

## The Dope Fiend

by Lavie Tidhar

Mother's advice, and Father's fears,  
Alike are voted—just a bore.  
There's Negro music in our ears,  
The world's one huge dancing floor.  
We mean to tread the Primrose Path,  
In spite of Mr. Joynson-Hicks.  
We're People of the Aftermath  
We're girls of 1926.

In greedy haste, on pleasure bent,  
We have no time to think, or feel  
What need is there for sentiment  
Now we've invented Sex Appeal?  
We've silken legs and scarlet lips,  
We're young and hungry, wild and free,  
Our waists are round about the hips  
Our shirts are well above the knee

We've boyish busts and Eton crops,  
We quiver to the saxophone.  
Come, dance before the music stops,  
And who can bear to be alone?  
Come drink your gin, or sniff your 'snow',  
Since Youth is brief, and Love has wings,  
And time will tarnish, ere we know,  
The brightness of the Bright Young Things.

—"Women of 1926" by James Laver

. . . . .

I'd known Edgar Manning for a number of years,  
and I was there at the event that introduced him,  
rather notoriously, to the rest of London.

I was at Lizzie Fox's restaurant in Little Newport  
Street. A group of us had been to the races the  
weekend before, Mrs. Fox having had a weakness  
to the laying of money on horses akin to mine.  
Lizzie won seventy pounds. I'd lost a hundred,  
and another hundred on champagne. Manning,  
who was also there, won, but not as much as  
Lizzie.

Which is what started it all.

I'd been sitting in my usual place by the window,  
reading the paper, smoking. Watching the door.  
Watching Yankee Frank come in, his ugly face  
made even uglier by the cheap cigar in his mouth.  
He came straight up to Manning and demanded a  
pound.

