no black mud, no dung on their clean yellow fat,
but the white bones show through, a white splash,
the stretched skin hasn’t stopped running through bars,
this white film running, those faces, those names
in their white skins . . .

Peter Stevens

The Cocktail Party

tonight i observe you,
maintain my distance,
as you stand so languid
in these crowded rooms.
they meet you, greet you,
again and again,
detaining hand on sleeve:
your legend draws them close,
though legends often lie.
you with your wives
and mistresses, ladies
of talent and beauty;
you with your tragic past,
your very magic future,
you endure all this: noise,
crowd, perpetual intrusion;
you have your confidence,
your success, easy charm
impartially dispensed . . .
i have known that manner,
later will know again that smile
— a last obliging gesture —
your hand between my thighs.

Linda Pyke