

New Year's Day

Slaid Cleaves

We are sitting at a table in a bar in Baltimore
It's the last night of December
And the room is nearly full
And the front door pulls a draft in every time it opens wide
And you are telling me a story
From another time and life
And the waitress brings our order
And we're tucked in mighty close
And I feel like we belong among
The living and these ghosts
And I know that I am dreaming
As I memorize each part
In the telling lies a reverie
In the details lie the heart
Like the folds of summer dresses
Like the scent upon my wrist
Like the way you played guitar
Like a boxer punches with his fist
And taken or just lost to me
It's better now to say
I dwell in possibility
On New Year's Day
There's a jukebox or a bandstand
And we're on another round
And the night's just getting started
Or the night's just winding down
And your stories are not clouded yet by the ale

Or by the gin
They just make me feel as if I've known you
All my life again
Like the folds of summer dresses
Like the scent upon my wrist
Like the way you played guitar
Like a boxer punches with his fist
And taken or just lost to me
It's better now to say
I dwell in possibility
On New Year's Day

And this is what it looked like
When we started walking home
The night sky bleached to silver
Against the city's bones
In dreams or in our waking
It's just enough to say
Love and grace and endless flowers
Be ours on New Year's Day
And the folds of summer dresses
And the bangles on my wrist
And the way you played guitar
Like a boxer punches with his fist
And taken or just lost to us
It's better now to say
We dwell in possibility
On New Year's Day

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