The Works of Stefan George

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Where the sunrays swiftly slash
Palls of death on naked land,
Waters in the furrows stand,
In the sodden mires flash

And to rivers run united,
I have lighted pyres for you
And for memories of too
Brittle joys which now are blighted.

And I leave the blazing shrines
For my boat, and take an oar,
There a brother on the shore
Spreads his flag and gayly signs.

Thawing wind is swept in powered
Gusts across the fallow plain,
With the withered souls the lane
Shall again be overflowered.

TRIUMPH OF SUMMER

The air, astir as though with coming things,
The sullen clouds which screen a fiery core,
The surging sound of homeward-pointed wings
Apprize me of adventure still in store

With you, who firmed my faith these many years,
Who were my sun where silent leaves attest
The alternating flux of hopes and fears.
For can delight — I ask — be manifest

To us, if such a night of stars and spells,
In gardens fresh with green, does not betray it,
If hosts of blooms with divers-coloured bells,
If burning winds do not convey it?
Ignore the poppies red as blood, the blue
Corollas, and the bright and brittle grain,
Remote from all reflection wander through
The wood and take each twisted path again.

The lettered birches shall not slow your pace,
Forget the fingers which have carven these,
Now learn that other names can fill with grace,
And turn your steps to younger, fresher trees.

Discard the sorrows and the wounds of old,
The gash of creepers, mouldering and spined,
The fronds of withered seasons! Light and bold,
Set foot on them and leave them far behind!

You want to found a realm of sun with me
Where we shall strive for joy and joy alone,
Where it will hallow grass, and bush, and tree
Before our vigours vanish with its own.

Oh, that so sweet a life sufficed, that we
Could linger here as grateful guests, for now
You find such words and songs that easily
Regret is banished to the highest bough.

You sing of humming fields, the gentle song
One hears before a door at dusk, you show
Us how to suffer like the plain and strong
Whose smile conceals the tear which lurks below.

The birds have fled from bitter sloes, the leap
Of wind and rain disbands the butterflies,
They glitter forth again in clearing skies,
And who has ever seen a flower weep?