

## Ruth Holzer

### New Year's Eve, W. 10

As the year went slipping down the drain  
Notting Hill became one vast  
impromptu masqueraders' ball.  
Homeward up the Grove, I elbowed past  
queens and belted earls, my neighbors all  
bedecked in gallantry, or heavy chains

and studded leather. They swirled in cloaks  
and flouncy gowns, Rastas, noblemen  
or ladies — who could tell or care —  
and I among them, fleeing when  
a random push turned to a shove and bare  
fists roughly handled slower folk.

Back by my hearth, I was unscathed at least,  
the single luckless lodger staying here  
at No. 80 for the holidays,  
reflecting on another wasted year.  
The last train rattled empty on its way.  
At twelve, a plaintive whistle from the street.

