CAN IT BE TRUE?
Susan Hill

Christmas Eve
Christmas Eve
Twelve of the clock
Twelve of the clock.

The message was heard
On the wind, underground.
Through wires, in dreams

Heard by the fox slinking up to the hens
In the dark
And the wolf prowling near to the sheep,
By the dog as it snarled at
The cat as it sniffed for the mouse
In a hole in the wall of the house.

Heard by the owl with blood on its beak
And the shrew in the ditch.
Heard by the weasel, the ferret, the stoat,
The terrified rabbit
And the whale and the whaler above in his boat.

Christmas Eve
And twelve chimed the clock when the message was heard.
‘And can it be true?’
Said the fox to the hen to the wolf to the sheep to the dog to the cat to the mouse to the owl
to the shrew.
‘And can it be true?’
They said to the weasel and ferret and stoat
And the whale to the man in his boat.
‘And can it be true?’
‘Come and see for yourself.’
So they went.
The fox with the hen with the wolf with the sheep with the dog with the cat with the mouse with the owl with the weasel and ferret and stoat.
And the whale towed the boat.

Christmas Eve
Twelve of the clock
When they came to the stable and saw.
‘It is true! It is true!’
And knelt down.