The Works of Stefan George

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Published by The University of North Carolina Press

Marx, Olga and Ernst Morwitz.
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Red as brick the slender, shallow
Rivers run as straight as strings,
Sighs arise from them and hollow
Winds cavort in gusty rings.

Women's hair is loose and slashes
Through the pebbles, thickly sweeping,
Women's weeping cools the gashes,
Lavish weeping — honest weeping?

Agathon, close to my pillow bowed,
What your mouth concealed your lashes said.
What shall I do to brush away the cloud
— My brother and my friend — of tears unshed?

When veins abounding in radiance shrink
From dust and merciless wind, refrain
From rising against the gods who drink
Joy from the sight of heroic pain.

This your reward: Only you may guess
These proud limbs too dread ash and bones.
We never shall tremble in earthly distress,
We, who were born for the purple of thrones.

Somnolent peace, yet I cannot dispel
Rumble of riotous mobs, do I grow
Fearful of Ides the planets foretell?
Foul is the omen of serpents, but know:
Long before any has dared to rebel
Out of your reaches your ruler will go.

Music sifted
Down! A harp? Or horn that gave
Wings and lifted
Me, or thrust into a grave?
As if shaken,
And as though a god ordained,
Prayers waken
In me, Syrians, at your strains.

Brittle trebles — regenerate, quicken,
Brazen flourishes — laughingly squander,
Shrill arpeggios — sever and sicken,
Silver clashes — fire and wonder.

Shall I tender
Thanks, but oust you, Syrian seers,
Who engender
Lust to cling in earthly spheres?

MEMORIES

Days of grandeur when in fancy worlds awaited my command,
Luckless day when I departed from the altars of my land.

There with gods I sat in counsel on their most exalted rules,
Down to earth their children journeyed as my paramours and tools.

Be again the boy who wanders through the woods to be alone,
Stops, afraid of thoughts that face him of a sudden as his own,

With your tender, daring pallor, mark of restless, ripening year.
Oh, that in the flesh, not only as a shadow you were here!

I have lost the days of bloom
When a tear was sweet. Has death
Chilled the butterfly to whom
Kisses clung in every breath?

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