The Works of Stefan George

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Marx, Olga and Ernst Morwitz.
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Today let us avoid the garden, for
As sometimes — unexplained and sudden — this
Elusive scent and lilting breath once more
Imbues us with a long forgotten bliss,

So that confronts us with reminding ghosts,
And grief that makes us tired and afraid.
Here from the window you can see how hosts
Of wind attacked the tree, how much is dead!

And from the gate whose iron lilies rust,
Birds light on lawns asleep in leafen stoles,
And others on the posts, in bitter frost,
Are sipping rain from empty flower-bowls.

I wrote it down: No more can I conceal
What, as a thought, no longer I can shun,
What I restrain, what you will never feel:
Our pilgrimage to joy is far from done!

And you, beside a tall and withered stalk,
Unfold my note. I stand apart and guess...
The sheet, which slipped from you, was white as chalk,
The loudest colour in the sallow grass.

Here in the spacious square of yellow stone
With fountains in the middle, though the day
Is gone, you still would like to talk and stay,
For brighter stars, you think, have never shone.

But keep from the basaltine bowl, it calls
For sepulture of faded bough and blade,
The wind is cooler where the moonlight falls
Than over there, where spruces throw their shade.
To spare you, I have let you guess askew
The reason why my sorrow is so deep.
I feel, when time has parted me from you,
You will not even haunt me in my sleep.

But when the snow has made the park a tomb,
Faint comfort, I believe, may still be told
By lovely residues: a note, a bloom,
In wintry silence, fathomless and cold.

JOURNEY THROUGH SNOW

The stones, which jutted in my road, have all
Been spirited away and softly shrined
In banks of snow. To distant skies it swells,
The flakes are weaving at a ghostly pall,

And when they touch my lashes with the wind,
They seem to flicker as when weeping wells.
I look to stars, for no one guides my quest,
They leave me lonely in the spectral night.

I wish that I could slowly sink to rest,
Unconscious of myself in drifts of white.
But if the tempest whirled me to the edge,
The gusts of death decoyed into their keep,

Once more for door and shelter I should make.
Perhaps that hidden there beyond the ledge
Of mountains, lies a hope of youth, asleep.
A first and tender breath — and it's awake!

I feel as if a glance had slit the dark.
So shyly you elected me to go
With you, your voice and gesture moved me so,
That I forgot our path was steep and stark.