The Works of Stefan George

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The Lyre Player

How he advanced with a white fillet twisted
Around his locks, a sumptuous garment weighing
His slender shoulders, how he struck the lyre
Uncertainly at first with youthful shyness
Astonished even the austere and aged.
How faces kindled with the blush of yearning,
How many women flung him strings of jewels
And priceless clasps while he who still was new
To such ovation bowed, will be remembered
Wherever fruit grows on the holy tree.
The girls are full of endless eager talk,
And every boy in secret anguish worships
The hero of his sleepless starlit hours.

ERINNA

They say that when I sing the leaves are shaken,
That constellations quiver with enchantment,
And nimble waves delay to hear, that even
Men make their peace and solace one another.
Erinna neither knows nor feels it, mute
And lonely by the sea she stands and thinks:
Thus was Eurialus astride a stallion,
Like this when he was coming from the banquet.
How will he be when my new song is finished?
How is Eurialus when faced with passion?

AFTER THE FESTIVAL

You too, Menechtenus, shall take the flowers from
Your head. Now let us go before the flutes are lulled.
Though still they offer cups of joy to honour us,
I see compassion break through many a reeling gaze.
We two were not elected by the priests to those
Who are allowed to expiate within the shrine.