

Stefan George, “The Light” (1928)

Abstract

Many of the poems included in *The New Empire* [*Das neue Reich*] were originally published between 1914 and 1919 in *Blätter für die Kunst*, the literary magazine founded by Stefan George in 1892. Circulated privately as an exclusive forum for poets and like-minded intellectuals who would later come to be known as the George Circle [*George-Kreis*], *Blätter für die Kunst* declared: “The name of this publication says in part what its intention is: to serve art – especially poetry and the written word, and to exclude everything pertaining to the state and society.” The last issue appeared in 1919.

Source

THE LIGHT

We are in grief, when less on us bestowing
Your grace, you turn to others gladdened more,
When eventides in your reflected glowing
Our spirit lingers, yearning to adore.
We should be fools to let our hatred grasp you,
Though often with your blaze you threaten blight,
We should be children if we tried to clasp you—
Because you shine for one and all: Sweet Light!

Source: Stefan George, *Poems*, translated by Carol North Valhope and Ernst Morwitz. New York: Pantheon Books, 1943, p. 241.

Source of original German text: Stefan George, *Das neue Reich. Gesamt-Ausgabe der Werke*, Volume 9. Berlin: Georg Bondi, Endgültige Fassung, 1928, pp. 135–36.

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