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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TO SIDONIA

I had persuaded myself that the poise and the pride of your bearing, 
Joined to the beauty you knew how to heighten, outshone all the younger 
Women, that not only indolent habit had prompted my friends to 
Offer you homage. But I was aware of your eyes that are steely 
Blue, of your lips that are contoured with shrewdness, and I was forwarned! 
Once in the twilight we stood face to face (was it chance, or 
Was it because you were wounded and sought him who never had sought you?) 
Stood in the alcove concealed from the others by hangings from Persia. 
Mocking and chiding I said there were persons who always are cautious, 
Never forgetting their profit and goal in the flux of existence. 
Then with amazement I noted your smile which so rarely is given. 
“Judge,” so you answered, “by something that happened a year ago, when I 
Wanted to leave all my conquests, and triumphs, and riches to share the 
Destinies of young Demotas who wooed me with mute adoration. 
But he was more circumspect and discouraged my plan with his coolness. 
Many a month did I need to revive from the smart of this blow!” 
While you were speaking, our fingers drew closer, were woven together. 
And from then on we no longer were strange to each other, Sidonia.

TO PHAON

Before the harvest, when the pointed sunrays
   Softly blurred behind the mountain,
We walked together by the narrow streams and
   Slender trees which dot your region,
And vying with each other’s words, recited
   Deathless cantos of our masters,
Inebriate with sound and lulled in rhythms,
   Stopped, withdrawn in dusk, and stood
Our arms entwined, who yesterday were strangers.
   Over us the feathery clouds retreated,
And ears of grain, the sheaves of a tomorrow,
   Moved in alternating ripples,
Still happy in the lavish seed they carried.