

TWO POEMS BY WES MAGEE

At Winter Solstice

The gifts are unwrapped,
Wine bottles emptied.
Darkness, the last guest,
Snuffs candles and it
Is time for night games;
The house a thrill of dares.

A built-in wardrobe
Is hide-hole for two;
Here they fashion a
Nest from winter coats
As friends seek them out;
Shrill voices on the stairs.

Oblivious, they
Open each other,
Share secret delights
And, later, leave as
Loud revellers at
Iced windows watch them go.

The midnight sky is
Blind with driven flakes.
Wind's mode — a low moan.
Bent, the lovers plod
The lawn, boots breaking
The virgin sheets of snow.

North York Moors: November

A first raw wind of winter
Is shaving the moors' gaunt face:
Rain stings the heather, rocks smart,
Sheep are like flecks of lather.

From the steamed car's safety
You view a dark land; slant sky
Greying with worry and fret.
Ridges, tops trawl rags of cloud.

The bleak landscape is littered
With outcrops; stone defining
The region's tongue, its guttural
And blunt consonantal clash.

How your car shivers in the
Wind's strop, the astringent air.
Ahead, a thin-clad road clings
To skinned and heaving contours.