursing paps
of feather-falling hair and golden coat.

So flutter by in downings of eternal quest,
of blooming concrete towers petal-bright
that sap the bowstring arch of arrows flutterly
and bite the quivering apple into milk.

ADVENT SONNET

Though advent bells ring Norwich, winter deep
with festive shoppers and the Christmas lights,
here in Thorpe Marriott a glass spire keeps
this season, drifting manged stars at night.

The crib's not bare, for infants gather round,
and candles singe our carolling to prayer.
We see the streetlights aching breath's cold airs
and join the angel throngs in glorious sound.

The cheer is warm in Otter's stomach, sleek
as fish and bread for breakfast by the lake.
And in that hot land, mortars break the meek
and net a catch of Caesar's coin-spun state.

O Little Town, your peace is bred in blood
and Silent Night must choir the star-sun's good.

HOME WITH MOTHER

**In country heaven, dog rose grows
Around pale flesh of open porch,
Where Irish stew breathes through the door
And dumplings breast in gravy whorls.**

**Soft bread and dripping, pantry-ripe,
And on the gas, the kettle boils.
The stone sink's full of fairy suds
And washing's dripping from the line.**

**The hearth is raked of ash and coal
To tinder paper into flames
And there the splash of ghosts dance walls
Of farmyard kitchen faraway**

**Where fresh-wrung chickens hung bare necks
And feathers cover table, floor,
Where Christmas Eve is sweet with blood
As carols tangerine fresh air.**

**The landing drips a slab of pork,
To curtain festive sleigh bell night.
Behind the pipes, quite out of reach,
A treasure-trove of coppers hid**

**And they lie undiscovered yet
In the old plastered house, worn thin
As horse-whip hanging on the wall
And threadbare breeches hang to dry.**

The horse and dray have vanished now
The greengrocer has sold his fare
And yet the village school tolls still
When office lights vacate at night.

The graveyard hides the school bell, eggs
And no headmaster says, 'Don't sing!'
The village lad stares at the hearth
As embers flicker one last time.

OASIS NEAR

There's a myrrhful near oasis
where the stones are clear as sand,
spreading mile on mile like water
in that far off distant land.

No wise men train like camels
where the dung is sweet as breath
and the holy place at Bethlehem
stars where rockets raze to death.

There's a shallow Jordan's incense,
cool to gently bathe scuffed feet
near the doming power of Herod
where my soul brooks clods complete.

From an ark of golden sorrow
where the earth bucks knees of peace,
there a heaven's perfect infancy
straws aureole's release.

A WINTER POEM

The snow is like a galloping mare
in deep winter's chill.
It dances, leaps and stops to stare
beside my window sill.
I pull the blind, it glares and winks
at the hooves of night.
A stallion stamps where my blind thinks
and breathes my glass to fright.

SANTA CHEER

Oh this Santa glass of vineyards
is as shapely as a racquet
bouncing snowballs in the high street
of the shops that make a packet.

Though it is unseemly ringing
checkout seasons flush as Carol
dressed in elfin shorts and baubles,
ringing sleigh bells from a barrel.

Ring the tide of waiting Advent's
urban Christmas, peeling sickly,
where the threat of global warming
melts our snowman slush and thickly.

WARRIOR DRIFTING SOUTH

**A Highlander, not an everyday sight,
his sporran and kilt and ruffled bearskin,
caber-tossed far away from mountain light;
snow-scened in city streets, his legs seemed thin.**

**One thing in common with the Norfolk crowd:
broadly, lochs and tourists and history...
to summarise – eccentric – and so loud
like warriors in battle hogmanay**

**but women, all, such brave hearts... and a skirt
from Boudicca to Trisha, chat or not,
bustling, tuck Boleyn-cold head under shirt;
Scots' Mary turning in her grave to shop.**

**Queen or serf, bagpipes drift Julian's wind,
such whistling legs and bare cold – Mother! Think.**

ALPINE WINTER, OR NARNIA

Footsteps sinking in sleek snow,
crackling boots' dull bite;
satisfying virgin trace,
race to spoil pure white.

Shushing, pushing punctured tyres,
slapping in dull slush,
humming murmurs, motorcars
slowed from thrusting rush.

Simple and exquisite scene
as a Christmas card;
alpine firs brushed pure and firm,
dwarfing feet rock-hard.

Youthful, frozen days when snow
coasts vast banks so tall;
Christmas-melting perfect gift:
vault's deep-stored snowfall.

Wardrobe-fairy waves a wand,
city drift-boards towns;
witch-spelt Narnia's kingdom melts
to Aslan's safe downs.

Listen, Santa's bells might ring
with pre-teen dreaming;
soon fairy-princess moments
tarnish their meaning.

Fast-build a seaside palace,
crowns and robes to claim:
anointing and bewitching
summer's golden mane.

DIAMONDS ON THE SOUL OF SLEEP

**Play, dulcimer, upon my mind and bring
the strings of Paradise in fire and ice,
then Xanadu will rise from pleasure's ring
and words, as drunken honey-dew, suffice.**

**The strings of Paradise, in fire and ice,
come trembling as a pool beside a shore
and words, as drunken honey-dew, suffice
to mirror dark or light for evermore.**

**Come, trembling as a pool beside a shore:
a thousand circling gulls splash – break the spell,
to mirror dark or light for evermore.
One seagull on a rock-cold living hell.**

**A thousand circling gulls – splash – break the spell,
in phantom fragments lovely forms dissolve.
One seagull on a rock-cold living hell,
no Kubla Khan can firm to dull resolve.**

**In phantom fragments, lovely forms dissolve:
wings of a dove, a cottage by a lake.
No Kubla Khan can firm to dull resolve
where passing mirrors flow, form surfing wake.**

**Wings of a dove – a cottage by a lake.
Rise, mirage Grasmere's cut and polished prose,
where passing mirrors flow, form surfing wake:
wet diamonds dancing jewels on dreams composed.**

**Rise, mirage, Grasmere's cut and polished prose
- sleep's harp-soft moments when bright angels wing.
Wet diamonds dancing jewels on dreams composed...
lost choruses deep-sleeping poets sing.**

**Play, dulcimer, upon my mind and bring
sleep's harp-soft moments when bright angels wing.
Then Xanadu will rise from pleasure's ring:
lost choruses deep-sleeping poets sing.**

AULD LANG SYNE

Compress into one piquant night,
glasshouse a thousand years and celebrate.
Dawn-bug our E-dreams dull not bright,
a thread of ether pearls encapsulate.

Insured, embark with boarding cards,
oil-spill a freezer cargo, waterline.
Our champagne toast of balmy brine,
a smash hit, webwise, netting crystal shards.

Bypass a thousand flicking themes,
daub garish Auld Lang Synes across our skies.
Drown vivid sparkling voyage dreams,
a last glance, tortured, from this Bridge of Sighs.

COLD HANDS, WARM HEART

Your feet
bubble cider
chilled in the glass, with ice.
Cold hands stretch out, heart-warm. Are hands
like feet?

COLD SHOULDER, WARM RECEPTION

**Pause Santa, cheer this muddled year
Melt the ice man's frozen shoulder.
Rays skate, fin-sharp, festive on fears,
Pause Santa's cheer this muddled year.
Glacier-fresh skid cool polar paws
Over melting ice man's boulder.
Cheer-muddled Santa, pause this year,
Melt cold ice man's frozen shoulder.**

CHILD IN A MANGER

**You will take flesh again
this year, Lord -
the eternal role of the Child
in a manger.**

**All people will be drawn to you,
or at least to your party.
We will think of Mary, who said
“Yes -
let it be to me
just the way you said.”**

**But we forget the Child born within
our hearts.
The angels above rejoicing, singing,
“Glory to God.”**

**We do not recall the one
taking flesh,
as we join him for
his Supper.**

**Yet do we see the Word
made flesh daily
in the hearts of the children
of a king.
The child who says, as Mary said,
“Yes -
let it be to me
just the way you said.”**

COOL IT, MAN!

Does it
give you the right
when your pose carries bite
to give me cold shoulder treatment?
Warm up!
Cool it!
You freeze me out,
a rigid lighthouse tower
emblazoned with a white-hot beam.
You wreck!
Teeth drip
rapid shark tears,
a coal-tar buttoned heart,
as your scarf abandons ship, with
your hat.

FALL THROUGH TO NARNIA'S WINTER

A door as brown as Autumn, cracked and slipped,
soft echo footfalls leaving frozen time;
smudged velvets rustled needles spiked with white
and pine frost currents iced my spine.
My dazzled lenses blurred with ice cream scoops
and candy floss dabbed every Christmas tree.
My ears and white-hot fingers candle burned.
Entranced, I left behind the open door.

Sweet-sickened tongue slips Turkish slush delights
round gritty icebergs fresh with caverned guilt.
In damp-rag feet I squelch through needle pines
as Autumn velvets warm my aching thoughts.
I mop the dripping moisture from my brow
and flick the switch as melting credits roll.
A wardrobe door my boy leaves - cracked and slipped,
as June drifts witches from the winter screen.

FESTIVE MOULIN ROUGE

**It is the special season for a show,
a time to leave the boudoir and to shine,
when all the girls in town must surely know
silk stockings and bright petticoats are fine.**

**This is no Moulin Rouge, for dames are free
to strut their stuff and shake a leg in time.
Emerging from their dressing room, we see
polished brush heads, mirrors, emerald green;
combed teeth, not spiked, but dotted saucily.
A family of shapes, with shammy sheen,
moist scattered lipsticks, pouting, shocking pink;
white garters, yellow stocking tops; flesh seen.**

**This blooming panto should be draped in mink:
the Christmas Cactus, tongue plunged down dream's
sink.**

THE FIRST SNOWFLAKE OF WINTER

**It's black as an ocean outside,
Wait, Noddy's first snowflake must fall.
Cool arrows whirl spray at high tide
And swirl in a new winter's pall.**

**Wait! Noddy's first snowflake must fall,
As comet-bright dreams slip, age-old
And swirl in a new winter's pall.
The weather report's jolly cold.**

**As comet-bright dreams slip, age-old,
Noel wraps the Mall up with plastic.
The weather report's jolly cold,
Stick Santa's sleigh down with mastic.**

**Noel raps the Mall door with plastic,
Cool arrows whirl spray at high tide,
Sticks Santa's sleigh down with mastic
(It's bleak as an ocean outside).**

HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS

Upon the Christmas tree this year
Each bauble gleams less bright.
We deck with insignificance
Each hall and home for night.

O Little Town of Bethlehem
We watch harsh tanks roll by,
Hills bright with rash infernos shine
On bleak midwinter sky.

Good Christian PC choirs rejoice
At Holly's ivy wreathes,
And we wish you merry, present,
Night sorties' silence breathes.

We view News 24's brash shires,
Calypso's bed of straw -
Our nations' mules plan treaties, broad,
Peace-berries bleed or thaw.

LONELY AS A DELL, LATE WINTER

**I wandered, lovely as a crowd
of snowdrops, like a bluebell wood.
I should not fault heaven's graceful flowers,
but how, like death, I wish I could.**

**I wandered, ash as trees in storm
and blanched as mossy logs adrift.
Wraith-sifted earth and bone-damp air
soon brought the peace of spirit's lift.**

**I wandered, not at all, today;
no snowdrops barren in the loam.
I saw the manger infant's birth
and now, white dove, my soul's come home.**

LITTLE DONKEY

It's dull
or dingy
muddy, dry.
It's sweet or dark or plain.
Soiled, sodden, sultry, same.
It's bark, or tree, or earth.
Sometime's chocolate's white -

Like a Christening.
It's cake
or ice
or sticky, sweet.
It's snow, it's frost,
it's Santa's trim, or beard.
It's cold or draughty
dark or dim.
It's manger wood, or straw, or earth -
or worse.

It's baby-white, or milk, or teething-red.
It's sticky fingers
cocoa-brown.
Caked thickly, sweetly
earthen-dark.

That turd of a donkey's-dung -
Easter's earthiness is simple.
Chocolate.

WINTER'S ENDING

Winter's frost has melted away
Ending snow's fast slurries by day
Icy chills and pitch black at night
Melting sludge and puddles by light.

Snowdrops peeking amid the snow
Crocuses add to bright Spring's glow
Brightening days with daffodils
Hyacinths on the window sills.

Golden Summer heralded on
May blossom falls and Oak Trees don
Rich leaves and grasses deep'ning green
The garden's jewels, red roses seen.

But furnace colours are the best
With all the trees for Autumn dressed
The short'ning days and crunch of leaves
Bereft and stark each branch now grieves.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

**Make your resolutions
It is a brand new year
Look forward and anticipate
It cannot be so drear.**

**Make your resolutions
Look ahead with joy and hope
Look forward and anticipate
What can there be to cope.**

**Make your resolutions
What now is there to dread
Look forward and anticipate
Whatever lies ahead.**

THE TIME OF OUR LIVES

**Our Christmas gift was a loft ladder,
so we could stash the tree and baubles
to celebrate next year.**

**Our birthday treats were sauna and steam,
so we could glean new wrinkles for our skin,
to celebrate next year.**

**Our holidays were booked in winter's snow,
so we had months to slush in stress
and celebrate in hospital.**

**Our immortality we framed in words,
so fellow writers could dissect our worth
and celebrate their rising stars.**

**So now I plant and reap time's seeds
and harvest crumbs, as daily bread,
to celebrate a life within a day.**

VIRGINAL SILENCE

**Stepping softly into winter
Virgin sheet-white patience fails
Drop on drop of berry autumn
Billows blanched as bloated sails.**

**Thermal vests tuck pantalette-tight
Boot-pipes drain cool legging blurs
Seal-pup hats sit sweet in litters
Scarves and gloves grope fake-skin furs.**

**Bleak midwinter's sherry-hearty
Programme guides blaze bright as Yule
Ruddy Santa's somewhat daunted
Man, expectant, pulls a mule.**

**Simply is it Christmas evening?
Straw-ripe, rough in scratchy stalls
 Bleating, hoarse sighs, infant crying
Stars' bright music as night falls.**

**Stepping softly into winter
Patience falls to virgin sleep
Drop on drop to berry springtime
Blanching sails as women weep.**