



The Last Day Of The Year (New Year's Eve)

BY LUIGI DE BERNARDINI | THU DEC 31 2015

The year at its turn,
the whirring thread unrolls.
One hour more, the last today,
and what was living time is scrolls
of dust dropping into a grave.

I wait in stern

silence. O deep night!

Is there an open eye?

Time, your flowing passage shakes

these walls. I shiver, my
one need is to observe. Night wakes
in solitude. I light

my eyes to all
that I have done and thought.
All that was in my head and heart
now stands like sullen rot
at Heaven's door. Victory in part –
the rest a fall

into dark wind
whipping my house! Yes, this year
will shatter and ride on the wings
of storm; not breathe under the clear
light of stars like quiet things.

You, child of sin,

has there not been
a hollow, secret quiver each
day in your savage chest,
as the polar winds reach
across the stones, breaking, possessed
with slow and in-

sistent rage? Now my lamp
is about to die; the wick
greedily sucks the last drop of oil.
Is my life like smoke lick-
ing the oil? Will death's cave uncoil
before me black, damp?

My life breaks down
somewhere in the circle of
this year. Long have I known
decay. Yet my heart in love
glows under the huge stone
of passion. I frown,

sweating in deep
fear, my hands, forehead wet.
Why? Is there a moist star
burning through clouds? Is it
the star of love, with far
light, dim from fear, a steep

booming note. Do you hear?
Again! Song for the dead!
The bell shakes in its mouth.
O Lord, on my knees I spread
my arms, and from my drouth
beg mercy. Dead is the year!

[Annette Von Droste-Hulshoff]