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Abstract: Athenian culture, including the likes of Plato and Aristophanes, set poetry and philosophy at odds. The quarrel between the two has remained at the core of western philosophical practices into the twenty-first century to the extent that many if not most professional philosophers today still do not accept Augustine, Emerson, or the late Heidegger as “philosophers.” The tide seems slowly to be shifting but little is said concerning the ancient quarrel. Here I aim to draw on the work of C. S. Peirce, William James, and George Santayana to show that the basis of the quarrel is mistaken. As philosophy moves past its deductivist failures of the last few centuries, it will begin to see that poetry and philosophy are continuous features of what Santayana calls the human spirit, and that they work in concert to yield knowledge of human experience. Peirce’s work elicits the continuity between the two; James and Santayana suggest that poetry returns to our discourses the “thickness” of experience that is generally eliminated by conceptual analysis; and Santayana reveals and enacts a picture of philosophy that makes art and poetic expression central to a philosophical life.

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