

Neckties

one year Jimmy Hackett bought his father
neckties for birthday and anniversary,
Easter and Christmas, in shades of gray
like bank managers wear and on New Year's Eve
his father sat at the kitchen table staring
into a bottle with no Captain Morgan
and no ship with furled sails waiting
for winds to sail the seven seas
and Jimmy Hackett helped his father
up the stairs to bed where he lay as if dead
even through neighbours' gun salutes
and Guy Lombardo's wishes for a happy new year
and shouts from the daughter in Toronto
who never forgot to phone the best new year yet
and Jimmy Hackett lashed his father
to the bed with neckties and sprinkled him
with kerosene and lit a bonfire
and police and paramedics and psychologists
all asked why, and Jimmy Hackett replied only,
He wasn't going to wear the neckties anyway

CARL LEGGO