

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