

## The Costume Ball

The technique here is of swarming  
Of teeming hats and hubbub and hucksters  
(Searching for ladies to bend in half).  
And hoarse throated huhs and hums  
Create a charged swell for the dance.

In this garden extravaganza  
The spectator's eye never grows  
Accustomed to the discs of lashed light  
The paths and lawns refugent and hissing  
For nature is much too tentative  
To remain fixed for any line of vision.

And the svelte-lipped women splash  
To the floor and the violent tinkle  
Of glasses and jugs chimes an undercurrent  
To the shifting and strained waders.  
Soon scudders and skimmers join in  
And the dense limbs squeeze a polka  
From a tinny waltz.

And the lamps mazy and seething  
Spin in the swelter like mizzled faces  
And wicker chairs creak underfoot.

Who finds the pungent musk insufferable  
Will leave not ever having danced  
And unable to sip through a mask  
(Forgotten about but essential)  
Though the mouth is fouled.

And the boozy bulk of sighs and screams  
Is too much for the slim shoulders  
Of the evening to buttress.