

## Canonical

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Authors die and then the lies begin:  
no more sleepless sorrow for old sins,  
no more daily Masses, wrestled passions,  
we theorize them into voguer fashions,

prune them till they fit our dissertations,  
pollard them with reinterpretations,  
quote them as an adjunct to our boasts,  
bury them with textbooks and with toasts,

make them Myrmidons or Doctor Watsons—  
sidekicks—wineskins for our fresher toxins,  
as though they'd lived, with no misgivings,  
lives that cast our shadows in their living.

Last of all, we stop them up in stone,  
place their busts on bookshelves in our homes,  
gaze at them and ask them in deadpan  
to explain the foolishness of man.

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