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 refugient 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.

SALVATORE DIFALCO