The Works of Stefan George

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You came, and closer each to each we clung,
I shall devise a gentle word for you,
And praise you on our sunny paths as though
You were the very one for whom I long.

Up to the gate and back again we wander
Between the beeches with their gold and gloom,
And glancing through the bars, we pause to ponder
The almond tree beyond, in second bloom.

We search for benches where there is no shade
And alien voices never fret. In dreams
Your arm in mine and mine in yours is laid,
And we are bathed in long and mellow beams,

And feel beholden when the sunflakes glisten
Around us from the leaves alive with sound,
And only lift our heads to look and listen
When fruit, too rich with ripeness, taps the ground.

Around the pond where runnels bring
Their silent waters, let us stroll,
You calmly try to plumb my soul,
A wind ensnares us, soft as spring.

The leaves that yellow on the mould,
Diffuse an odour new and frail,
Echoing me, you subtly told
What pleased me in this picture-tale.

But do you know of wordless sighs
And bliss on a sublimer stage?
Down from the bridge, with shaded eyes
You watch the swans in slow cortège.
Beside the long and even hedge we lean.
Led by a Sister, rows of children pace,
Their voices rise in praise of heaven's grace
In earthly accents, steadfast and serene.

We, who are bathed in evening's latest rays,
Are frightened by your words, for you recall
That we were happy only when a wall
Like this was still enough to block our gaze.

Above the spring, niched in the wall, you bent
To cup the cool and dabble in the spray,
And yet it seems your fingers draw away
From the two lion heads with some constraint.

You wear a ring whose jewelled lustre dies.
I try to slip it off, but you invade
My very spirit with your misty eyes
In answer to the plea I could not hide.

Now do not lag in reaching for the boon
Of parting pomp before the turn of tide,
The clouds are grey, they swiftly mass and glide,
Perhaps the fog will be upon us soon.

A faint and fluted note from tattered tree
Tells you that goodness, wise and ultimate,
Will dip the land — before it learns the fate
Of freezing storms — in damask lambency.

The wasps with scales of golden-green are gone
From blooms that close their chalices. We row
Our boat around an archipelago
Of matted leaves in shades of bronze and fawn.