

### Seeing in the New Year With Velma

Well, another one gone by and this well passed  
 with all its grief and turmoil. Let's send the bugger out  
 with a few well chosen rockets; welcome the new one in  
 by trailing emerald stars and ruby meteors.  
 You say for you this night was never special. Just slips by.  
 But for me a magic midnight when we can erase the past  
 and right the future.

Did those cold wet northern nights stoke up my fire  
 when Dad went off, collar against the wind, parcel in pocket.  
 Mam pushing him out at least five minutes early  
 [we can't risk mixing the old year with the new].  
 Now George listen for the bells of Leighton Moor  
 and don't come in before.  
 We'd hear the foghorns rising from the docks,  
 Cathedral clock's off-key chimes  
 and finally the bells across the hills.  
 Then this ordinary man, shy ordinary working man  
 took centre stage, Magus for the night:

*"I take out the Old and bring in the New.  
 Coal so you'll always be warm,  
 Bread so you'll never go hungry  
 And salt so you'll never be poor."*

So do I send you into the warm Raumati night  
 not able to pass this evening without my stars.  
 Train you in the spell and give you rights;  
 yet you not even dark, and not a man.  
 [But we have to bend our rituals at times.]  
 You trace your watch—no help from Leighton Moor;  
 then say the magic words once more.

*Julie Leibrich*