

Last of the Magi, Maybe

Each Christmas Eve, wart-faced Kilbride unwrapped
His plumber's carpet-bag; laid spanners, wrenches,
Bolts, nuts, screwdrivers, on the kitchen table,
Deliberate as a priest renouncing Holy Orders.
Pub-pilgrimage then began: sawdusting steps
Re-traced their last year's Odyssey of thirst
To publicans' proliferating *balls*—
Of-maltä black-massive pints of festive stout;
Loud-mouthed men-of-the-world's good-willery.

Returning home at midnight, drunk and broke
He stuck a Christmas Candle in a milk-bottle,
And placed it at the window-pane to light
All revellers, travellers, wise men to his *câche*
Of desperation; adoration; Calvary.