The Works of Stefan George

Marx, Olga, Morwitz, Ernst

Published by The University of North Carolina Press


For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/75740
Beside the lovely flower-bed I lean,
Where haws with black and crimson thorn are hedged
Around tall cups with dappled spurs, and fledged
With velvet wings the bracken arches. Green
As water, flaky clusters curl their tips,
And in the middle bells! The grain of snow!
The liquid fragrance clinging to their lips
Is sweet as fruit from paradisian bough.

When behind the flowered gate our own
Breath at longed-for last, was all that stirred,
Did we feel that fancied ecstasy?
I remember how when softly one
Touched the other, we began to sway
Like the fragile reeds — without a word.
Tears rose in your eyes and had their way.
Very long like this you stayed with me.

When flung on heavy mats in holy rest,
Our tender hands around our temples curve,
And awe abates the burning of our limbs,
Then do not fear the formless shadows pressed
Against the wall in high and nether swerve,
The guards who can divide us at a nod,
The sand that traps the town in glaring rims
And is athirst to suck our tepid blood.

Against a silver willow on the shore
Your leaned, and with your fan you framed your hair,
The pointed slats in flashes seemed to flare,
As if in play you twirled the gems you wore.
And in a boat the leafen arches hide,
I wait. In vain I coaxed you down to me,
I see the willows bending lower, see
The scattered blossoms drifting with the tide.
Hush your tale
Of the leaves
Wind unweaves,
Quince that lies
Ripe and bled,
And the tread
Of the vandals,
Fall of year,
Of the brightning
Dragonflies
In the lightning,
Of the candles
That in frail
Glimmers veer.

Blithe in arbours dim with dusk we moved,
Lit pavilions, garden-bed, and lane,
She with smiles and I with whispers roved,
Now she leaves and will not come again.
Broken are the slender blooms and drab,
Drab and broken is the water's glass,
And I stumble in the withered grass,
Palmy fronds with pointed fingers stab.
Brittle foliage sibilant and massed,
Loosed by unseen hands to flight and fall,
Drives against our Eden's ghostly wall.
The night is close and overcast.

The shallow appetite for fame is reined,
Since now there is a treasure I must cherish
Which, after losing many things, I gained.
It makes the greed for other glories perish.

The hands which summoned subjects to their duty,
Forget to use the force in their employ,
Because to you, surrendered to your beauty,
I raise them in a reel of pagan joy.