The Works of Stefan George

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TO DAMON

Oh, may the luminous thought of that winter, my Damon,

    Never grow empty or dim,

Thought of our house near the northerly hill, where we tasted

    New and secluded delights!

Statues of marble ennobled it, naked and godlike,

    Which we admired and praised.

Then again we conversed, or you read me of battles

    And of desire and dream,

Read in a low and yet sonorous voice, and the fire

    Purred to the powerless wind.

Lamia who served us so noiselessly, Lamia who loved us

    Eagerly offered the cup.

Always communing with heavenly matters, a something

    Sheathed us like heavenly gleam.

And since we shunned every hostile intrusion, the quiet

    Flooded our senses with light.

But in the thaw and the tempest of March — Oh, I wonder

    Why we descended again

Down to the throngs in the square, to the portico's glory,

    Closer to creatures of earth!

TO MENIPPA

Menippa, though your eyes — so well aware of how they glow —

Still lure me as in former days, you did not use the time

    Which never will return, when you could guide me like a child,

When every word you spoke beset me like a fragrant breath,

    And every flaw in you was but another charm. I hold

The gesture of that dancer dearer now than yours. The scar

Upon your chin no longer seems a miracle and I

Am not in serious danger at your side, although

While we were walking on the shore beneath a roof of branches,

You bade the slave who paced before us with a torch withdraw.