

Poetical Dust

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Poetical Dust

Poets' Corner and the Making of Britain

Thomas A. Prendergast

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For Terry and Charles

I passed some time in Poet's Corner [*sic*], which occupies an end of one of the transepts or cross aisles of the abbey. The monuments are generally simple, for the lives of literary men afford no striking themes for the sculptor. Shakespeare and Addison have statues erected to their memories, but the greater part have busts, medallions, and sometimes mere inscriptions. Notwithstanding the simplicity of these memorials, I have always observed that the visitors to the abbey remained longest about them. A kinder and fonder feeling takes the place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great and the heroic. They linger about these as about the tombs of friends and companions, for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and the reader.

—Washington Irving, *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*