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Valvins

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Here in the ruins where roses shake,
Time is adrift and the sunshine pure.
Statue and briar and blossoms thresh,
Sea wind and fragrance and cries obscure.
Leaf, you are veined of a marble flesh
Carving the light that the sun endure.

LINCOLN FITZELL

VALVINS

by Paul Valéry

If you would disentwine the forest that gives you airy
lightness, you must melt in the leaves, — if you are
within the fluidum forever literary
dragging some suns, hung ardent and bizarre,
along that white of thigh the slow Seine caresses,
adumbrate afternoon, the sung and celebrated,
while the great wood stands, steeping long low tresses,
mingling its veil in summer's midst belated.

But always near to you let the silence presage
a giving to the many-voiced, the bird-filled azure
out of some volume the sparse shade of a page

trembling like that veil and vagabonding sure
on the flaky flesh immense of the vast green waves that lie
midmost the Seine's long look, half open to the sky.

Translated by HERMAN SALINGER