George Santayana (1863-1952)

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And like a quarrel in a dream we spake with angry breath,
Till in that place of shadows our Love was done to death.

God hung the dawn with carmine and pillared it with gold
To welcome in our new Love, the angel of the old.
With lips still pale from requiems and litanies she came,
But home-sweet lights were in her eyes,—the same, and not the same.

All that was mortal of her, the passion, the caprice,
We had wrapt in cloud-white linen and laid away at peace;
But the living Spirit stood within the temple of the sun,
Her agony accomplished, her consecration won.

GEORGE SANTAYANA
1863–1952

To W.P.

I.
Calm was the sea to which your course you kept,
Oh, how much calmer than all southern seas!
Many your nameless mates, whom the keen breeze
Wafted from mothers that of old have wept.
All souls of children taken as they slept
Are your companions, partners of your ease,
And the green souls of all these autumn trees
Are with you through the silent spaces swept.
Your virgin body gave its gentle breath
Untainted to the gods. Why should we grieve,
But that we merit not your holy death?
We shall not loiter long, your friends and I;
Living you made it goodlier to live,
Dead you will make it easier to die.

II.
With you a part of me hath passed away;

For in the peopled forest of my mind
A tree made leafless by this wintry wind
Shall never don again its green array.
Chapel and fireside, country road and bay,
Have something of their friendliness resigned;
Another, if I would, I could not find,
And I am grown much older in a day.
But yet I treasure in my memory
Your gift of charity, and young heart's ease,
And the dear honour of your amity;
For these once mine, my life is rich with these.
And I scarce know which part may greater be,—
What I keep of you, or you rob from me.

III.
Your ship lies anchored in the peaceful bight
Until a kinder wind unfurl her sail;
Your docile spirit, winged by this gale,
Hath at the dawning fled into the light.
And I half know why heaven deemed it right
Your youth, and this my joy in youth, should fail;
God hath them still, for ever they avail,
Eternity hath borrowed that delight.
For long ago I taught my thoughts to run
Where all the great things live that lived of yore,"
There all my loves are gathered into one,
Where change is not, nor parting any more,
Nor revolution of the moon and sun.

IV.
In my deep heart these chimes would still have rung
To toll your passing, had you not been dead;
For time a sadder mask than death may spread
Over the face that ever should be young.
The bough that falls with all its trophies hung
Falls not too soon, but lays its flower-crowned head
Most royal in the dust, with no leaf shed
Unhallowed or unchiselled or unsung.
And though the after word will never hear
The happy name of one so gently true,
Nor chronicles write large this fatal year,
Yet we who loved you, though we be but few,
Keep you in whatsoe'er things are good, and rear
In our weak virtues monuments to you.

Apollo in Love or the Poet Lost in the Platonist

The stern palestra moulded well my youth,
That I might wring from the taut-corded lyre
Music and truth
To lighten souls, and move to holy rith.

Much did I wander through the Delphic glen
Where the rapt sibyl strained to catch my song
Through field and fen
Eurotas watered, nurse of perfect men.

And through all lovely lands, where beauty fed
The eyes with joy, and left the heart secure,
Which only bled
When my sweet boy, my Hyacinth, was dead.

Till, goddess, seeing thee, my soul was fired
With might of all the beauties ever seen,
For all conspired
In thy one form, divine and all-desired.

In thee I found all friends, all gifts, all power
Of music, and all harmonies—in thee,
With richer dower,
My Hyacinth came back, immortal flower.

But that, alas, which should my psalm inspire
Confounds me quite, and leaves me dumb, abashed;
So great desire
Chokes my faint voice, and snaps the pulsing lyre.

Dedication of the Later Sonnets to Urania

How shall I give thee what was never mine?
I have no voice, no hope beneath the sky;
All sound and silence are a melody
Played on my heartstrings by some touch of thine.
Thine is the glory of my brave design,
The ardour, the compulsion, and the cry;
Mine but the hoarseness and the unbidden sigh
Muffling the silver music of the line.
If aught of rapture from the feeble string
Escape and swell and tremble as I sing,
Think what the might of loveliness must be,
That from the dust could raise a living thing,
And from the cold heart of a doubter wring
This book of verses, writ in love of thee.

LOGAN PEARSSALL SMITH
1865–1946

Two Loves

Two loves are lords of life, each Nature's child;
One haunts the valleys and to men draws near
By stream and farm and orchard, where the clear
Soft voices echo through the evening mild.
His are the gifts of earth, the fruit up-piled,
All harvests of the golden, mellowing year;
Warm-housed, with wife, with children, he can hear
The gossip of the fire in winter wild.

The other love is barren as the sea,
The wandering sea, that knows nor rest nor home,
Washing against earth's shores with vain desire.
Yet heroes sail those highways, bold and free;
And to that bosom the stars of heaven come,
And glitter there, bright firmaments of fire.

The Magic Streets

Within an ancient wood, where far from heat,
Far, and blue shadows all the summer day
Dawn's twilight lingers, there I love to stray