The Works of Stefan George

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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?
A golden mullein nodding in the grass,
The silver tufts along the meadow’s hem
Remember us and wonder if a less
Ungracious star has sent us back to them.

The branches touch our heads, may they eclipse
The fear which clings between us even now,
And let no idle query cool the lips
Which to a mated mouth have made their vow.

And let us guard against the dooms that brew
When flaming life of one the other laves,
And gaze together into summer blue
Which blithely beckons from the shining waves.

Have you his lovely image still in mind,
Who boldly snatched a rose from the ravine,
Forgot the passing day in such a find,
And thieved the nectar from a columbine?

Who when a flash of wings had driven him
Too far afield, turned back into the park,
Who mused and rested at the water’s rim
And listened to the deep and secret dark?

The swan forsook the waterfall to sail
Around the island, built of moss and stone,
And laid a slender neck into the frail
And childish hand which smoothed his down.

When we are haunted by a past dismay,
And fear is rampant in our golden land,
“Feel no alarm at what recurs,” you say
With confidence, “while we are hand in hand.”