

Poems of George Santayana,
ed. Robert Hutchinsan (New
York: Dover, 1970)

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, 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.