Classic Poetry Series

George Santayana
- poems -

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George Santayana(16 December 1863 - 26 September 1952)

Born Jorge Agustín Nicolás Ruiz de Santayana y Borrás, George Santayana was a philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist. A lifelong Spanish citizen, Santayana was raised and educated in the United States and identified himself as an American. He wrote in English and is generally considered an American man of letters. At the age of forty-eight, Santayana left his position at Harvard and returned to Europe permanently, never to return to the United States. His last will was to be buried in the Spanish Pantheon of the Cimitero Monumentale del Verano in Rome.

Santayana is known for his (often-misquoted) comments: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it", and "[O]nly the dead have seen the end of war." The latter sentence has often been falsely attributed to Plato; The former appears in his book, Reason in Common Sense, the first volume of the five-volume Life of Reason. (In the 1905 Charles Scribner's Sons edition, it is found on page 284.) The philosophical system of Santayana is broadly considered as pragmatist due to his concerns shared with fellow Harvard University associates William James and Josiah Royce. Santayana did not accept this label for his writing and eschewed any association with a philosophical school; he declared that he stood in philosophy "exactly where [he stood] in daily life."

Biography

Early Life

Born Jorge Agustín Nicolás Ruiz de Santayana y Borrás on December 16, 1863 in Madrid, he spent his early childhood in Ávila. His mother Josefina Borrás was the daughter of a Spanish official in the Philippines, and Jorge was the only child of her second marriage. She was the widow of George Sturgis, a Boston merchant with whom she had five children, two of whom died in infancy. She lived in Boston for a few years following her husband's death in 1857, but in 1861 moved with her three surviving children to live in Madrid. There she encountered Agustín Ruiz de Santayana, an old friend from her years in the Philippines. They married in 1862. A colonial civil servant, Ruiz de Santayana was also a painter and minor intellectual.

The family lived in Madrid and Ávila until 1869, when Josefina Borrás de Santayana returned to Boston with her three Sturgis children, as she had

promised her first husband to raise the children in the US. She left the six-year-old Jorge with his father in Spain. Jorge and his father followed her in 1872, but his father, finding neither Boston nor his wife's attitude to his liking, soon returned alone to Ávila. He remained there the rest of his life. Jorge did not see him again until he had entered Harvard University and took his summer vacations in Spain. Sometime during this period, Jorge's first name was anglicized as George, the English equivalent.

Education

He attended Boston Latin School and Harvard University, where he studied under the philosophers William James and Josiah Royce. After graduating from Harvard, Phi Beta Kappa in 1886, Santayana studied for two years in Berlin. He returned to Harvard to write his dissertation on Hermann Lotze and teach philosophy, becoming part of the Golden Age of the Harvard philosophy department. Some of his Harvard students became famous in their own right, including "T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Gertrude Stein, Walter Lippmann, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Harry Austryn Wolfson. Wallace Stevens was not among his students, but became a friend. From 1896 to 1897, he studied at King's College, Cambridge.

Travels

In 1912, Santayana resigned his Harvard position to spend the rest of his life in Europe. He had saved money and been aided by a legacy from his mother. After some years in Ávila, Paris and Oxford, after 1920, he began to winter in Rome, eventually living there year-round until his death. During his 40 years in Europe, he wrote nineteen books and declined several prestigious academic positions. Many of his visitors and correspondents were Americans, including his assistant and eventual literary executor, Daniel Cory. In later life, Santayana was financially comfortable, in part because his 1935 novel, The Last Puritan, had become an unexpected best-seller. In turn, he financially assisted a number of writers, including Bertrand Russell, with whom he was in fundamental disagreement, philosophically and politically. Santayana never married.

Philosophical Work and Publications

Santayana's main philosophical work consists of The Sense of Beauty (1896), his first book-length monograph and perhaps the first major work on aesthetics written in the United States; The Life of Reason five volumes, 1905–6, the high point of his Harvard career; Scepticism and Animal Faith (1923); and The Realms

of Being (4 vols., 1927–40). Although Santayana was not a pragmatist in the mold of William James, Charles Sanders Peirce, Josiah Royce, or John Dewey, The Life of Reason arguably is the first extended treatment of pragmatism written.

Like many of the classical pragmatists, and because he was also well-versed in evolutionary theory, Santayana was committed to metaphysical naturalism. He believed that human cognition, cultural practices, and social institutions have evolved so as to harmonize with the conditions present in their environment. Their value may then be adjudged by the extent to which they facilitate human happiness. The alternate title to The Life of Reason, "the Phases of Human Progress", is indicative of this metaphysical stance.

Santayana was an early adherent of epiphenomenalism, but also admired the classical materialism of Democritus and Lucretius (of the three authors on whom he wrote in Three Philosophical Poets, Santayana speaks most favorably of Lucretius). He held Spinoza's writings in high regard, without subscribing to the latter's rationalism or pantheism.

Although an agnostic, he held a fairly benign view of religion, in contrast to Bertrand Russell who held that religion was harmful. Santayana's views on religion are outlined in his books Reason in Religion, The Idea of Christ in the Gospels, and Interpretations of Poetry and Religion. Santayana described himself as an "aesthetic Catholic". He spent the last decade of his life at the Convent of the Blue Nuns of the Little Company of Mary on the Celian Hill at 6 Via Santo Stefano Rotondo in Rome, where he was cared for by the Irish sisters.

Man of Letters

Santayana's one novel, The Last Puritan, is a bildungsroman, that is, a novel that centers on the personal growth of the protagonist. His Persons and Places is an autobiography. These works also contain many of his sharper opinions and bons mots. He wrote books and essays on a wide range of subjects, including philosophy of a less technical sort, literary criticism, the history of ideas, politics, human nature, morals, the subtle influence of religion on culture and social psychology, all with considerable wit and humor. While his writings on technical philosophy can be difficult, his other writings are far more accessible and have literary quality. All of his books contain quotable wrote poems and a few plays, and left an ample correspondence, much of it published only since 2000.

In his temperament, judgments and prejudices, Santayana was very much the Castilian Platonist, cold, aristocratic and elitist, a curious blend of Mediterranean

conservative (similar to Paul Valéry) and cultivated Anglo-Saxon, aloof and ironically detached. Russell Kirk discussed Santayana in his The Conservative Mind from Edmund Burke to T. S. Eliot. Like Alexis de Tocqueville, Santayana observed American culture and character from a foreigner's point of view. Like Ralph Waldo Emerson, he wrote philosophy in a literary way. Although he declined to become an American citizen and resided in fascist Italy for decades, Santayana is usually considered an American writer by Americans. But, he said that he was most comfortable, intellectually and aesthetically, at Oxford University.

His materialistic, skeptical philosophy was never in tune with the Spanish world of his time. In the post-Franco era, he is gradually being recognized and translated. Ezra Pound includes Santayana among his many cultural references in The Cantos, notably in "Canto LXXXI" and "Canto XCV". Chuck Jones used Santayana's description of fanaticism as "redoubling your effort after you've forgotten your aim" to describe his cartoons starring Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner.

Awards

Royal Society of Literature Benson Medal, 1928
Columbia University Butler Gold Medal, 1945
Honorary degree from the University of Wisconsin

Legacy

Santayana is remembered in large part for his aphorisms, many of which have been so frequently used as to have become clichéd. His philosophy has not fared quite as well. Although he is regarded by most as an excellent prose stylist, Professor John Lachs (who is sympathetic with much of Santayana's philosophy) writes in his book On Santayana that the latter's eloquence may ultimately be the cause of this neglect.

Santayana influenced those around him, including Bertrand Russell, who in his critical essay admits that Santayana single-handedly steered him away from the ethics of G. E. Moore. He also influenced many of his prominent students, perhaps most notably the eminent poet Wallace Stevens. Those who have studied the philosophies of naturalism or materialism in the 20th century come inevitably to Santayana, whose mark upon them has been great.

Santayana is quoted by the Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman as a central influence in the thesis of his famous 1959 book The Presentation of Self in

Everyday Life.

A Toast

See this bowl of purple wine,
Life-blood of the lusty vine!
All the warmth of summer suns
In the vintage liquid runs,
All the glow of winter nights
Plays about its jewel lights,
Thoughts of time when love was young
Lurk its ruby drops among,
And its deepest depths are dyed
With delight of friendship tried.
Worthy offering, I ween,
For a god or for a queen,
Is the draught I pour to thee,--
Comfort of all misery,
Single friend of the forlorn,
Haven of all beings born,
Hope when trouble wakes at night,
And when naught delights, delight.
Holy Death, I drink to thee;
Do not part my friends and me.
Take this gift, which for a night
Puts dull leaden care to flight,
Thou who takest grief away
For a night and for a day.

George Santayana

As In The Midst Of Battle There Is Room

As in the midst of battle there is room
   For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth;
   As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth
Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom;
As in the crevices of Caesar's tomb
   The sweet herbs flourish on a little earth:
   So in this great disaster of our birth
We can be happy, and forget our doom.

For morning, with a ray of tenderest joy
   Gilding the iron heaven, hides the truth,
And evening gently woos us to employ
   Our grief in idle catches. Such is youth;
Till from that summer's trance we wake, to find
Despair before us, vanity behind.

George Santayana

Before A Statue Of Achilles

I

Behoild Pelides with his yellow hair,
Proud child of Thetis, hero loved of Jove;
Above the frowning of his brows of wove
A crown of gold, well combed, with Spartan care.
Who might have seen him, sullen, great, and fair,
As with the wrongful world he proudly strove,
And by high deeds his wilder passion shrove,
Mastering love, resentment, and despair.
He knew his end, and Phoebus' arrow sure
He braved for fame immortal and a friend,
Despising life; and we, who know our end,
Know that in our decay he shall endure
And all our children's hearts to grief inure,
With whose first bitter battles his shall blend.

II

Who brought thee forth, immortal vision, who
In Phthia or in Tempe brought thee forth?
Out of the sunlight and the sapful earth
What god the simples of thy spirit drew?
A goddess rose from the green waves, and threw
Her arms about a king, to give thee birth;
A centaur, patron of thy boyish mirth,
Over the meadows in thy footsteps flew.
Now Thessaly forgets thee, and the deep
Thy keeled bark furrowed answers not thy prayer;
But far away new generations keep
Thy laurels fresh; where branching Isis hems
The lawns of Oxford round about, or where
Enchanted Eton sits by pleasant Thames.

III

I gaze on thee as Phidias of old
Or Polyclitus gazed, when first he saw
These hard and shining limbs, without a flaw,

And cast his wonder in heroic mould.
Unhappy me who only may behold,
Nor make immutable and fix in awe
A fair immortal form no worm shall gnaw,
A tempered mind whose faith was never told!
The godlike mien, the lion's lock and eye,
The well-knit sinew, utter a brave heart
Better than many words that part by part
Spell in strange symbols what serene and whole
In nature lives, nor can in marble die.
The perfect body itself the soul.

George Santayana

Cape Cod

The low sandy beach and the thin scrub pine,
The wide reach of bay and the long sky line,—
O, I am sick for home!

The salt, salt smell of the thick sea air,
And the smooth round stones that the ebbtides wear,—
When will the good ship come?

The wretched stumps all charred and burned,
And the deep soft rut where the cartwheel turned,—
Why is the world so old?

The lapping wave, and the broad gray sky
Where the cawing crows and the slow gulls fly,
Where are the dead untold?

The thin, slant willows by the flooded bog,
The huge stranded hulk and the floating log,
Sorrow with life began!

And among the dark pines, and along the flat shore,
O the wind, and the wind, for evermore!
What will become of man?

George Santayana

Decima

Silent daisies out of reach,
Maidens of the starry grass,
Gazing on me as I pass
With a look too wise for speech,
Teach me resignation,--teach
Patience to the barren clod,
As, above your happier sod,
Bending to the wind's caress,
You--unplucked, alas!--no less
Sweetly manifest the god.

George Santayana

Faith

O WORLD, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul'd invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is lead
Unto the thinking of the thoughts divine.

George Santayana

I Would I Might Forget That I Am I

I would I might forget that I am I,
And break the heavy chain that binds me fast,
Whose links about myself my deeds have cast.
What in the body's tomb doth buried lie
Is boundless; 'tis the spirit of the sky,
Lord of the future, guardian of the past,
And soon must forth, to know his own at last.
In his large life to live, I fain would die.
Happy the dumb beast, hungering for food,
But calling not his suffering his own;
Blessed the angel, gazing on all good,
But knowing not he sits upon a throne;
Wretched the mortal, pondering his mood,
And doomed to know his aching heart alone.

George Santayana

Mont Brevent

O dweller in the valley, lift thine eyes
To where, above the drift of cloud, the stone
Endures in silence, and to God alone
Upturns its furrowed visage, and is wise.
There yet is being, far from all that dies,
And beauty where no mortal maketh moan,
Where larger planets swim the liquid zone,
And wider spaces stretch to calmer skies.
Only a little way above the plain
Is snow eternal. Round the mountain's knees
Hovers the fury of the wind and rain.
Look up, and teach thy noble heart to cease
From endless labour. There is perfect peace
Only a little way above thy pain.

George Santayana

My Heart Rebels

My heart rebels against my generation,
That talks of freedom and is slave to riches,
And, toiling 'neath each day's ignoble burden,
    Boasts of the morrow.

No space for noonday rest or midnight watches,
No purest joy of breathing under heaven!
Wretched themselves, they heap, to make them happy,
    Many possessions.

But thou, O silent Mother, wise, immortal,
To whom our toil is laughter,—take, divine one,
This vanity away, and to thy lover
    Give what is needful:—

A staunch heart, nobly calm, averse to evil,
The windy sky for breath, the sea, the mountain,
A well-born, gentle friend, his spirit's brother,
    Ever beside him.

What would you gain, ye seekers, with your striving,
Or what vast Babel raise you on your shoulders?
You multiply distresses, and your children
    Surely will curse you.

O leave them rather friendlier gods, and fairer
Orchards and temples, and a freer bosom!
What better comfort have we, or what other
    Profit in living,

Than to feed, sobered by the truth of Nature,
Awhile upon her bounty and her beauty,
And hand her torch of gladness to the ages
    Following after?

She hath not made us, like her other children,
Merely for peopling of her spacious kingdoms,
Beasts of the wild, or insects of the summer,
    Breeding and dying,

But also that we might, half knowing, worship
The deathless beauty of her guiding vision,
And learn to love, in all things mortal, only
What is eternal.

George Santayana

O World

O world, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

George Santayana

On A Piece Of Tapestry

Hold high the woof, dear friends, that we may see
The cunning mixture of its colours rare.
Nothing in nature purposely is fair,—
Her beauties in their freedom disagree;
But here all vivid dyes that garish be,
To that tint mellowed which the sense will bear,
Glow, and not wound the eye that, resting there,
Lingers to feed its gentle ecstacy.
Crimson and purple and all hues of wine,
Saffron and russet, brown and sober green
Are rich the shadowy depths of blue between;
While silver threads with golden intertwine,
To catch the glimmer of a fickle sheen,—
All the long labour of some captive queen.

George Santayana

Premonition

The muffled syllables that Nature speaks
Fill us with deeper longing for her word;
She hides a meaning that the spirit seeks,
She makes a sweeter music than is heard.

A hidden light illumines all our seeing,
An unknown love enchants our solitude.
We feel and know that from the depths of being
Exhales an infinite, a perfect good.

Though the heart wear the garment of its sorrow
And be not happy like a naked star,
Yet from the thought of peace some peace we borrow,
Some rapture from the rapture felt afar.

Our heart strings are too coarse for Nature's fingers
Deftly to quicken as she pulses on,
And the harsh tremor that among them lingers
Will into sweeter silence die anon.

We catch the broken prelude and suggestion
Of things unuttered, needing to be sung;
We know the burden of them, and their question
Lies heavy on the heart, nor finds a tongue.

Till haply, lightning through the storm of ages,
Our sullen secret flash from sky to sky,
Glowing in some diviner poet's pages
And swelling into rapture from this sigh.

George Santayana

Slow And Reluctant Was The Long Descent

Slow and reluctant was the long descent,
With many farewell pious looks behind,
And dumb misgivings where the path might wind,
And questionings of nature, as I went.
The greener branches that above me bent,
The broadening valleys, quieted by mind,
To the fair reasons of the Spring inclined
And to the Summer's tender argument.
But sometimes, as revolving night descended,
And in my childish heart the new song ended,
I lay down, full of longing, on the steep;
And, haunting still the lonely way I wended,
Into my dreams the ancient sorrow blended,
And with these holy echoes charmed my sleep.

George Santayana

Slowly The Black Earth Gains

Slowly the black earth gains upon the yellow,
And the caked hill-side is ribbed soft with furrows.
Turn now again, with voice and staff, my ploughman,
Guiding thy oxen.

Lift the great ploughshare, clear the stones and brambles,
Plant it the deeper, with thy foot upon it,
Uprooting all the flowering weeds that bring not
Food to thy children.

Patience is good for man and beast, and labour
Hardens to sorrow and the frost of winter.
Turn then again, in the brave hope of harvest,
Singing to heaven.

George Santayana

Sonnet Iii

O world, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.

Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

George Santayana

Sonnet V

Dreamt I today the dream of yesternight,
Sleep ever feigning one evolving theme -
Of my two lives which should I call the dream?
Which action vanity? Which vision sight?
Some greater waking must pronounce aright,
If aught abides still of the things that seem,
And with both currents swell the flooded stream
Into an ocean infinite of light.

Even such a dream I dream, and know full well
My waking passes like a midnight spell,
But know not if my dreaming could break through
Into the deeps of heaven and of hell.
I know but this of all I would I knew:
Truth is a dream, unless my dream is true.

George Santayana

Sonnet Vii

I would I might forget that I am I,
And break the heavy chain that binds me fast,
Whose links about myself my deeds have cast.
What in the body’s tomb doth buried lie
Is boundless; ’tis the spirit of the sky,
Lord of the future, guardian of the past,
And soon must forth, to know his own at last.
In his large life to live, I fain would die.
Happy the dumb beast, hungering for food,
But calling not his suffering his own;
Blessèd the angel, gazing on all good,
But knowing not he sits upon a throne;
Wretched the mortal, pondering his mood,
And doomed to know his aching heart alone.

George Santayana

Sonnet Xliii

The candor of the gods is in thy gaze,
The strength of Diane in thy virgin hand,
Commanding as the goddess might command,
And lead her lovers into higher ways.
Aye, the gods walk among us in these days,
Had we the docile soul to understand;
And me they visit in this joyless land,
To cheer mine exile and receive my praise.

For once, methinks, before the angels fell,
Thou, too, did follow the celestial seven
Threading in file the meads of asphodel.
And when thou comes here, lady, where I dwell,
The place is flooded with the light of heaven
And a lost music I remember well.

George Santayana

Sonnet Xxv

As in the midst of battle there is room
For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth;
As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth
Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom;
As in the crevices of Caesar's tomb
The sweet herbs flourish on a little earth
So in this great disaster of our birth
We can be happy, and forget our doom.

For morning, with a ray of tenderest joy
Gilding the iron heaven, hides the truth,
And evening gently woos us to employ
Our grief in idle catches. Such is youth;
Till from that summer's trance we wake, to find
Despair before us, vanity behind.

George Santayana

The Poet's Testament

I give back to the earth what the earth gave,
All to the furrow, none to the grave,
The candle's out, the spirit's vigil spent;
Sight may not follow where the vision went.

I leave you but the sound of many a word
In mocking echoes haply overheard,
I sang to heaven. My exile made me free,
from world to world, from all worlds carried me.

Spared by the furies, for the Fates were kind,
I paced the pillared cloisters of the mind;
All times my present, everywhere my place,
Nor fear, nor hope, nor envy saw my face.

Blow what winds would, the ancient truth was mine,
And friendship mellowed in the flush of wine,
And heavenly laughter, shaking from its wings
Atoms of light and tears for mortal things.

To trembling harmonies of field and cloud,
Of flesh and spirit was my worship vowed.
Let form, let music, let all quickening air
Fulfil in beauty my imperfect prayer.

George Santayana

The Power Of Art

Not human art, but living gods alone
Can fashion beauties that by changing live,--
Her buds to spring, his fruits to autumn give,
To earth her fountains in her heart of stone;
But these in their begetting are o'erthrown,
Nor may the sentenced minutes find reprieve;
And summer in the blush of joy must grieve
To shed his flaunting crown of petals blown.
We to our works may not impart our breath,
Nor them with shifting light of life array;
We show but what one happy moment saith;
Yet may our hands immortalize the day
When life was sweet, and save from utter death
The sacred past that should not pass away.

George Santayana

There May Be Chaos Still Around The World

There may be chaos still around the world,
This little world that in my thinking lies;
For mine own bosom is the paradise
Where all my life's fair visions are unfurled.
Within my nature's shell I slumber curled,
Unmindful of the changing outer skies,
Where now, perchance, some new-born Eros flies,
Or some old Cronos from his throne is hurled.
I heed them not; or if the subtle night
Haunt me with deities I never saw,
I soon mine eyelid's drowsy curtain draw
To hide their myriad faces from my sight.
They threat in vain; the whirlwind cannot awe
A happy snow-flake dancing in the flaw.

George Santayana

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, your mellow 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 of me.

III

Your bark lies anchored in the peaceful bight
Until a kinder wind unfurl her sail;
Your docile spirit, wingèd 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,
And in eternal quiet float and soar;
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 world 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 is good, and rear
In our weak virtues monuments to you.

George Santayana

We Needs Must Be Divided In The Tomb

We needs must be divided in the tomb,
   For I would die among the hills of Spain,
   And o'er the treeless, melancholy plain
Await the coming of the final gloom.
But thou -- O pitiful! -- wilt find scant room
   Among thy kindred by the northern main,
   And fade into the drifting mist again,
The hemlocks' shadow, or the pines' perfume.

Let gallants lie beside their ladies' dust
   In one cold grave, with mortal love inurned;
Let the sea part our ashes, if it must,
   The souls fled thence which love immortal burned,
For they were wedded without bond of lust,
   And nothing of our heart to earth returned.

George Santayana