Rafael Heliodoro Valle

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Sorrento

This is Sorrento, this the distant sea of illusion and mythology; sea of emeralds and gold that revels in blue blue and crystal of Murano.

All the blue and gold of twilight, Flowering mother of pearl, and distant jade all the blue, all the blue of day, all the gold lies within reach of the hand.

Blue oars in golden boats . . . This is Sorrento and this the singing sea. Give me this full day to look on you.

These transmutations and these ultramarines . . . O to live here among the orange blossoms, To love, my love, and think of nothing else.

—Rafael Heliodoro Valle translated by D. M. Pettinella

Capitulation to the South

One must reach purgatory from the north; There the heat of hell hollows the heart And there, gods go forth.

I too, damned, slid to that soft southern part Quickly to burn out, more quick to repent. Who would understand that sin is substance: Salvation is not chosen, but is sent And evil is preferred to impotence. Thus heaven's treachery is not the sin, But that it creates gods from better men.

—Marshall Keith