

## New Year's Ledger 2014

This year's celeb dead tallied, catalogued, glossy  
as we near the finish line. Never mind

the ongoing wars (nom du jour conflicts)  
the confusing acrostic of factions, fractions,

acronyms, each with its signature violence.  
This week, an auld lang syne to the top

twenty most popular bygone, vanished  
from the cul-de-sac of an era. This year's

exception to type, war reporter James Foley:  
beheaded celebrity.

No matter how famous,

you have to drop dead by the deadline.  
If you sip your last breath between Christmas

and New Year's, you slide like a coin  
into a meter that eats what it's fed between

this year and next. If you're still on the grid  
of the living, the list's unavoidable, sung from

each hillside, poured through ear buds or  
cued up on coffee tables. Gone Ms. Becall's

Belarus glamour my mother copied.  
Gone Shirley Temple (FDR's little darling)—

orphaned rain who soaked the Reffe's  
with the belief we too could tap dance into

love and money. Reading entry after entry,  
impossible not to concede the inky

accounting. I've lived long enough to know  
my life as the treasure the tiniest hand

once retrieved from a cereal box, tracked  
in a ledger shopkeepers use, textured

to imitate leather. Engraved on its  
cover: "Beat Yesterday" in gold letters.