The Works of Stefan George

Marx, Olga, Morwitz, Ernst

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THE RECLUSE GOES FORTH

A lance of light does not deceive him now.
The winds that with a scourge of twisted hail
Had driven him away from every trail,
Are curved caressingly about his brow.

"O cell, from you I often seek release,
Your wall has never yielded me rewards
Like glints of red and blue on snowy swards.
How slumber numbs my senses in your peace."

And faintly dazed by flecks of changing gold,
Straight through the shining trees he makes his way,
And does not know the end will bring dismay.
He found the valley which he knew of old.

"They bend and sway with glaring crimson bows.
I dare the leap! But now — to whom to turn?
They made the long extinguished tinder burn,
I hate them, yet I blaze to clasp them close.

Why does my gaze explore the distant peak?
The arching stair, the figures saturate
With sun? They never falter in their gait.
To none of these my tongue shall ever speak.

To match my whim (already vengeance neared!)
I used to fashion stature, mouth, and eye.
Among the joyful rose my restless cry,
Is beauty always cheap? I asked and sneered.

But now my anguish hungers for a mien
Of sorrow, now a brow can strike me blind,
Lashes suffice to snare and sway my mind,
An arm entwined with rings of tourmaline."