

George Szirtes

Demi-monde

after Brassai

It's where desire drives us, to this truce
In the sex wars where the dark fawns over
A plump thigh and fixed stare,
Where everyone is glad to be of use
Providing there is adequate cover
And smoke fills every cubic inch of air.

A woman is a man who is a woman:
Flesh parts itself in mirrors, turns around
To watch itself undress. Root and sap and urge
Move over cold sheets. There is no-one
To talk to in the psychic underground
From which your face is waiting to emerge.

You cake yourself in paint, become the scent
That you've been trailing through passages
Of dreamless night. Flick through the address book.
Find your own name and prepare to experiment.
Flesh leaves behind its cryptic messages.
See, there you are, if you but care to look.

