Beautiful the Doom

**Thucydides, Book II, §43: Pericles’ Funeral Oration for the Athenian War Dead**
For having everyone given his body to the commonwealth, they receive in place thereof an undecaying commendation and a most remarkable sepulchre not wherein they are buried so much as wherein their glory is laid up upon all occasions both of speech and action to be remembered forever. For to famous men the earth is a sepulchre; and their virtues shall be testified not only by the inscription in stone at home but by an unwritten record of the mind, which more than of any monument will remain with everyone forever.

*trans. Thomas Hobbes*

**Eulogy by Simonides (#531)**
Of those who died in Thermopylae
glorious the fortune, beautiful the doom,
an altar the tomb, in exchange for groans remembrance, pity as praise…

*Compare how Simonides, in a poem (handout #1) about how Danaë and her infant son Perseus had been put to sea in a chest (by her father avoiding the prophecy that his grandson would kill him), develops the antithesis between the mother’s watchful suffering and her infant’s dream-visited slumber, how Danaë says to the baby, “If this danger [deinon ‘fearful thing’] were danger to you…”*

**Heraclitus: fragments**

48. The bow (βίος) is called Life (βίος), but its work is death.
62. Immortals are mortal, mortals are immortal: each lives the death of the other, and dies their life.
60. The way up and down is one and the same.
67. God is day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, satiety-famine. But he changes like fire which when it mingles with the smoke of incense, is named according to each man’s pleasure.
49. One man to me is worth ten thousand, if he is the best.
32. That which alone is wise is one; it is willing and unwilling to be called by the name of Zeus.

**The end of Gorgias’ Funeral Oration¹ (fr. 6, compare fr. 5a)**
So you see, then:
of them, dead, the desire did not die with,
but deathless, not in deathless bodies
of those not living, it lives.

¹ A sophistical display-piece in prose. My verse translation is meant to emphasize Gorgias’ highly rhythmic verbal artistry, for which he was famous, and the parallels to Simonides and Heraclitus (whose prose style shows a tremendous artistic originality).