THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

HYSTERIA

As she laughed I was aware of becoming involved in her
laughter and being part of it, until her teeth were
only accidental stars with a talent for squad-drill. I
was drawn in by short gasps, inhaled at each momentary
recovery, lost finally in the dark caverns of her
throat, bruised by the ripple of unseen muscles. An
elderly waiter with trembling hands was hurriedly
spreading a pink and white checked cloth over the rusty
green iron table, saying: "If the lady and gentleman
wish to take their tea in the garden, if the lady and
gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden..." I
decided that if the shaking of her breasts could be
stopped, some of the fragments of the afternoon might
be collected, and I concentrated my attention with
careful subtlety to this end.