Anecdote of a Novelist

She declines her head
till half-mooned by the lamp.

It is her August party,
and everything she drew

from the housefuls of artists
who stood in her father's drawing room

is displayed tonight, though the wit
now is decidedly anti-Victorian:

less is better. Yet no one
will take away enough of her "arrangements,"
told in her sharp, brittle way.
The lamp bulb labors

under the green Tiffany,
as she labors, to please.

When she completes her
impromptu truths,

she appoints a girl of eighteen
in a corner as her last

lift: "Now you tell
us something clever, will you?"
The crowd proves at first
less glad, then laughter

sways them, as chestnuts
sway their heavy summer candles.

The girl chirps nothing, sinks
through the rest. Till

rising for home, she feels
a hit swell in the bruise:

"But I have not
prepared anything, my dear."

Think what would happen
if she said that.

Think of the chestnut
swaying its candles.

Francis Blessington