

# New Year's Eve

At the year's turn a smiling ghost appears  
to watch me chucking out old calendars,  
and says (as I, grown cautious, glance behind  
and question briefly if I've lost my mind),  
'Don't be alarmed, it is my memory  
that tracks you in and out, it is not mine.  
Go far enough my gravestone may be seen  
adorned with wreaths of festering evergreen.  
Another man sits prayerfully in the chair;  
my thoughts, my words pour out the empty air.  
The Yuletide decorations clatter down,  
the bulb-covered candle and the tinsel crown,  
and I speak the thin white mist, the haar,  
creeps fast inland, and slides beneath your door.  
You glimpse vague figures moving through that mist  
with hats pulled down, and one of them, my ghost.  
Take out that score-sheet, write while there is time;  
note each man's record, in so cramped a room.  
Then mark the church door, watch the mourners leave,  
hang round; you'll still be here next New Year's Eve'.

Merryn Williams