

LATIN SERIES • VOLUME 8

THE NATURE OF THINGS

LUCRETIUS

De Rerum Natura

The Nature of Things

Three Books on Matter, Void, and the Mortal Soul

with a word-for-word interlinear English translation
preserving the original word order



CANES NOBILES · MMXXVI

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Volume 8 of the Canes Nobiles Latin interlinear texts

Set from the Perseus Digital Library, with corrections

Translated and composed with AI, edited by Christopher Hench
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The source names no printed edition, and this text matches neither Munro's nor Brieger's; its readings and its line order are its own — five verses stand where the edition puts them rather than where their numbers would, as verse 15 before verse 14 in Book I. Words it brackets as spurious are not printed, and seven whole verses go with them; but nineteen bracketed words the meter requires are restored. *** marks a gap, and the eight verses lost after verse 1093 of Book I are marked once. The section divisions are the source's own paragraph marks, and every English section title is this press's.

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BOOK I

I.1 • THE INVOCATION OF VENUS

The poem opens with a prayer to Venus as the power through which everything living is conceived and comes into the light. Lucretius asks her to give his verses a lasting charm, and to lull the works of war by pouring sweet words over Mars as he lies back in her lap. He then states the doctrine that will govern the whole poem: the gods are untroubled, need nothing from us, and are neither won by service nor touched by anger.

Aeneadam genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,

of-Aeneas'-sons mother, of-men and-of-gods delight,

alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa

life-giving Venus, of-heaven beneath gliding constellations

quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis

who the-sea ship-bearing, who the-lands fruit-bearing

concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantum

you-fill, through you since the-race every of-living-things

concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis:

5

is-conceived and-beholds having-arisen the-lights of-the-sun:

te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli

you, goddess, you flee the-winds, you the-clouds of-heaven

adventumque tuum, tibi suavis daedala tellus

and-the-approach your, for-you sweet inventive earth

summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti

sends-up flowers, for-you laugh the-levels of-the-sea

placatumque nitet diffuso lumine caelum.

and-calmed shines with-outspread light the-sky.

nam simul ac species patefactast verna diei

10

for as-soon as the-aspect has-been-laid-open vernal of-the-day

et reserata viget genitabilis aura favoni,
and unbarred grows-strong the-life-giving breeze of-the-west-wind,
 aerae primum volucris te, diva, tuumque
the-airy first birds you, goddess, and-your
 significant initum percussae corda tua vi.
announce arrival struck in-hearts by-your force.

- 15 inde ferae pecudes persultant pabula laeta
then the-wild beasts bound-over pastures glad
 et rapidos tranant amnis: ita capta lepore
and rushing swim-across streams: so seized by-charm
 te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis.
you it-follows eagerly whither each to-lead you-press-on.

denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapacis
finally through seas and mountains and-rivers grasping
 frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
and-leaf-bearing homes of-birds and-plains greening
 omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
into-all striking coaxing through breasts love

- 20 efficis ut cupide generatim saecula propagent.
you-bring-it-about that eagerly kind-by-kind the-generations propagate.

quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas
who since of-things the-nature alone you-govern
 nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
nor without you anything the-divine into of-light shores
 exoritur neque fit laetum neque amabile quicquam,
rises nor becomes glad nor lovable anything,

- te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse,
you as-partner I-desire for-writing verses to-be,
 25 quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor
which I about of-things the-nature to-compose I-try

Memmiadae nostro, quem tu, dea, tempore in omni

for-Memmius'-son our, whom you, goddess, time in every

omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.

in-all adorned you-willed to-excel things.

quo magis aeternum da dictis, diva, leporem.

whereby the-more everlasting give to-my-words, goddess, charm.

effice ut interea fera moenera militiai

bring-it-about that meanwhile the-savage works of-warfare

per maria ac terras omnis sopita quiescant;

through seas and lands all lulled may-rest;

nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace iuvare

for you alone can with-tranquil peace to-help

mortalis, quoniam belli fera moenera Mavors

mortals, since of-war the-savage works Mavors

armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se

mighty-in-arms rules, into the-lap who often your himself

reiiicit aeterno devictus vulnere amoris,

throws-back by-the-eternal conquered wound of-love,

atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta

and so looking-up with-shapely neck laid-back

pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus

he-feeds with-love greedy gaping on you, goddess, his-gaze

eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.

and-from your hangs of-him-lying-back the-breath mouth.

hunc tu, diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto

him you, goddess, with-your reclining body holy

circum fusa super, suavis ex ore loquellas

around poured above, sweet from mouth words

funde petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem;

pour seeking peaceful for-the-Romans, illustrious-one, peace;

30

35

40

nam neque nos agere hoc patriai tempore iniquo

for neither we to-do this of-the-fatherland in-time troubled

possumus aequo animo nec Memmi clara propago

can with-calm mind nor of-Memmius the-illustrious offspring

talibus in rebus communi desse saluti.

such in circumstances to-the-common to-be-wanting safety.

omnis enim per se divum natura necessest

the-whole for by itself of-gods nature must-needs

45 immortalis aeo summa cum pace fruatur

in-immortal age highest with peace enjoy

semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;

withdrawn from our affairs and-severed far;

nam privata dolore omni, privata periculis,

for free-from pain all, free-from perils,

ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,

itself in-its-own strong resources, nothing needing of-us,

nec bene promeritis capitur nec tangitur ira.

neither by-good services is-it-won nor is-it-touched by-anger.

1.2 · WHAT THIS POEM WILL TEACH

Lucretius asks Memmius for an attentive bearing, free of other cares, and warns him not to throw the gift away before he has understood it. He announces his subject: the highest law of heaven and the gods, and the first-beginnings of things, out of which nature makes everything and into which she resolves it again. He also names them: matter, generative bodies, seeds, and first bodies.

Quod super est, vacuas auris animumque sagacem 50
As-for-what over is, empty ears and-a-mind keen
semotum a curis adhibe veram ad rationem,
withdrawn from cares bring true to reasoning,
ne mea dona tibi studio disposta fideli,
lest my gifts for-you with-zeal set-out faithful,
intellecta prius quam sint, contempta relinquas.
understood before than they-are, scorned you-leave.
nam tibi de summa caeli ratione deumque
for for-you about the-highest of-heaven account and-of-gods
disserere incipiam et rerum primordia pandam, 55
to-discourse I-shall-begin and of-things the-first-beginnings I-shall-disclose,
unde omnis natura creet res, auctet alatque,
whence all nature creates things, increases and-nourishes,
quove eadem rursus natura perempta resolvat,
or-whither the-same again nature destroyed dissolves,
quae nos materiem et genitalia corpora rebus
which we matter and generative bodies for-things
reddunda in ratione vocare et semina rerum
to-be-rendered in account to-call and seeds of-things
appellare suemus et haec eadem usurpare 60
to-name we-are-wont and these same to-employ

corpora prima, quod ex illis sunt omnia primis.

bodies first, because from those are all-things first.

1.3 · THE MAN WHO STOOD AGAINST RELIGION

While human life lay crushed on the earth beneath religion, a Greek first dared to lift mortal eyes against it. Neither the gods' repute nor thunder held him back; he passed beyond the flaming walls of the world, traversed the measureless in thought, and brought back word of what can arise and what cannot. So religion is trampled underfoot in turn, and the victory raises us to heaven.

Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret

Human before eyes foully when life lay

in terris oppressa gravi sub religione,

on the-earth crushed grievous beneath religion,

quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat

which its-head from of-heaven the-regions showed

65 horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,

with-horrible from-above look over-mortals looming,

primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra

first a-Greek man mortal to-raise against

est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra;

has eyes dared and-first to-stand against;

quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti

whom neither the-repute of-gods nor thunderbolts nor with-threatening

murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem

rumble checked heaven, but thereby the-more keen

70 inritat animi virtutem, effringere ut arta

it-goads of-mind the-valor, to-break-open that the-tight

naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.

of-nature first of-the-gates bolts he-longed.

ergo vivida vis animi pervicit et extra
therefore the-living force of-mind prevailed and beyond
 processit longe flammantia moenia mundi
it-marched far the-flaming walls of-the-world
 atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,
and the-whole measureless he-traversed with-mind [intellect] and-mind,
 unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
whence he-brings-back to-us victorious what can arise,
 quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
what cannot, a-bounded power finally to-each
 qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
by-what pray is law and deeply boundary-mark fixed.
 quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
wherefore religion under-foot thrown in-turn
 opteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.
is-trampled, us makes-level the-victory with-heaven.

75

I.4 · IPHIGENIA AT AULIS

Lucretius fears Memmius will take this teaching for an impious road into crime; on the contrary, it is religion that has bred criminal and impious deeds. He tells how the chosen leaders of the Greeks defiled the altar of the maiden Trivia with the blood of Iphigenia, who was lifted trembling to it not to be married but to fall as a victim by her father's hand, so that the fleet might have a lucky sailing. So much evil could religion urge.

Illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis
This in these matters I-fear, lest perchance you-think
 impia te rationis inire elementa viamque
impious you of-reasoning to-enter-on the-elements and-a-road

80

indugredi sceleris. quod contra saepius illa

to-tread of-crime. but contrariwise more-often that

religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.

religion has-brought-forth criminal and impious deeds.

Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram

at-Aulis in-what way of-Trivia the-maiden the-altar

85 Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede

of-Iphianassa they-defiled with-blood foully

ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum.

the-leaders of-the-Danaans chosen, the-first of-men.

cui simul infula virgineos circum data comptus

on-whom as-soon-as the-fillet maiden around given tresses

ex utraque pari malarum parte profusast,

from each equal of-the-cheeks side streamed-down,

et maestum simul ante aras adstare parentem

and sorrowing at-the-same-time before the-altars to-stand her-father

90 sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros

she-perceived and him beside the-blade hiding the-attendants

aspectuque suo lacrimas effundere civis,

and-at-the-sight of-her tears pouring the-citizens,

muta metu terram genibus summissa petebat.

mute with-fear the-ground on-knees sunk she-sought.

nec miserae prodesse in tali tempore quibat,

nor for-the-wretched-girl to-profit in such an-hour could-it,

quod patrio princeps donarat nomine regem;

that with-a-father's first she-had-endowed name the-king;

95 nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras

for lifted-up of-men by-the-hands and-trembling to the-altars

deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum

she-was-led-down, not that with-solemn rite of-the-holy-things

perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenaeo,
completed she-might with-loud to-be-attended by-Hymen,
 sed casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso
but chaste unchastely of-marrying at-the-time in itself
 hostia concideret mactatu maesta parentis,
a-victim she-might-fall by-the-slaughter sorrowing of-her-father,
 exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.
an-outcome that for-the-fleet lucky and-favorable might-be-given.
 tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.
so-much religion could to-urge of-evils.

100

I.5 • THE TERRORS OF THE SEERS

Memmius will one day be tempted to desert this teaching for the terror-speaking words of the seers. Because men do not know what the spirit is, they fear everlasting punishment after death. Ennius sang of the Acherusian regions, from which Homer's ghost rose to him in tears. So the courses of sun and moon must be understood, and above all what mind and spirit are made of, and why in sickness and sleep we seem to see the dead.

Tutemet a nobis iam quovis tempore vatum
You-yourself from us now at-any time of-seers
 terriloquis victus dictis desciscere quaeres.
by-terror-speaking overcome sayings to-fall-away you-will-seek.
 quippe etenim quam multa tibi iam fingere possunt
for indeed how many for-you now to-frame they-can
 somnia, quae vitae rationes vertere possint
dreams, which of-life the-plans to-overturn may-be-able
 fortunasque tuas omnis turbare timore!
and-fortunes your all to-trouble with-fear!

105

et merito; nam si certam finem esse viderent
and deservedly; for if a-fixed end to-be they-saw
 aerumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
of-troubles men, by-some reasoning they-would-be-able
 religionibus atque minis obsistere vatium.
religions and threats to-withstand of-seers.

110 nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,
now means none is of-resisting, no power,
 aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.
everlasting since penalties in death must-be-feared.

ignoratur enim quae sit natura animai,
it-is-not-known for what is the-nature of-the-spirit,
 nata sit an contra nascentibus insinuetur
born is-it or on-the-contrary into-the-newborn slips-in

et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta
and together perishes with-us by-death sundered

115 an tenebras Orci visat vastasque lacunas
or the-darkness of-Orcus visits and-the-desolate pools

an pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se,
or beasts other by-divine-power insinuates itself,

Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno
Ennius as our sang, who first from-lovely

detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,
brought-down from Helicon with-evergreen leaf a-crown,

per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret;
through the-races Italian of-men which bright should-be-renowned;

120 etsi praeterea tamen esse Acherusia templa
although besides yet there-are the-Acherusian precincts

Ennius aeternis exponit versibus edens,
Ennius in-everlasting sets-forth verses declaring,

quo neque permaneant animae neque corpora nostra,
whither neither remain spirits nor bodies our,

sed quaedam simulacra modis pallentia miris;
but certain images in-ways pale strange;

unde sibi exortam semper florentis Homeri
whence to-him risen ever blooming of-Homer

commemorat speciem lacrimas effundere salsas
he-recalls the-form tears to-pour salt

125

coepisse et rerum naturam expandere dictis.
to-have-begun and of-things the-nature to-unfold in-words.

qua propter bene cum superis de rebus habenda
for-which reason well both lofty about matters to-be-held

nobis est ratio, solis lunaeque meatus
by-us is an-account, of-the-sun and-of-the-moon the-courses

qua fiant ratione, et qua vi quaeque gerantur
by-what come-about law, and by-what force each are-carried-on

in terris, tunc cum primis ratione sagaci
on the-earth, then with the-first with-reasoning keen

130

unde anima atque animi constet natura videndum,
whence spirit and of-mind consists the-nature must-be-seen,

et quae res nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
and what thing to-us waking meeting minds

terrificet morbo adfectis somnoque sepultis,
terrifies by-disease afflicted and-in-sleep buried,

cernere uti videamur eos audireque coram,
to-see that we-seem them and-to-hear face-to-face,

morte obita quorum tellus amplectitur ossa.
death having-met whose the-earth enfolds bones.

135

Lucretius knows how hard it is to set the obscure discoveries of the Greeks in Latin verse, especially since much must be handled with new words, the language being poor and the subject new. But Memmius' worth and the hope of a sweet friendship persuade him to sit up through clear nights, looking for the words and the song that will spread a bright light before his friend's mind.

Nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta

Nor me in-mind escapes of-the-Greeks the-obscure discoveries

difficile inlustrare Latinis versibus esse,

hard to-illumine in-Latin verses to-be,

multa novis verbis praesertim cum sit agendum

many-things with-new words especially since it-is to-be-dealt-with

propter egestatem linguae et rerum novitatem;

because-of the-poverty of-the-tongue and of-the-matters the-newness;

140 sed tua me virtus tamen et sperata voluptas

but your me worth yet and the-hoped-for delight

suavis amicitiae quemvis efferre laborem

of-sweet friendship any to-endure toil

suadet et inducit noctes vigilare serenas

persuades and leads nights to-wake-through clear

quaerentem dictis quibus et quo carmine demum

seeking words by-what and by-what song at-last

clara tuae possim praepandere lumina menti,

clear to-your I-may-be-able to-spread-before lights mind,

145 res quibus occultas penitus convisere possis.

things by-which hidden deeply to-descry you-may-be-able.

Nature's own aspect and law, not the rays of the sun, must scatter the terror of the mind. The first principle is that nothing is ever begotten from nothing. Men are held by fear because they see things happen whose causes they cannot find, and set them down to the gods. If things came from nothing, any kind could be born from anything and nothing would need a seed; instead each thing has its own fixed matter, and each season brings its own growth.

hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest

this therefore terror of-mind and-the-darkness must-needs

non radii solis neque lucida tela diei

not the-rays of-the-sun nor the-bright shafts of-day

discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

scatter, but of-nature the-aspect and-the-law.

Principium cuius hinc nobis exordia sumet,

The-first-principle of-which hence for-us its-start shall-take,

nullam rem e nihilo gigni divinitus umquam.

no thing from nothing to-be-begotten by-divine-power ever.

quippe ita formido mortalis continet omnis,

for so fear mortals holds all,

quod multa in terris fieri caeloque tuentur,

because many-things on the-earth to-happen and-in-heaven they-behold,

quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre

of-which works the-causes by-no reasoning to-see

possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.

they-can and to-be-done by-divine will they-suppose.

quas ob res ubi viderimus nil posse creari

which for reasons when we-shall-have-seen nothing can to-be-created

de nihilo, tum quod sequimur iam rectius inde

from nothing, then what we-pursue now more-rightly thence

perspiciemus, et unde queat res quaeque creari

we-shall-discern, and whence can thing each to-be-created

155 et quo quaeque modo fiant opera sine divom.

and in-what each way come-about the-work without of-gods.

Nam si de nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus

For if from nothing they-came, from all things

160 omne genus nasci posset, nil semine egeret.

every kind to-be-born could, nothing seed would-need.

e mare primum homines, e terra posset oriri

from the-sea first men, from the-earth could arise

squamigerum genus et volucres erumpere caelo;

the-scale-bearing race and birds to-burst-forth from-heaven;

armenta atque aliae pecudes, genus omne ferarum,

berds and other cattle, the-race every of-wild-beasts,

incerto partu culta ac deserta tenerent.

by-uncertain birth tilled-lands and the-wastes would-hold.

165 nec fructus idem arboribus constare solerent,

nor fruits the-same on-trees to-stay would-be-wont,

sed mutarentur, ferre omnes omnia possent.

but would-change, to-bear all all-things could.

quippe ubi non essent genitalia corpora cuique,

for where not there-were generative bodies for-each,

qui posset mater rebus consistere certa?

how could a-mother for-things to-stand fixed?

at nunc seminibus quia certis quaeque creantur,

but now from-seeds because fixed each-thing are-created,

170 inde enascitur atque oras in luminis exit,

thence it-springs-up and the-shores into of-light it-comes,

materies ubi inest cuiusque et corpora prima;

matter where is-within of-each and bodies first;

atque hac re nequeunt ex omnibus omnia gigni,
and by-this fact cannot from all-things all-things to-be-begotten,

quod certis in rebus inest secreta facultas.

because fixed in things is-within a-separate faculty.

Praeterea cur vere rosam, frumenta calore,

Besides why in-spring the-rose, the-grain in-heat,

vites autumnno fundi suadente videmus,

vines in-autumn to-be-poured-forth urging we-see,

si non, certa suo quia tempore semina rerum

if not, fixed their-own because at-time the-seeds of-things

cum confluerunt, patefit quod cumque creatur,

when have-flowed-together, is-disclosed what soever is-created,

dum tempestates adsunt et vivida tellus

while the-seasons are-at-hand and the-quickening earth

tuto res teneras effert in luminis oras?

safely things tender brings-forth into of-light the-shores?

quod si de nihilo fierent, subito exorerentur

but if from nothing they-came, suddenly they-would-spring-up

incerto spatio atque alienis partibus anni,

at-uncertain interval and in-alien parts of-the-year,

quippe ubi nulla forent primordia, quae genitali

for where no there-were first-beginnings, which from-generative

concilio possent arceri tempore iniquo.

combination could to-be-kept-off at-a-season unfavorable.

Nec porro augendis rebus spatio foret usus

Nor further for-growing things of-time there-would-be need

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180

If things could grow out of nothing there would be no need of time for the seed to gather: young men would spring suddenly from little infants, and thickets leap from the ground. Instead everything grows little by little from its own matter and keeps its kind. Without fixed rains and food nothing could propagate; and no man was ever made able to wade the sea or tear down mountains, because matter fixes what can arise.

- 185 *seminis ad coitum, si e nilo crescere possent;*
of-seed for the-gathering, if from nothing to-grow they-could;
nam fierent iuvenes subito ex infantibus parvis
for would-become young-men suddenly from infants little
e terraque exorta repente arbusta salirent.
from and-the-earth sprung of-a-sudden thickets would-leap.
quorum nil fieri manifestum est, omnia quando
of-which nothing to-happen manifest it-is, all-things since
paulatim crescunt, ut par est semine certo,
little-by-little grow, as fitting it-is from-seed fixed,
- 190 *crescentesque genus servant; ut noscere possis*
and-growing their-kind they-keep; so-that to-know you-may-be-able
quicque sua de materia grandescere alique.
each-thing its-own from matter grows-big and-is-nourished.
Huc accedit uti sine certis imbribus anni
Hereto is-added that without fixed rains of-the-year
laetificos nequeat fetus submittere tellus
the-gladdening cannot crops send-up the-earth
nec porro secreta cibo natura animantium
nor further cut-off from-food the-nature of-living-things
- 195 *propagare genus possit vitamque tueri;*
to-propagate its-kind can and-life to-preserve;

ut potius multis communia corpora rebus

so-that rather to-many common bodies things

multa putes esse, ut verbis elementa videmus,

many you-may-think there-are, as in-words elements we-see,

quam sine principiis ullam rem existere posse.

than without first-elements any thing to-exist can.

Denique cur homines tantos natura parare

Finally why men so-great nature to-make

non potuit, pedibus qui pontum per vada possent

not could, on-foot who the-sea over the-shallows could

transire et magnos manibus divellere montis

to-cross and great with-hands to-tear-apart mountains

multaque vivendo vitalia vincere saecula,

and-many by-living of-life to-outlast generations,

si non, materies quia rebus reddita certast

if not, matter because for-things assigned is-fixed

gignundis, e qua constat quid possit oriri?

to-be-begotten, from which it-is-fixed what can arise?

Lucretius closes the first proof — that nothing comes from nothing — with the argument from farming: tilled ground yields better than wild ground, so the first-beginnings of things must already lie in the earth. He then turns the proof around. Nothing is ever destroyed into nothing, since infinite past time would long ago have consumed everything, and the world is still here.

- 205 nil igitur fieri de nilo posse fatendumst,
nothing therefore to-be-made from nothing can must-be-confessed,
 semine quando opus est rebus, quo quaeque creatae
seed since need there-is for-things, whereby each created
 aeris in teneras possint proferrier auras.
of-air into the-soft they-may-be-able to-be-brought-forth breezes.
 Postremo quoniam incultis praestare videmus
Lastly since than-untilled to-surpass we-see
 culta loca et manibus melioris reddere fetus,
tilled places and by-hands better to-yield crops,
 210 esse videlicet in terris primordia rerum
there-are evidently in the-earth the-first-beginnings of-things
 quae nos fecundas vertentes vomere glebas
which we the-fertile turning with-the-plowshare clods
 terraique solum subigentes cimus ad ortus;
and-of-the-earth the-soil working we-rouse to birth;
 quod si nulla forent, nostro sine quaeque labore
but if none there-were, our without each-thing toil
 sponte sua multo fieri meliora videres.
of-accord their-own much to-become better you-would-see.
 215 Huc accedit uti quicque in sua corpora rursum
Hereto is-added that each-thing into its-own bodies again

dissoluat natura neque ad nihilum interemat res.

dissolves nature nor to nothing destroys things.

nam siquid mortale e cunctis partibus esset,

for if-anything mortal in all parts were,

ex oculis res quaeque repente erepta periret;

from the-eyes a-thing each suddenly snatched would-perish;

nulla vi foret usus enim, quae partibus eius

no force there-would-be need indeed, which of-parts its

discidium parere et nexus exsolvere posset.

a-sundering to-produce and the-bonds to-loosen could.

220

quod nunc, aeterno quia constant semine quaeque,

but now, of-everlasting because they-consist seed each,

donec vis obiit, quae res diverberet ictu

until a-force has-come-on, which things may-shatter with-a-blow

aut intus penetret per inania dissoluatque,

or within may-pierce through the-voids and-dissolve,

nullius exitium patitur natura videri.

of-nothing the-destruction suffers nature to-be-seen.

Praeterea quae cumque vetustate amovet aetas,

Besides what soever by-age removes time,

225

si penitus premit consumens materiem omnem,

if utterly it-destroys consuming the-matter all,

unde animale genus generatim in lumina vitae

whence the-animal race kind-by-kind into the-lights of-life

redducit Venus, aut reductum daedala tellus

brings-back Venus, or brought-back the-inventive earth

unde alit atque auget generatim pabula praebens?

whence feeds and increases kind-by-kind pasture furnishing?

unde mare ingenui fontes externaque longe

whence the-sea native springs and-foreign far

230

flumina suppeditant? unde aether sidera pascit?

rivers supply? whence the-aether the-stars feeds?

omnia enim debet, mortali corpore quae sunt,

all-things for must, of-mortal body which are,

infinita aetas consumpse ante acta diesque.

infinite age to-have-consumed before passed and-the-days.

quod si in eo spatio atque ante acta aetate fuere

but if in that space and before passed time they-have-been

235 e quibus haec rerum consistit summa refecta,

from which this of-things consists sum remade,

immortali sunt natura praedita certe.

with-immortal they-are nature endowed surely.

haud igitur possunt ad nilum quaeque reverti.

not therefore can to nothing each-thing return.

I.10 • THE BODIES NO EYE CAN SEE

Nothing returns to nothing: were matter not everlasting, the same force would destroy all things alike, and a touch would be death enough. Rain falls into the lap of earth and rises again as crops, cattle, and children. Lucretius then turns to bodies the eye cannot see. Wind wrecks ships and levels forests as a river in flood does, yet the river is seen and the wind is not; smells, heat, and sound strike the senses unseen; clothes grow damp on the shore and dry in the sun, rings wear thin, plowsbares dwindle, and bronze statues wear away under the touch of greeting hands.

Denique res omnis eadem vis causaque volgo

Finally things all the-same force and-cause commonly

conficeret, nisi materies aeterna teneret,

would-destroy, unless matter everlasting held-them,

240 inter se nexus minus aut magis indupedita;

among themselves in-bonds less or more entangled;

tactus enim leti satis esset causa profecto,
a-touch for of-death enough would-be cause assuredly,
 quippe ubi nulla forent aeterno corpore, quorum
for where none there-were of-everlasting body, whose
 contextum vis deberet dissolvere quaeque.

fabric force must to-dissolve each.

at nunc, inter se quia nexus principiorum
but now, among themselves because the-bonds of-first-elements

dissimiles constant aeternaque materies est,

unlike stand and-everlasting matter is,

incolumi remanent res corpore, dum satis acris
unharm'd remain things in-body, until enough sharp

vis obeat pro textura cuiusque reperta.

a-force comes-on in-proportion-to the-texture of-each found.

haud igitur redit ad nihilum res ulla, sed omnes
not therefore returns to nothing thing any, but all

discidio redeunt in corpora materiai.

by-sundering return into the-bodies of-matter.

postremo pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater aether

lastly perish the-rains, when them father aether

in gremium matris terrai praecipitavit;

into the-lap of-mother earth has-hurled;

at nitidae surgunt fruges ramique virescunt

but shining rise crops and-boughs grow-green

arboribus, crescunt ipsae fetuque gravantur.

on-trees, they-grow themselves and-with-fruit are-weighed-down.

hinc alitur porro nostrum genus atque ferarum,

hence is-fed further our race and of-wild-beasts,

hinc laetas urbes pueris florere videmus

hence glad cities with-children to-bloom we-see

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frondiferasque novis avibus canere undique silvas,
and-leafy with-new birds to-sing everywhere the-woods,

hinc fessae pecudes pinguis per pabula laeta
hence weary cattle fat over pastures glad

corpora deponunt et candens lacteus umor
bodies lay-down and gleaming milky liquid

uberibus manat distentis, hinc nova proles
from-udders flows distended, hence the-new offspring

260 artubus infirmis teneras lasciva per herbas
on-limbs unsteady the-tender frisking through grasses

ludit lacte mero mentes percussa novellas.
plays with-milk pure in-minds struck young,

haud igitur penitus pereunt quaecumque videntur,
not therefore utterly perish whatsoever are-seen,

quando alid ex alio reficit natura nec ullam
since one-thing from another remakes nature nor any

rem gigni patitur nisi morte adiuta aliena.
thing to-be-begotten she-suffers unless by-death helped another's.

265 Nunc age, res quoniam docui non posse creari
Now come, things since I-have-taught not can to-be-created

de nihilo neque item genitas ad nil revocari,
from nothing nor likewise once-begotten to nothing to-be-called-back,

ne qua forte tamen coeptes diffidere dictis,
lest in-any-way perchance still you-begin to-distrust my-words,

quod nequeunt oculis rerum primordia cerni,
because cannot by-the-eyes of-things the-first-beginnings to-be-seen,

accipe praeterea quae corpora tute necessest
bear besides what bodies you-yourself must-needs

270 confiteare esse in rebus nec posse videri.
confess to-be in things and-not can to-be-seen.

Principio venti vis verberat incita corpus

First of-the-wind the-force lashes roused the-body

ingentisque ruit navis et nubila differt,

and-buge overwhelms ships and the-clouds scatters,

inter dum rapido percurrrens turbine campos

between times with-swift sweeping-over whirlwind the-plains

arboribus magnis sternit montisque supremos

with-trees great it-strews and-mountains highest

silvifragis vexat flabris: ita perfurit acri

with-forest-breaking it-harries blasts: so rages with-fierce

cum fremitu saevitque minaci murmure pontus.

with roaring and-storms with-threatening murmur the-sea.

sunt igitur venti ni mirum corpora caeca,

there-are therefore of-wind no wonder bodies unseen,

quae mare, quae terras, quae denique nubila caeli

which the-sea, which the-lands, which finally the-clouds of-heaven

verrunt ac subito vexantia turbine raptant,

sweep and with-sudden harrying whirlwind snatch-away,

nec ratione fluunt alia stragemque propagant

nor in-a-way they-flow other and-havoc they-spread

et cum mollis aquae fertur natura repente

than when of-soft water is-borne the-nature suddenly

flumine abundanti, quam largis imbribus auget

in-a-stream overflowing, which with-copious rains swells

montibus ex altis magnus decursus aquai

mountains from high a-great downrush of-water

fragmina coniciens silvarum arbustaque tota,

fragments flinging of-woods and-thickets whole,

nec validi possunt pontes venientis aquai

nor strong can bridges of-the-coming water

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vim subitam tolerare: ita magno turbidus imbri

the-force sudden to-bear: so with-great turbid rain

molibus incurrit validis cum viribus amnis,

against-the-piers it-charges strong with force the-river,

dat sonitu magno stragem volvitque sub undis

it-deals with-noise great havoc and-rolls beneath the-waves

grandia saxa, ruit qua quidquid fluctibus obstat.

huge rocks, it-hurls-down where whatever to-the-waves stands-in-the-way.

290 sic igitur debent venti quoque flamina ferri,

so therefore must of-the-wind also blasts to-be-borne,

quae vel uti validum cum flumen procubuerit

which even as a-strong when stream they-have-fallen

quam libet in partem, trudent res ante ruuntque

what you-please into direction, they-push things before and-overwhelm

impetibus crebris, inter dum vertice torto

with-onsets repeated, between times with-a-whirl twisting

corripiunt rapidique rotanti turbine portant.

they-seize and-swift with-wheeling whirlwind they-carry.

295 quare etiam atque etiam sunt venti corpora caeca,

wherefore again and again there-are of-wind bodies unseen,

quandoquidem factis et moribus aemula magnis

since-indeed in-deeds and ways rivals to-great

amnis inveniuntur, aperto corpore qui sunt.

rivers they-are-found, of-open body which are.

Tum porro varios rerum sentimus odores

Then further various of-things we-perceive smells

nec tamen ad naris venientis cernimus umquam

and-not yet to the-nostrils coming we-see ever

300 nec calidos aestus tuimur nec frigora quimus

nor hot beats we-behold nor cold we-can

usurpare oculis nec voces cernere suemus;

to-grasp with-eyes nor voices to-see we-are-wont;

quae tamen omnia corporea constare necessest

which yet all of-bodily to-consist must-needs

natura, quoniam sensus inpellere possunt;

nature, since the-senses to-strike they-can;

tangere enim et tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

to-touch for and to-be-touched, except body, no can thing.

Denique fluctifrago suspensae in litore vestis

Finally the-wave-breaking hung on shore clothes

uvescunt, eadem dispansae in sole serescunt.

grow-damp, the-same spread-out in the-sun grow-dry.

at neque quo pacto persederit umor aquai

but neither in-what way has-settled the-moisture of-water

visumst nec rursum quo pacto fugerit aestu.

has-been-seen nor again in-what way has-fled with-beat.

in parvas igitur partis dispergitur umor,

into small therefore parts is-scattered the-moisture,

quas oculi nulla possunt ratione videre.

which the-eyes by-no can means see.

quin etiam multis solis redeuntibus annis

nay even many of-the-sun returning years

anulus in digito subter tenuatur habendo,

a-ring on the-finger underneath is-thinned by-wearing,

stilicidi casus lapidem cavat, uncus aratri

of-a-dripping the-fall a-stone hollows, the-curved of-the-plow

ferreus occulte decrescit vomer in arvis,

iron unseen dwindles share in the-fields,

strataque iam volgi pedibus detrita viarum

and-the-paved now of-the-crowd by-the-feet worn-down of-roads

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saxea conspicimus; tum portas propter aena

stone we-behold; then the-gates beside bronze

signa manus dextras ostendunt adtenuari

statues hands right show to-be-worn-thin

saepe salutantum tactu praeterque meantum.

often of-those-greeting by-the-touch and-past of-those-passing.

haec igitur minui, cum sint detrita, videmus.

these therefore to-be-lessened, when they-are worn, we-see.

320 sed quae corpora decedant in tempore quoque,

but what bodies depart at time each,

invida praeclusit speciem natura videndi.

grudging has-shut-off the-sight nature of-seeing.

Postremo quae cumque dies natura rebus

Lastly what soever time and-nature to-things

paulatim tribuit moderatim crescere cogens,

little-by-little grants by-measure to-grow compelling,

nulla potest oculorum acies contenta tueri,

no can of-the-eyes keenness strained behold,

325 nec porro quae cumque aevo macieque senescunt,

nor further what soever by-age and-wasting grow-old,

nec, mare quae impendent, vesco sale saxa peresa

nor, the-sea which overhang, by-gnawing salt rocks eaten-away

quid quoque amittant in tempore cernere possis.

what at-each they-lose in time to-discern you-could.

corporibus caecis igitur natura gerit res.

with-bodies unseen therefore nature carries-on things.

Not everything is packed solid: there is void in things. Without it nothing could move at all, since the whole office of body is to block and withstand. Water seeps through rock, food spreads through the body, voices pass through walls, and cold soaks to the bone. A ball of wool weighs less than lead of the same size, which shows that the lighter thing holds more void within it.

Nec tamen undique corporea stipata tenentur

Nor yet everywhere by-bodily packed are-held

omnia natura; namque est in rebus inane.

330

all-things nature; for there-is in things void.

quod tibi cognosse in multis erit utile rebus

which for-you to-have-learned in many will-be useful matters

nec sinet errantem dubitare et quaerere semper

and-not will-let wandering to-doubt and to-question always

de summa rerum et nostris diffidere dictis.

about the-sum of-things and my to-distrust words.

qua propter locus est intactus inane vacansque.

for-which reason space there-is untouched void and-empty.

quod si non esset, nulla ratione moveri

335

but if not it-were, by-no means to-be-moved

res possent; namque officium quod corporis exstat,

things could; for the-office which of-body stands,

officere atque obstare, id in omni tempore adesset

to-block and to-withstand, that at every time would-be-present

omnibus; haud igitur quicquam procedere posset,

to-all; not therefore anything to-go-forward could,

principium quoniam cedendi nulla daret res.

a-beginning since of-yielding no would-give thing.

- 340 at nunc per maria ac terras sublimaque caeli
but now over seas and lands and-the-heights of-heaven
 multa modis multis varia ratione moveri
many-things in-ways many by-varied means to-move
 cernimus ante oculos, quae, si non esset inane,
we-see before the-eyes, which, if not there-were void,
 non tam sollicito motu privata carerent
not so-much of-restless motion deprived would-lack
 quam genita omnino nulla ratione fuissent,
as begotten altogether by-no means would-have-been,
- 345 undique materies quoniam stipata quiesset.
everywhere matter since packed would-have-rested.
 Praeterea quamvis solidae res esse putentur,
Besides however solid things to-be are-thought,
 hinc tamen esse licet raro cum corpore cernas.
hence yet to-be you-may of-rare with body discern.
 in saxis ac speluncis permanat aquarum
in rocks and caves oozes-through of-waters
 liquidus umor et uberibus flent omnia guttis.
the-liquid moisture and with-plentiful they-weep all-things drops.
- 350 dissipat in corpus sese cibus omne animantum;
spreads into the-body itself food whole of-living-things;
 crescunt arbusta et fetus in tempore fundunt,
grow trees and fruits in season pour-forth,
 quod cibus in totas usque ab radicibus imis
because nourishment into all(-parts) right from the-roots lowest
 per truncos ac per ramos diffunditur omnis.
through trunks and through boughs is-diffused all.
 inter saepta meant voces et clausa domorum
through enclosures pass voices and the-shut-places of-houses

transvolitant, rigidum permanat frigus ad ossa.

they-fly-across, stiffening soaks-through cold to the-bones.

quod nisi inania sint, qua possent corpora quaeque

but unless voids there-are, where could bodies each

transire, haud ulla fieri ratione videres.

pass-through, not by-any to-happen means you-would-see.

Denique cur alias aliis praestare videmus

Finally why some than-others to-surpass we-see

pondere res rebus nihilo maiore figura?

in-weight things things by-nothing greater in-bulk?

nam si tantundemst in lanae glomere quantum

for if there-is-just-as-much in of-wool a-ball as

corporis in plumbo est, tantundem pendere par est,

of-body in lead there-is, just-as-much to-weigh fitting it-is,

corporis officiumst quoniam premere omnia deorsum,

of-body the-office-is since to-press all-things downward,

contra autem natura manet sine pondere inanis.

on-the-contrary but the-nature remains without weight of-void.

ergo quod magnumst aequale leviusque videtur,

therefore what is-big equally and-lighter seems,

ni mirum plus esse sibi declarat inanis;

no wonder more there-is in-itself it-declares of-void;

at contra gravius plus in se corporis esse

but contrariwise the-heavier more in itself of-body there-is

dedicat et multo vacui minus intus habere.

it-proclaims and much of-empty less within to-have.

est igitur ni mirum id quod ratione sagaci

there-is therefore no wonder that which with-reasoning keen

quaerimus, admixtum rebus, quod inane vocamus.

we-seek, mingled with-things, which the-void we-call.

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Some say that water gives way to swimming fish because the fish leave a space behind them for the waves to fill. On that account, Lucretius answers, the fish could never go forward, nor the waves withdraw; and when two broad bodies spring apart the air cannot fill the gap in one moment. These small traces are enough for a keen mind: as hounds scent out a lair, Memmius can track one truth from another himself.

- 370 **Illud in his rebus ne te deducere vero**
This in these matters lest you to-lead-away from-the-truth
possit, quod quidam fingunt, praecurrere cogor.
it-may, what certain-men imagine, to-forestall I-am-compelled.
cedere squamigeris latices nitentibus aiunt
to-give-way to-the-scaly-ones the-waters pressing they-say
et liquidas aperire vias, quia post loca pisces
and liquid to-open paths, because behind places the-fish
linquant, quo possint cedentes confluere undae;
leave, whither can yielding to-flow-together the-waves;
- 375 **sic alias quoque res inter se posse moveri**
so other also things among themselves can to-be-moved
et mutare locum, quamvis sint omnia plena.
and to-change place, although are all-things full.
scilicet id falsa totum ratione receptumst.
surely that by-false whole reasoning has-been-accepted.
nam quo squamigeri poterunt procedere tandem,
for whither the-scaly-ones will-be-able to-go-forward at-all,
ni spatium dederint latices? concedere porro
unless room have-given the-waters? to-withdraw further
- 380 **quo poterunt undae, cum pisces ire nequibunt?**
whither will-be-able the-waves, when the-fish to-go will-not-be-able?

aut igitur motu privandumst corpora quaeque
either therefore of-motion must-be-deprived bodies each
 aut esse admixtum dicundumst rebus inane,
or to-be mingled it-must-be-said with-things void,
 unde initum primum capiat res quaeque movendi.

whence the-start first takes thing each of-moving.

Postremo duo de concursu corpora lata

Lastly two from a-collision bodies broad

si cita dissiliant, nempe aer omne necessest,

if swift spring-apart, surely the-air all must-needs,

inter corpora quod fiat, possidat inane.

between the-bodies which comes-to-be, occupy the-void.

is porro quamvis circum celerantibus auris

it further however round hastening with-breezes

confluat, haud poterit tamen uno tempore totum

flows-together, not will-it-be-able yet in-one moment the-whole

compleri spatium; nam primum quemque necessest

to-be-filled space; for first each must-needs

occupet ille locum, deinde omnia possideantur.

it-occupy that place, then all be-taken.

quod si forte aliquis, cum corpora dissiluerit,

but if perchance someone, when the-bodies have-sprung-apart,

tum putat id fieri quia se condenseat aer,

then thinks that to-happen because itself condenses the-air,

errat; nam vacuum tum fit quod non fuit ante

he-errs; for a-void then comes-to-be which not was before

et repletur item vacuum quod constitit ante,

and is-filled likewise the-void which stood before,

nec tali ratione potest denserier aer

nor by-such a-way can be-condensed the-air

385

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nec, si iam posset, sine inani posset, opinor,
nor, if even it-could, without void could-it, I-think,
 ipse in se trahere et partis conducere in unum.
itself into itself to-draw and parts to-gather into one.

Qua propter, quamvis causando multa moreris,
For-which reason, however by-pleading much you-delay,
 esse in rebus inane tamen fateare necessest.
to-be in things void yet you-confess must-needs.

400 multaue praeterea tibi possum commemorando
and-many besides for-you I-can by-recounting
 argumenta fidem dictis conradere nostris.
proofs credence to-words to-scrape-together my.

verum animo satis haec vestigia parva sagaci
but for-a-mind enough these traces small keen
 sunt, per quae possis cognoscere cetera tute.
are, by which you-may-be-able to-know the-rest yourself.
 namque canes ut montivagae persaepe ferai
for dogs as of-the-mountain-roaming very-often wild-beast

405 naribus inveniunt intectas fronde quietes,
with-nostrils find covered with-leafage lairs,

cum semel institerunt vestigia certa viai,
when once they-have-struck the-tracks sure of-the-way,
 sic alid ex alio per te tute ipse videre
so one-thing from another by you yourself alone to-see
 talibus in rebus poteris caecasque latebras
such in matters you-will-be-able and-the-bidden coverts
 insinuare omnis et verum protrahere inde.
to-worm-into all and the-truth to-drag-out thence.

410 quod si pigraris paulumve recesseris ab re,
but if you-are-slack or-a-little you-draw-back from the-matter,

hoc tibi de plano possum promittere, Memmi:

this to-you on the-level [readily] I-can promise, Memmius:

usque adeo largos haustus e fontibus magnis

right so-far bounteous drafts from springs great

lingua meo suavis diti de pectore fundet,

tongue my sweet rich from breast will-pour,

ut verear ne tarda prius per membra senectus

that I-fear lest slow sooner through limbs old-age

serpat et in nobis vitae claustra resolvat,

creep and in us of-life the-bolts unloose,

quam tibi de quavis una re versibus omnis

than to-you about any one thing in-verses all

argumentorum sit copia missa per aures.

of-proofs has-been the-store sent through the-ears.

415

I.13 • PROPERTIES AND ACCIDENTS

All nature consists of two things, body and void; there is no third. Whatever exists is either tangible, and so body, or intangible, and so void. What is named is either a property, which cannot be parted from a thing without destroying it, or an accident, like slavery, wealth, and war. Time is not a thing in itself, and the Trojan War is an accident of the men and the places it happened to.

Sed nunc ut repetam coeptum pertexere dictis,

But now that I-may-take-up-again the-begun to-weave-through in-words,

omnis ut est igitur per se natura duabus

all as is therefore by itself nature in-two

constitit in rebus; nam corpora sunt et inane,

consists in things; for bodies there-are and void,

haec in quo sita sunt et qua diversa moventur.

these in which placed are and where apart are-moved.

420

corpus enim per se communis dedicat esse

body for by itself the-common declares to-be

sensus; cui nisi prima fides fundata valebit,

sense; in-which unless a-first trust founded shall-hold,

haut erit occultis de rebus quo referentes

not there-will-be hidden about matters whereto referring

425 confirmare animi quicquam ratione queamus.

to-establish of-mind anything by-reasoning we-could.

tum porro locus ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,

then further place and space, which void we-call,

si nullum foret, haut usquam sita corpora possent

if none there-were, not anywhere placed bodies could

esse neque omnino quoquam diversa meare;

be nor at-all anywhitber apart move;

id quod iam supera tibi paulo ostendimus ante.

that which already above to-you a-little we-showed before.

430 praeterea nihil est quod possis dicere ab omni

besides nothing there-is which you-could say from all

corpore seiunctum secretumque esse ab inani,

body severed and-set-apart to-be from void,

quod quasi tertia sit numero natura reperta.

which as-it-were a-third is in-number nature found.

nam quod cumque erit, esse aliquid debebit id ipsum

for what soever there-shall-be, to-be something it-will-have-to that itself

augmine vel grandi vel parvo denique, dum sit;

in-bulk either great or small in-short, so-long-as it-is;

435 cui si tactus erit quamvis levis exiguusque,

to-which if touch there-shall-be however slight and-scant,

corporis augebit numerum summamque sequetur;

of-body it-will-swell the-count and-the-sum it-will-follow;

sin intactile erit, nulla de parte quod ullam

but-if untouchable it-shall-be, no from side which any

rem prohibere queat per se transire meantem,

thing to-binder it-can through itself to-pass moving,

scilicet hoc id erit, vacuum quod inane vocamus.

surely this that will-be, the-empty which void we-call.

Praeterea per se quod cumque erit, aut faciet quid

440

Besides by itself what soever shall-be, either it-will-do something

aut aliis fungi debebit agentibus ipsum

or by-others to-be-acted-on it-will-have-to acting itself

aut erit ut possint in eo res esse gerique.

or it-will-be such-that can in it things be and-be-done.

at facere et fungi sine corpore nulla potest res

but to-act and to-be-acted-on without body no can thing

nec praebere locum porro nisi inane vacansque.

nor to-furnish place further except the-void and-empty.

ergo praeter inane et corpora tertia per se

445

therefore besides void and bodies a-third by itself

nulla potest rerum in numero natura relinqui,

no can of-things in the-number nature to-be-left,

nec quae sub sensus cadat ullo tempore nostros

neither which under the-senses falls at-any time our

nec ratione animi quam quisquam possit apisci.

nor by-the-reasoning of-mind which anyone could grasp.

Nam quae cumque cluent, aut his coniuncta duabus

For what soever are-named, either to-these joined two

rebus ea invenies aut horum eventa videbis.

450

things them you-will-find or of-these accidents you-will-see.

coniunctum est id quod nusquam sine perimitali

joined is that which nowise without destructive

discidio potis est seiungi seque gregari,
sundering able is to-be-parted and-apart separated,
 pondus uti saxis, calor ignis, liquor aquai,
weight as to-stones, heat to-fire, fluidity to-water,
 tactus corporibus cunctis, intactus inani.
touch to-bodies all, untouchableness to-void.

455 servitium contra paupertas divitiaeque,
slavery on-the-other-hand poverty and-riches,
 libertas bellum concordia cetera quorum
freedom war concord the-rest of-which
 adventu manet incolumis natura abituque,
by-the-coming remains unharmed the-nature and-by-the-going,
 haec soliti sumus, ut par est, eventa vocare.
these wont we-are, as fitting it-is, accidents to-call.
 tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis
time likewise by itself not is, but things from themselves

460 consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in aevo,
follows the-sense, past what is in the-age,
 tum quae res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur;
then what thing presses, what further then follows;
 nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendumst
nor by itself that-anyone time perceives must-be-confessed
 semotum ab rerum motu placidaque quiete.
apart from of-things the-motion and-calm rest.
 denique Tyndaridem raptam belloque subactas
finally Tyndareus'-daughter carried-off and-in-war subdued

465 Troiugenas gentis cum dicunt esse, videndumst
Trojan-born nations when they-say to-be, it-must-be-seen
 ne forte haec per se cogant nos esse fateri,
lest perchance these by themselves they-force us to-be to-confess,

quando ea saecula hominum, quorum haec eventa fuerunt,
since those generations of-men, whose these accidents were,

inrevocabilis abstulerit iam praeterita aetas;

irrecoverable has-taken-away now past time;

namque aliud terris, aliud regionibus ipsis

for one-thing to-the-lands, another to-the-regions themselves

eventum dici poterit quod cumque erit actum. 470

an-accident to-be-called will-be-able what soever shall-have been-done.

denique materies si rerum nulla fuisset

finally matter if of-things none had-been

nec locus ac spatium, res in quo quaeque geruntur,

nor place and space, things in which each are-carried-on,

numquam Tyndaridis forma conflatus amore

never of-Tyndareus'-daughter by-the-beauty kindled with-love

ignis Alexandri Phrygio sub pectore gliscens

the-fire of-Alexander in-the-Phrygian beneath breast swelling

clara accendisset saevi certamina belli 475

famous would-have-lit of-savage contests war

nec clam durateus Troiiianis Pergama partu

nor secretly the-wooden for-the-Trojans Pergama by-a-birth

inflammasset equos nocturno Graiugenarum;

would-have-set-ablaze the-horse nightly of-the-Greek-born;

perspicere ut possis res gestas funditus omnis

to-see-clearly so-that you-may-be-able deeds done utterly all

non ita uti corpus per se constare neque esse

not so as body by itself to-subsist nor to-be

nec ratione cluere eadem qua constet inane, 480

nor in-the-way to-be-named the-same in-which subsists void,

sed magis ut merito possis eventa vocare

but rather that rightly you-may-be-able accidents to-call

corporis atque loci, res in quo quaeque gerantur.

of-body and place, things in which each are-carried-on.

I.14 • THE FIRST-BEGINNINGS ARE SOLID

Bodies are either the first-beginnings of things or combinations of them. The first-beginnings are solid and no force can quench them, though it seems hard to believe that anything solid exists, since lightning passes through walls and heat soaks through silver. But because there is void in begotten things, there must be solid matter around it; and what is solid cannot be crushed, broken, or pierced, and so lasts forever.

Corpora sunt porro partim primordia rerum,

Bodies are further partly the-first-beginnings of-things,

partim concilio quae constant principiorum.

partly by-a-combination which consist of-first-elements.

485 sed quae sunt rerum primordia, nulla potest vis

but which are of-things the-first-beginnings, no can force

stinguere; nam solido vincunt ea corpore demum.

quench; for by-solid they-prevail they body at-last.

etsi difficile esse videtur credere quicquam

although hard to-be it-seems to-believe that-anything

in rebus solido reperiri corpore posse.

among things of-solid to-be-found body can.

transit enim fulmen caeli per saepta domorum

passes for the-lightning of-heaven through the-walls of-houses

490 clamor ut ac voces, ferrum candescit in igni

a-shout as and voices, iron glows-white in fire

dissiliuntque fero ferventi saxa vapore;

and-fly-apart with-fierce seething rocks vapor;

cum labefactatus rigor auri solvitur aestu,
when loosened the-stiffness of-gold is-dissolved by-beat,
 tum glacies aeris flamma devicta liquescit;
then the-ice of-bronze by-flame overcome melts;
 permanat calor argentum penetraleque frigus,
soaks-through beat silver and-piercing cold,
 quando utrumque manu retinentes pocula rite
since both in-hand holding cups duly
 sensimus infuso lympharum rore superne.
we-have-felt with-poured of-waters dew from-above.
 usque adeo in rebus solidi nihil esse videtur.
right so-far among things of-solid nothing to-be seems.
 sed quia vera tamen ratio natura que rerum
but because true yet reasoning and-the-nature of-things
 cogit, ades, paucis dum versibus expediamus
compels, attend, in-few while verses we-set-forth
 esse ea quae solido atque aeterno corpore constant,
there-are those which of-solid and everlasting body consist,
 semina quae rerum primordiaque esse docemus,
the-seeds which of-things and-first-beginnings to-be we-teach,
 unde omnis rerum nunc constet summa creata.
whence all of-things now consists the-sum created.
 Principio quoniam duplex natura duarum
First since a-twofold nature of-two
 dissimilis rerum longe constare repertast,
unlike things far to-consist has-been-found,
 corporis atque loci, res in quo quaeque geruntur,
of-body and place, things in which each are-carried-on,
 esse utramque sibi per se puramque necessesse.
to-be each to-itself by itself and-pure must-needs.

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nam qua cumque vacat spatium, quod inane vocamus,
for where soever is-empty space, which void we-call,

corpus ea non est; qua porro cumque tenet se
body there not is; where further soever holds itself

corpus, ea vacuum nequaquam constat inane.
body, there empty by-no-means stands void.

510 sunt igitur solida ac sine inani corpora prima.
there-are therefore solid and without void bodies first.

Praeterea quoniam genitis in rebus inanest,
Besides since begotten in things there-is-void,

materiem circum solidam constare necessest;
matter around solid to-consist must-needs;

nec res ulla potest vera ratione probari
nor thing any can by-true reasoning to-be-proved

corpore inane suo celare atque intus habere,
in-body void its-own to-hide and within to-have,

515 si non, quod cohibet, solidum constare relinquo.
if not, what contains, solid to-consist you-allow.

id porro nihil esse potest nisi materiai
that further nothing to-be can except of-matter

concilium, quod inane queat rerum cohibere.
a-combination, which void can of-things contain.

materies igitur, solido quae corpore constat,
matter therefore, of-solid which body consists,

esse aeterna potest, cum cetera dissoluantur.
to-be everlasting can, when the-rest are-dissolved.

520 Tum porro si nil esset quod inane vocaret,
Then further if nothing there-were which void one-should-call,

omne foret solidum; nisi contra corpora certa
all would-be solid; unless on-the-other-hand bodies fixed

essent quae loca complerent quae cumque tenerent
there-were which the-places should-fill what soever they-should-hold

omne quod est spatium, vacuum constaret inane.

all which is space, empty would-stand void.

alternis igitur ni mirum corpus inani

by-turns therefore no wonder body from-void

distinctum, quoniam nec plenum naviter extat

is-marked-off, since neither full wholly it-stands

nec porro vacuum; sunt ergo corpora certa,

nor further empty; there-are therefore bodies fixed,

quae spatium pleno possint distinguere inane.

which space from-the-full can mark-off void.

haec neque dissolui plagis extrinsecus icta

these neither to-be-dissolved by-blows from-without struck

possunt nec porro penitus penetrata retexi

can nor further deeply pierced to-be-unwoven

nec ratione queunt alia temptata labare;

nor in-a-way can-they other assailed totter;

id quod iam supra tibi paulo ostendimus ante.

that which already above to-you a-little we-showed before.

nam neque conlidi sine inani posse videtur

for nor to-be-crushed without void can seems

quicquam nec frangi nec findi in bina secando

anything nor to-be-broken nor to-be-cleft into two by-cutting

nec capere umorem neque item manabile frigus

nor to-take moisture nor likewise soaking cold

nec penetralem ignem, quibus omnia conficiuntur.

nor piercing fire, by-which all-things are-destroyed.

et quo quaeque magis cohibet res intus inane,

and by-how-much each more holds thing within void,

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tam magis his rebus penitus temptata labascit.

so more by-these things deeply assailed it-gives-way.

ergo si solida ac sine inani corpora prima

therefore if solid and without void bodies first

sunt ita uti docui, sint haec aeterna necessest.

are so as I-have-taught, they-are these everlasting must-needs.

540 Praeterea nisi materies aeterna fuisset,

Besides unless matter everlasting had-been,

antehac ad nihilum penitus res quaeque redissent

before-now to nothing utterly things each would-have-returned

de nihiloque renata forent quae cumque videmus.

from and-nothing reborn would-be what soever we-see.

at quoniam supra docui nil posse creari

but since above I-have-taught nothing can to-be-created

de nihilo neque quod genitumst ad nil revocari,

from nothing nor what has-been-begotten to nothing to-be-called-back,

545 esse immortalia primordia corpore debent,

to-be of-immortal the-first-beginnings body must,

dissolui quo quaeque supremo tempore possint,

to-be-dissolved whereinto each at-the-last hour they-can,

materies ut subpeditet rebus reparandis.

matter that may-supply for-things to-be-renewed.

sunt igitur solida primordia simplicitate

there-are therefore solid the-first-beginnings in-singleness

nec ratione queunt alia servata per aevom

nor in-a-way can-they other preserved through the-ages

550 ex infinito iam tempore res reparare.

from infinite now time things renew.

If nature had set no limit to breaking, infinite past time would have ground all matter down past repair, since things are destroyed faster than they are made. But we see each thing remade, and each kind granted a fixed span for growing and for holding life. Since birds of a kind carry the same markings generation after generation, matter too must have an unchangeable body.

denique si nullam finem natura parasset

finally if no limit nature had-set

frangendis rebus, iam corpora materiai

for-breaking things, by-now the-bodies of-matter

usque redacta forent aevo frangente priore,

right reduced would-be by-age breaking former,

ut nihil ex illis a certo tempore posset

so-that nothing from them from a-fixed time could

conceptum summum aetatis pervadere finem.

conceived the-highest of-life reach limit.

nam quidvis citius dissolvi posse videmus

for anything more-quickly to-be-dissolved can we-see

quam rursus refici; qua propter longa diei

than again to-be-remade; for-which reason the-long of-day

infinita aetas ante acti temporis omnis

infinite age before passed of-time all

quod fregisset adhuc disturbans dissoluensque,

what had-broken hitherto shattering and-dissolving,

numquam relicuo reparari tempore posset.

never in-the-remaining to-be-restored time could.

at nunc ni mirum frangendi reddita finis

but now no wonder of-breaking appointed a-limit

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certa manet, quoniam refici rem quamque videmus
fixed remains, since to-be-remade thing each we-see

et finita simul generatim tempora rebus
and fixed likewise kind-by-kind times for-things

stare, quibus possint aevi contingere florem.
to-stand, in-which they-can of-life attain the-flower.

565 Huc accedit uti, solidissima materiai

Hereto is-added that, most-solid of-matter

corpora cum constant, possint tamen omnia reddi,
the-bodies although consist, can yet all-things to-be-explained,

mollia quae fiunt, aer aqua terra vapores,
soft which become, air water earth vapors,

quo pacto fiant et qua vi quaeque gerantur,
in-what way they-come-to-be and by-what force each are-carried-on,

admixtum quoniam semel est in rebus inane.
mingled since once is in things void.

570 at contra si mollia sint primordia rerum,

but contrariwise if soft are the-first-beginnings of-things,

unde queant validi silices ferrumque creari,
whence can strong flints and-iron to-be-created,

non poterit ratio reddi; nam funditus omnis
not will-be-able an-account to-be-given; for utterly all

principio fundamenti natura carebit.
a-beginning of-foundation nature will-be-without.

sunt igitur solida pollentia simplicitate,
there-are therefore solid strong in-singleness,

575 quorum condenseo magis omnia conciliatu

of-which by-a-denser more all-things combination

artari possunt validasque ostendere viris.
to-be-packed can and-strong to-show forces.

porro si nullast frangendis reddita finis

further if there-is-no for-breaking appointed limit

corporibus, tamen ex aeterno tempore quaeque

to-bodies, still from everlasting time each

nunc etiam superare necessest corpora rebus,

now even to-survive must-needs bodies for-things,

quae non dum clueant ullo temptata periclo.

which not yet are-named by-any assailed peril.

at quoniam fragili natura praedita constant,

but since with-frail nature endowed they-stand,

discrepat aeternum tempus potuisse manere

it-is-inconsistent everlasting time to-have-been-able to-remain

innumerabilibus plagis vexata per aevom.

by-innumerable blows harried through the-ages.

Denique iam quoniam generatim reddita finis

Finally now since kind-by-kind appointed a-limit

crescendi rebus constat vitamque tenendi,

of-growing for-things stands and-life of-holding,

et quid quaeque queant per foedera naturai,

and what each can by the-covenants of-nature,

quid porro nequeant, sancitum quando quidem extat,

what further cannot, ordained since indeed it-stands,

nec commutatur quicquam, quin omnia constant

nor is-changed anything, but-that all-things stand

usque adeo, variae volucres ut in ordine cunctae

right so-far, the-varied birds that in order all

ostendant maculas generalis corpore inesse,

show the-markings of-their-kind on-body to-be-in,

inmutabilis materiae quoque corpus habere

unchangeable of-matter also a-body to-have

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debent ni mirum; nam si primordia rerum

they-must no wonder; for if the-first-beginnings of-things

commutari aliqua possent ratione revicta,

to-be-changed in-some could way overcome,

incertum quoque iam constet quid possit oriri,

uncertain also now it-would-stand what can arise,

595 quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique

what cannot, a-bounded power finally to-each

qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens,

by-what pray is law and deeply boundary-mark fixed,

nec totiens possent generatim saecula referre

nor so-often could kind-by-kind the-generations reproduce

naturam mores victum motusque parentum.

the-nature ways food and-motions of-their-parents.

I.16 • THE LEAST PARTS

Each first-beginning has an outermost point that our senses cannot see, and this least part has no parts of its own and never stood alone. If there were no least, the smallest bodies would consist of infinite parts, and there would be no difference between the least thing and the whole sum. Since reason cries out against that, there must be least parts, and what has them is solid and everlasting.

Tum porro quoniam est extremum quodque cacumen

Then further since there-is an-outermost each tip

600 corporis illius, quod nostri cernere sensus

of-body that, which our to-discern senses

iam nequeunt, id ni mirum sine partibus extat

now cannot, that no wonder without parts stands

et minima constat natura nec fuit umquam

and of-least consists nature nor was ever

per se secretum neque post hac esse valebit,

by itself separate nor after this to-be will-be-able,

alterius quoniamst ipsum pars primaque et una,

of-another since-it-is itself a-part and-first and single,

inde aliae atque aliae similes ex ordine partes

then other and other like in order parts

agmine condenso naturam corporis explent;

in-a-column close-packed the-nature of-body fill-out;

quae quoniam per se nequeunt constare, necessest

which since by themselves cannot subsist, must-needs

haerere unde queant nulla ratione revelli.

cling whence they-can by-no means to-be-torn-away.

sunt igitur solida primordia simplicitate,

there-are therefore solid the-first-beginnings in-singleness,

quae minimis stipata cohaerent partibus arte.

which with-least packed cohere parts closely.

non ex illorum conventu conciliata,

not from of-those a-gathering combined,

sed magis aeterna pollentia simplicitate,

but rather everlasting strong in-singleness,

unde neque avelli quicquam neque deminui iam

whence neither to-be-torn anything nor to-be-lessened now

concedit natura reservans semina rebus.

allows nature reserving the-seeds for-things.

Praeterea nisi erit minimum, parvissima quaeque

Besides unless there-shall-be a-least, the-tiniest each

corpora constabunt ex partibus infinitis,

bodies will-consist of parts infinite,

quippe ubi dimidiaie partis pars semper habebit

for where of-a-half part a-part always will-have

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dimidiam partem nec res praefiniet ulla.

a-half part nor thing will-set-a-limit any.

ergo rerum inter summam minimamque quod escit,

therefore of-things between the-sum and-the-least what shall-be,

620 nil erit ut distet; nam quamvis funditus omnis

nothing there-will-be that differs; for however utterly all

summa sit infinita, tamen, parvissima quae sunt,

the-sum is infinite, yet, the-tiniest which are,

ex infinitis constabunt partibus aequae.

of infinite will-consist parts alike.

quod quoniam ratio reclamationem vera negatque

but since reasoning cries-out-against true and-denies

credere posse animum, victus fateare necessest

to-believe can the-mind, overcome you-confess must-needs

625 esse ea quae nullis iam praedita partibus extent

there-are those which with-no now endowed parts stand

et minima constant natura. quae quoniam sunt,

and of-least consist nature. which since are,

illa quoque esse tibi solida atque aeterna fatendum.

those also to-be by-you solid and everlasting must-be-confessed.

Denique si minimas in partis cuncta resolvi

Finally if least into parts all-things to-be-dissolved

cogere consuesset rerum natura creatrix,

to-force had-been-wont of-things the-nature creating,

630 iam nihil ex illis eadem reparare valeret

now nothing from them the-same to-restore would-be-able

propterea quia, quae nullis sunt partibus aucta,

therefore because, which with-no are parts enriched,

non possunt ea quae debet genitalis habere

not can those-things which must generative have

materies, varios conexus pondera plagas

matter, varied connections weights blows

concursus motus, per quas res quaeque geruntur.

meetings motions, through which things each are-carried-on.

I.17 • AGAINST HERACLITUS

Those who make fire the matter of everything have fallen far from true reasoning, and Heraclitus leads them, famous for his dark speech among the empty-headed rather than the weighty. If all things were one pure fire, thickening and thinning it would explain nothing. And a man who says that only fire is real fights his own senses, since it is by the senses that he knows fire at all.

Quapropter qui materiem rerum esse putarunt

Wherefore who the-matter of-things to-be have-thought

ignem atque ex igni summam consistere solo,

fire and from fire the-sum to-consist alone,

magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur.

in-great measure from true fallen reasoning seem.

Heraclitus init quorum dux proelia primus,

Heraclitus enters of-whom the-leader the-battles first,

clarus ob obscuram linguam magis inter inanis

famous for obscure speech more among the-empty

quamde gravis inter Graios, qui vera requirunt;

than the-weighty among Greeks, who truth seek;

omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,

all-things for fools the-more admire and-love,

inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt,

inverted which beneath words lurking they-see,

veraue constituunt quae belle tangere possunt

and-true they-set-down what prettily to-touch can

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auris et lepto quae sunt fucata sonore.

the-ears and with-charming which are painted sound.

645 Nam cur tam variae res possent esse, requiro,

For why so varied things could be, I-ask,

ex uno si sunt igni puroque creatae?

from one if they-are fire and-pure created?

nil prodesset enim calidum denserier ignem

nothing would-avail for hot to-be-thickened fire

nec rare fieri, si partes ignis eandem

nor rare to-become, if the-parts of-fire the-same

naturam quam totus habet super ignis haberent.

nature which the-whole has besides fire should-have.

650 acrior ardor enim conductis partibus esset,

keener the-blaze for when-drawn-together parts would-be,

languidior porro disiectis disque supatis.

fainter further scattered and-asunder strewn.

amplius hoc fieri nihil est quod posse rearis

more than-this to-happen nothing there-is which can you-may-think

talibus in causis, ne dum variantia rerum

such in cases, not to-say the-variety of-things

tanta queat densis rarisque ex ignibus esse.

so-great could dense and-rare from fires be.

655 Id quoque: si faciant admixtum rebus inane,

This too: if they-make mingled with-things void,

denseri poterunt ignes rarique relinqui;

to-be-thickened will-be-able fires and-rare to-be-left;

sed quia multa sibi cernunt contraria quae sint

but because many-things to-themselves they-see contrary which are

et fugitant in rebus inane relinquere purum,

and they-shun in things void to-leave pure,

ardua dum metuunt, amittunt vera viai

the-steep while they-fear, they-lose the-true of-the-road

nec rursum cernunt exempto rebus inani

nor again they-see removed from-things the-void

omnia denseri fierique ex omnibus unum

all-things to-be-thickened and-to-become from all one

corpus, nil ab se quod possit mittere raptim,

body, nothing from itself which could send swiftly,

aestifer ignis uti lumen iacit atque vaporem,

the-beat-bearing fire as light hurls and vapor,

ut videas non e stipatis partibus esse.

so-that you-may-see not of packed parts to-be.

Quod si forte alia credunt ratione potesse

But if perchance in-another they-believe way to-be-possible

ignis in coetu stingui mutareque corpus,

fires in gathering to-be-quenched and-to-change body,

scilicet ex nulla facere id si parte reparcent,

surely from no to-do that if part they-refrain,

occidet ad nihilum ni mirum funditus ardor

will-fall to nothing no wonder utterly the-blaze

omnis et e nihilo fient quae cumque creantur;

all and from nothing will-come what soever are-created;

nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,

for what soever from-its-own changed bounds passes-out,

continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

straightway this the-death is of-that which was before.

proinde aliquid superare necesse est incolume ollis,

therefore something to-survive needful it-is unharmed for-them,

ne tibi res redeant ad nilum funditus omnes

lest for-you things return to nothing utterly all

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de nihiloque renata vigescat copia rerum.

from and-nothing reborn should-grow-strong the-store of-things.

675 Nunc igitur quoniam certissima corpora quaedam

Now therefore since most-fixed bodies certain

sunt, quae conservant naturam semper eandem,

there-are, which keep nature always the-same,

quorum abitu aut aditu mutatoque ordine mutant

by-whose departure or arrival and-changed order they-change

naturam res et convertunt corpora sese,

nature things and transform bodies themselves,

scire licet non esse haec ignea corpora rerum.

to-know one-may not to-be these fiery bodies of-things.

680 nil referret enim quaedam decedere, abire

nothing it-would-matter for certain-ones to-depart, to-go-away

atque alia adtribui mutarique ordine quaedam,

and others to-be-added and-be-changed in-order certain-ones,

si tamen ardoris naturam cuncta tenerent;

if still of-blaze the-nature all kept;

ignis enim foret omnimodis quod cumque crearet.

fire for would-be in-every-way what soever it-created.

verum, ut opinor, itast: sunt quaedam corpora, quorum

but, as I-think, so-it-is: there-are certain bodies, whose

685 concursus motus ordo positura figurae

meetings motions order position shapes

efficiunt ignis mutatoque ordine mutant

make fires and-changed order they-change

naturam neque sunt igni simulata neque ulli

nature nor are-they to-fire like nor to-any

praeterea rei quae corpora mittere possit

besides thing which bodies to-send could

sensibus et nostros adiectu tangere tactus.

to-the-senses and our by-impact to-touch feelings.

dicere porro ignem res omnis esse neque ullam

to-say further fire things all to-be nor any

rem veram in numero rerum constare nisi ignem,

thing true in the-number of-things to-stand except fire,

quod facit hic idem, perdelirum esse videtur.

which does this-man same, utterly-mad to-be seems.

nam contra sensus ab sensibus ipse repugnat

for against the-senses from the-senses himself he-fights

et labefactat eos, unde omnia credita pendent,

and he-shakes them, whence all-things believed hang,

unde hic cognitus est ipsi quem nominat ignem;

whence this known is to-himself which he-names fire;

credit enim sensus ignem cognoscere vere,

he-believes for the-senses fire to-know truly,

cetera non credit, quae nilo clara minus sunt.

the-rest not he-believes, which by-nothing clear less are.

quod mihi cum vanum tum delirum esse videtur;

which to-me both empty and mad to-be seems;

quo referemus enim? quid nobis certius ipsis

whither shall-we-refer then? what to-us more-certain than-the-very

sensibus esse potest, qui vera ac falsa notemus?

senses to-be can, by-which the-true and the-false we-mark?

Praeterea quare quisquam magis omnia tollat

Besides why should-anyone rather all-things take-away

et velit ardoris naturam linquere solam,

and wish of-blaze the-nature to-leave alone,

quam neget esse ignis, aliam tamen esse relinquat?

than he-deny to-be fires, another yet to-be he-allow?

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aequa videtur enim dementia dicere utrumque.

equal seems for madness to-say either.

I.18 · EMPEDOCLES AND THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The same charge falls on those who make air or water or earth the single source, and on those who take two or four. Empedocles of Acragas is the first among them, and Sicily holds nothing more glorious than the man; but he and his fellows came to grief over the first-beginnings. They allow no void, they set no limit to cutting, and their elements are soft and hostile to one another.

705 Quapropter qui materiem rerum esse putarunt

Wherefore who the-matter of-things to-be have-thought

ignem atque ex igni summam consistere posse,

fire and from fire the-sum to-consist can,

et qui principium gignundis aera rebus

and who a-beginning for-begetting air things

constituere aut umorem qui cumque putarunt

set-up or moisture who soever have-thought

figere res ipsum per se terramve creare

to-shape things itself by itself or-earth to-create

710 omnia et in rerum naturas vertier omnis,

all-things and into of-things the-natures to-be-turned all,

magno opere a vero longe derrasse videntur.

in-great measure from the-truth far to-have-strayed they-seem.

adde etiam qui conduplicant primordia rerum

add also who double the-first-beginnings of-things

aera iungentes igni terramque liquori,

air joining to-fire and-earth to-liquid,

et qui quattuor ex rebus posse omnia rentur

and who four from things can all-things deem

ex igni terra atque anima procrecere et imbri.

from fire earth and breath to-grow-forth and rain.

quorum Acragantinus cum primis Empedocles est,

of-whom the-Acragantine among the-first Empedocles is,

insula quem triquetris terrarum gessit in oris,

an-island whom three-cornered of-lands bore on shores,

quam fluitans circum magnis anfractibus aequor

which flowing around with-great windings the-sea

Ionium glaucis aspargit virus ab undis

Ionian gray sprinkles brine from waves

angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis

and-with-a-narrow strait the-rushing sea divides with-waves

Aeoliae terrarum oras a finibus eius.

of-Aeolia of-lands the-shores from the-borders its.

hic est vasta Charybdis et hic Aetnaea minantur

here is vast Charybdis and here Aetnean threaten

murmura flammaram rursum se colligere iras,

the-rumblings of-flames again themselves to-gather wrath,

faucibus eruptos iterum vis ut vomat ignis

from-the-jaws burst-forth again the-force that may-vomit fires

ad caelumque ferat flammai fulgura rursum.

to and-heaven may-bear of-flame the-flashes again.

quae cum magna modis multis miranda videtur

which although great in-ways many to-be-wondered-at seems

gentibus humanis regio visendaque fertur

to-the-races human the-region and-worth-seeing is-said

rebus opima bonis, multa munita virum vi,

in-things rich good, with-much defended of-men force,

nil tamen hoc habuisse viro praeclarius in se

nothing yet than-this to-have-had man more-glorious in itself

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- 730 nec sanctum magis et mirum carumque videtur.
nor holy more and wonderful and-dear it-seems.
 carmina quin etiam divini pectoris eius
the-songs nay even of-divine breast his
 vociferantur et exponunt praeclara reperta,
cry-aloud and set-forth glorious discoveries,
 ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.
so-that scarcely of-human he-seems stock born.
 Hic tamen et supra quos diximus inferiores
He yet and above whom we-named inferior
- 735 partibus egregie multis multoque minores,
in-parts exceedingly many and-by-much lesser,
 quamquam multa bene ac divinitus inveniunt
although many-things well and divinely finding
 ex adyto tam quam cordis responsa dedere
from the-shrine so as of-the-heart answers they-gave
 sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam
more-holily and by-much sure reasoning more than
 Pythia quae tripodi a Phoebi lauroque profatur,
the-Pythia which the-tripod from of-Phoebus and-laurel utters,
- 740 principiis tamen in rerum fecere ruinas
the-beginnings yet in of-things they-made ruin
 et graviter magni magno cecidere ibi casu.
and heavily great with-great they-fell there a-fall.
 Primum quod motus exempto rebus inani
First because motions removed from-things the-void
 constituunt et res mollis rarasque relinquunt
they-set-up and things soft and-rare they-leave
 aera solem ignem terras animalia frugis
air sun fire lands living-things crops

nec tamen admiscent in eorum corpus inane;

and-not yet they-mingle into their body void;

deinde quod omnino finem non esse secandis

next because altogether a-limit not to-be for-cutting

corporibus facient neque pausam stare fragori

bodies they-will-make nor a-halt to-stand to-the-breaking

nec prorsum in rebus minimum consistere quicquam,

nor at-all in things a-least to-stand anything,

cum videamus id extremum cuiusque cacumen

although we-see that the-outermost of-each tip

esse quod ad sensus nostros minimum esse videtur,

to-be which to the-senses our least to-be seems,

conicere ut possis ex hoc, quae cernere non quis

to-infer so-that you-may-be-able from this, which to-see not you-can

extremum quod habent, minimum consistere rerum.

an-outermost which they-have, a-least to-stand of-things.

Huc accedit item, quoniam primordia rerum

Hereto is-added likewise, since the-first-beginnings of-things

mollia constituunt, quae nos nativa videmus

soft they-set-up, which we born see

esse et mortali cum corpore, funditus ut qui

to-be and mortal with body, utterly so-that somehow

debeat ad nihilum iam rerum summa reverti

must to nothing now of-things the-sum return

de nihiloque renata vigescere copia rerum;

from and-nothing reborn grow-strong the-store of-things;

quorum utrumque quid a vero iam distet habebis.

of-which each how from the-truth now differs you-will-know.

Deinde inimica modis multis sunt atque veneno

Next hostile in-ways many they-are and poison

745

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760 ipsa sibi inter se; quare aut congressa peribunt
themselves to-themselves among themselves; wherefore either having-met they-will-perish
 aut ita diffugient, ut tempestate coacta
or so they-will-scatter, as a-storm gathered
 fulmina diffugere atque imbris ventosque videmus.
the-lightnings scatter and rains and-winds we-see.

I.19 · LETTERS AND THE ORDER OF THINGS

If everything comes from four things and returns to them, why call those four the first-beginnings rather than the reverse? Lucretius answers the objection that everything grows from earth and rain: many first-beginnings are common to many things, and what matters is which ones, in what position, and with what motions. The letters of these very verses are shared by many words, and it is their order that makes the difference.

Denique quattuor ex rebus si cuncta creantur
Finally four from things if all-things are-created
 atque in eas rursum res omnia dissoluuntur,
and into those again things all are-dissolved,
 765 qui magis illa queunt rerum primordia dici
how rather those can of-things the-first-beginnings to-be-called
 quam contra res illorum retroque putari?
than conversely things of-those and-backward to-be-thought?
 alternis gignuntur enim mutantque colorem
by-turns they-are-begotten for and-change color
 et totam inter se naturam tempore ab omni.
and the-whole among themselves nature time from all.
 770 sin ita forte putas ignis terraeque coire
but-if so perchance you-think of-fire and-of-earth to-come-together

corpus et aerias auras roremque liquoris,

the-body and airy breezes and-the-dew of-liquid,

nil in concilio naturam ut mutet eorum,

nothing in the-combination nature that changes their,

nulla tibi ex illis poterit res esse creata,

no for-you from them will-be-able thing to-be created,

non animans, non exanimo cum corpore, ut arbos;

not a-living-thing, not lifeless with body, as a-tree;

quippe suam quicque in coetu variantis acervi

for its-own each in the-gathering of-the-varying heap

naturam ostendet mixtusque videbitur aer

nature will-show and-mingled will-be-seen air

cum terra simul et quodam cum rore manere.

with earth together and a-certain with dew to-remain.

at primordia gignundis in rebus oportet

but the-first-beginnings to-be-begotten in things must

naturam clandestinam caecamque adhibere,

a-nature secret and-unseen bring,

emineat ne quid, quod contra pugnet et obstet

may-stand-out lest anything, which against fights and withstands

quo minus esse queat proprie quodcumque creatur.

whereby the-less to-be can properly whatsoever is-created.

Quin etiam repetunt a caelo atque ignibus eius

Nay even they-trace-back from heaven and the-fires of-it

et primum faciunt ignem se vertere in auras

and first they-make fire itself to-turn into the-breezes

aeris, hinc imbrem gigni terramque creari

of-air, hence rain to-be-begotten and-earth to-be-created

ex imbro retroque a terra cuncta reverti,

from rain and-backward from earth all-things to-return,

775

780

785

umorem primum, post aera, deinde calorem,

moisture first, after air, then heat,

nec cessare haec inter se mutare, meare

nor to-cess these among themselves to-change, to-pass

a caelo ad terram, de terra ad sidera mundi.

from heaven to earth, from earth to the-stars of-the-world.

quod facere haud ullo debent primordia pacto.

which to-do not in-any must the-first-beginnings way.

790 immutabile enim quiddam superare necessest,

unchangeable for something to-survive must-needs,

ne res ad nihilum redigantur funditus omnes;

lest things to nothing be-reduced utterly all;

nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,

for what soever from-its-own changed bounds passes-out,

continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

straightway this the-death is of-that which was before.

quapropter quoniam quae paulo diximus ante

wherefore since what a-little we-said before

795 in commutatum veniunt, constare necessest

into change come, to-consist must-needs

ex aliis ea, quae nequeant convertier usquam,

of others they, which cannot be-transformed ever,

ne tibi res redeant ad nilum funditus omnis;

lest for-you things return to nothing utterly all;

quin potius tali natura praedita quaedam

nay rather with-such nature endowed certain

corpora constituas, ignem si forte crearint,

bodies you-should-set-up, fire if perchance they-have-created,

800 posse eadem demptis paucis paucisque tributis,

can the-same taken-away a-few and-a-few added,

ordine mutato et motu, facere aeris auras,

order changed and motion, to-make of-air the-breezes,

sic alias aliis rebus mutarier omnis?

so other by-other things to-be-changed all?

'At manifesta palam res indicat' inquis 'in auras

'but manifest openly fact shows' you-say 'into the-breezes

aeris e terra res omnis crescere alicue;

of-air from earth things all to-grow and-be-fed;

et nisi tempestas indulget tempore fausto

and unless the-weather indulges at-a-season favorable

imbribus, ut tabe nimborum arbusta vacillent,

with-rains, so-that with-the-melting of-storm-clouds the-trees sway,

solque sua pro parte fovet tribuitque calorem,

and-the-sun his-own for part warms and-grants heat,

crescere non possint fruges arbusta animantis.'

to-grow not could crops trees living-things.'

scilicet et nisi nos cibis aridus et tener umor

surely and unless us food dry and soft moisture

adiuvet, amisso iam corpore vita quoque omnis

helps, lost now body life also all

omnibus e nervis atque ossibus exsoluatur;

all from sinews and bones would-be-loosed;

adiutamur enim dubio procul atque alimur nos

we-are-helped for doubt beyond and are-fed we

certis ab rebus, certis aliae atque aliae res.

fixed from things, by-fixed other and other things.

ni mirum quia multa modis communia multis

no wonder because many in-ways common many

multarum rerum in rebus primordia mixta

of-many things in things first-beginnings mingled

805

810

815

sunt, ideo variis variae res rebus aluntur.

are, therefore by-various various things things are-fed.

atque eadem magni refert primordia saepe

and the-same greatly it-matters the-first-beginnings often

cum quibus et quali positura contineantur

with which and in-what position they-are-held

et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque;

and what among themselves they-give motions and-receive;

820 namque eadem caelum mare terras flumina solem

for the-same heaven sea lands rivers sun

constituunt, eadem fruges arbusta animantis,

make-up, the-same crops trees living-things,

verum aliis alioque modo commixta moventur.

but with-others and-in-another way mingled they-move.

quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis

nay even everywhere our in verses themselves

multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,

many elements you-see to-many common words,

825 cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necessest

although yet among themselves verses and words must-needs

confiteare et re et sonitu distare sonanti.

you-confess both in-substance and in-sound to-differ ringing.

tantum elementa queunt permutato ordine solo;

so-much elements can changed order alone;

at rerum quae sunt primordia, plura adhibere

but of-things which are the-first-beginnings, more to-bring

possunt unde queant variae res quaeque creari.

they-can whence can various things each to-be-created.

Anaxagoras holds that bone is made of tiny bones, flesh of tiny flesh, blood of drops of blood, and gold of grains of gold. The name is Greek, and the poverty of Latin will not let it be translated, though the doctrine itself is easy enough to state. He allows no void anywhere and sets no limit to cutting, and so, Lucretius says, he errs on both counts, just as the men criticized before him.

Nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur homoeomerian

830

Now also of-Anaxagoras let-us-examine the-homoeomeria

quam Grai memorant nec nostra dicere lingua

which the-Greeks name and-not our to-say tongue

concedit nobis patrii sermonis egestas,

allows us of-ancestral speech the-poverty,

sed tamen ipsam rem facilest exponere verbis.

but yet the-very thing it-is-easy to-set-forth in-words.

principio, rerum quam dicit homoeomerian,

to-begin-with, of-things which he-calls the-homoeomeria,

ossa videlicet e pauxillis atque minutis

835

bones namely from tiny and minute

ossibus hic et de pauxillis atque minutis

bones he and from tiny and minute

visceribus viscus gigni sanguenque creari

flesh flesh to-be-begotten and-blood to-be-created

sanguinis inter se multis coeuntibus guttis

of-blood among themselves many coming-together drops

ex aurique putat micis consistere posse

from and-of-gold he-thinks grains to-consist can

aurum et de terris terram condescere parvis,

840

gold and from earths earth to-grow-together small,

ignibus ex ignis, umorem umoribus esse,

fires from fires, moisture from-moistures to-be,

cetera consimili fingit ratione putatque.

the-rest in-like he-shapes fashion and-thinks.

nec tamen esse ulla de parte in rebus inane

nor yet to-be any from part in things void

concedit neque corporibus finem esse secandis.

he-allows nor bodies a-limit to-be for-cutting.

845 quare in utraque mihi pariter ratione videtur

wherefore in each to-me alike reasoning he-seems

errare atque illi, supra quos diximus ante.

to-err and those, above whom we-named before.

I.21 · WHY BONE IS NOT MADE OF BONES

Anaxagoras' first-beginnings are too feeble: if they are endowed with a nature like the things themselves, they suffer and perish as those do. And if food increases the body, then food must already hold veins, blood, and bones within it, so that every food, dry alike and liquid, is made of foreign parts after all. The same argument holds for whatever grows out of the earth, and for the fire that is supposed to lie hidden in wood.

Adde quod inbecilla nimis primordia fingit;

Add that feeble too the-first-beginnings he-shapes;

si primordia sunt, simili quae praedita constant

if first-beginnings they-are, with-like which endowed stand

natura atque ipsae res sunt aequaeque laborant

nature as themselves things are and-equally they-suffer

850 et pereunt, neque ab exitio res ulla refrenat.

and perish, nor from destruction thing any holds-back.

nam quid in oppressu valido durabit eorum,
for what under the-crushing strong will-endure of-them,
 ut mortem effugiat, leti sub dentibus ipsis?
so-as death to-escape, of-death beneath the-teeth themselves?
 ignis an umor an aura? quid horum? sanguen an ossa?
fire or moisture or breeze? which of-these? blood or bones?
 nil ut opinor, ubi ex aequo res funditus omnis
nothing as I-think, where on equal-terms things utterly all
 tam mortalis erit quam quae manifesta videmus
as mortal will-be as which manifest we-see
 ex oculis nostris aliqua vi victa perire.

855

from eyes our by-some force overcome to-perish.
 at neque reccidere ad nihilum res posse neque autem
but neither to-fall-back to nothing things can nor again
 crescere de nihilo testor res ante probatas.
to-grow from nothing I-call-to-witness the-things before proved.

Praeterea quoniam cibus auget corpus alitque,
Besides since food increases the-body and-feeds,
 scire licet nobis venas et sanguen et ossa
to-know one-may our veins and blood and bones

860

(lacuna)

sive cibos omnis commixto corpore dicent
or-if foods all of-mingled body they-will-say
 esse et habere in se nervorum corpora parva
to-be and to-have in themselves of-sinews bodies small
 ossaque et omnino venas partisque cruoris,
and-bones and altogether veins and-parts of-gore,
 fiet uti cibus omnis et aridus et liquor ipse
it-will-come that food all both dry and liquid itself

- 865 **ex alienigenis rebus constare putetur,**
of foreign things to-consist be-thought,
ossibus et nervis sanieque et sanguine mixto.
of-bones and sinews and-ichor and blood mingled.
Praeterea quae cumque e terra corpora crescunt,
Besides what soever from earth bodies grow,
si sunt in terris, terram constare necessest
if they-are in the-earth, earth to-consist must-needs
ex alienigenis, quae terris exoriuntur.
of foreign-things, which from-earth spring-up.
- 870 **transfer item, totidem verbis utare licebit:**
transfer-it likewise, the-same words you-may-use it-will-be-allowed:
in lignis si flamma latet fumusque cinisque,
in logs if flame lurks and-smoke and-ash,
ex alienigenis consistant ligna necessest,
of foreign-things consist logs must-needs,
ex alienigenis, quae lignis exoriuntur.
of foreign-things, which from-logs spring-up.

Anaxagoras takes refuge in saying that everything lurks mixed in everything, and that only the most plentiful ingredient shows. Then grain crushed by stone should bleed, grasses should give drops that taste of milk, and split logs should show ash and smoke. When wind rubs treetops into flame, no fire was hidden in the wood; its seeds were there, and rubbing brought them together. And first-beginnings like the things they make would have to laugh and weep.

Linquitur hic quaedam latitandi copia tenvis,

875

There-is-left here a-certain of-hiding chance slender,

id quod Anaxagoras sibi sumit, ut omnibus omnis

that which Anaxagoras for-himself takes, that in-all all

res putet inmixtas rebus latitare, sed illud

things he-thinks mingled things to-lie-bidden, but that

apparere unum, cuius sint plurima mixta

to-appear one, of-which are most-parts mingled

et magis in promptu primaque in fronte locata.

and more in readiness and-first in front placed.

quod tamen a vera longe ratione repulsumst;

880

which yet from true far reasoning is-driven-off;

conveniebat enim fruges quoque saepe, minaci

it-would-be-fitting for grains also often, with-threatening

robore cum saxi franguntur, mittere signum

strength when of-a-stone they-are-crushed, to-let-forth a-sign

sanguinis aut aliquid, nostro quae corpore aluntur.

of-blood or something, by-our which body are-nourished.

cum lapidi in lapidem terimus, manare cruorem

when a-stone on a-stone we-grind, to-flow gore

consimili ratione herbis quoque saepe decebat,

885

in-like fashion from-grasses also often it-would-be-fit,

et latices dulcis guttas similique sapore

and waters sweet drops and-with-like taste

mittere, lanigeræ quali sunt ubere lactis,

to-send, the-wool-bearing such-as are from-the-udder of-milk,

scilicet et glebis terrarum sæpe friatis

surely and clods of-earth often crumbled

herbarum genera et fruges frondesque videri

of-grasses kinds and grains and-leaves to-be-seen

890 dispertita inter terram latitare minute,

scattered among the-earth to-lie-hidden minutely,

postremo in lignis cinerem fumumque videri,

lastly in logs ash and-smoke to-be-seen,

cum prae fracta forent, ignisque latere minutos.

when broken-apart they-were, and-fires to-lurk tiny.

quorum nil fieri quoniam manifesta docet res,

of-which nothing to-happen since manifest teaches fact,

scire licet non esse in rebus res ita mixtas,

to-know one-may not to-be in things things so mingled,

895 verum semina multimodis inmixta latere

but seeds in-many-ways mingled to-lurk

multarum rerum in rebus communia debent.

of-many things in things common they-must.

‘At sæpe in magnis fit montibus’ inquis ‘ut altis

‘but often on great it-happens mountains’ you-say ‘that of-tall

arboribus vicina cacumina summa terantur

trees neighboring the-tops highest are-rubbed

inter se validis facere id cogentibus austris,

among themselves strong to-do that compelling south-winds,

900 donec flammai fulserunt flore coorto.’

until of-flame they-have-flashed with-the-blossom sprung-up.’

scilicet et non est lignis tamen insitus ignis,

surely and not is in-logs yet implanted fire,

verum semina sunt ardoris multa, terendo

but seeds there-are of-blaze many, by-rubbing

quae cum confluxere, creant incendia silvis.

which when they-have-flowed-together, they-make conflagrations in-the-woods.

quod si facta foret silvis abscondita flamma,

but if made had-been in-the-woods hidden flame,

non possent ullum tempus celarier ignes,

not could for-any time be-bidden the-fires,

conficerent volgo silvas, arbusta cremarent.

they-would-destroy everywhere the-woods, the-trees they-would-burn.

iamne vides igitur, paulo quod diximus ante,

do-you-now see therefore, a-little what we-said before,

permagni referre eadem primordia saepe

very-greatly it-matters the-same first-beginnings often

cum quibus et quali positura contineantur

with which and in-what position they-are-held

et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,

and what among themselves they-give motions and-receive,

atque eadem paulo inter se mutata creare

and the-same a-little among themselves changed to-make

ignes et lignum? quo pacto verba quoque ipsa

fires and wood? in-what way words also themselves

inter se paulo mutatis sunt elementis,

among themselves a-little changed are letters,

cum ligna atque ignes distincta voce notemus.

when logs and fires with-distinct sound we-mark.

Denique iam quae cumque in rebus cernis apertis

Finally now what soever in things you-see open

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si fieri non posse putas, quin materiai

if to-happen not can you-think, unless of-matter

corpora consimili natura praedita fingas,

the-bodies with-like nature endowed you-imagine,

hac ratione tibi pereunt primordia rerum:

by-this reasoning for-you perish the-first-beginnings of-things:

fiet uti risu tremulo concussa cachinnent

it-will-come that with-laughter shaking convulsed they-guffaw

920 et lacrimis salsis umectent ora genasque.

and with-tears salt they-wet faces and-cheeks.

I.23 · WORMWOOD IN A HONEYED CUP

Lucretius claims a path over ground no one has trodden, drawing from untouched springs and seeking a crown the Muses have given no one. His subject is great: to free the mind from the knots of religion, and to set a dark matter in luminous verse. As doctors rim a cup with honey to coax a child into drinking bitter wormwood, so he coats a hard doctrine in the charm of the Muses.

Nunc age, quod super est, cognosce et clarius audi.

Now come, what over is, learn and more-clearly hear.

nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura; sed acri

nor me in-mind escapes how they-are dark; but with-sharp

percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor

has-struck thyrsus of-praise hope great my heart

et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem

and at-once has-struck sweet to-me into breast love

925 Musarum, quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti

of-the-Muses, by-which now inspired with-mind vigorous

avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante

pathless of-the-Pierides I-range places by-none before

trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis

trodden sole. it-delights untouched to-approach springs

atque haurire iuvatque novos decerpere flores

and to-drink and-it-delights new to-pluck flowers

insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,

and-distinguished for-my head to-seek thence crown,

unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musae;

whence before for-none have-veiled the-temples the-Muses;

primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis

first because great I-teach about matters and tight

religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,

of-religions the-mind from-the-knots to-free I-press-on,

deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango

next because dark about a-matter so luminous I-fashion

carmina musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.

songs with-Muses' touching all charm.

id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur;

that too for not from no reason seems;

sed vel uti pueris absinthia taetra medentes

but even as to-children wormwood foul healers

cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum

when to-give they-try, first the-rims the-cups around

contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,

they-touch of-honey with-sweet and-yellow liquid,

ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur

so-that of-children the-age unforeseeing may-be-beguiled

labrorum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum

of-the-lips as-far-as, meanwhile may-drink-off bitter

absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiatur,

of-wormwood the-draft and-deceived not be-caught,

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sed potius tali facto recreata valescat,

but rather by-such a-deed restored grow-strong,

sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur

so I now, since this reasoning mostly seems

tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque

too-gloomy to-be to-whom not it-is handled, and-back

945 volgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti

the-crowd shrinks from it, I-have-wished to-you in-sweet-speaking

carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram

song Pierian the-reasoning to-set-forth our

et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle,

and as-it-were with-Muses' sweet to-touch honey,

si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere

if for-you perchance the-mind by-such a-way to-hold

versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem

verses in our I-could, while you-look-through the-whole

950 naturam rerum, qua constet compta figura.

nature of-things, by-what it-stands ordered shape.

The sum of things has no boundary in any direction, for a boundary needs something beyond it to bound it, and outside the whole there is nothing. If a man ran to the supposed edge and threw a spear, either it would fly on or something would stop it — and either way the edge is not an edge. And were space bounded, all matter would long since have settled to the bottom, and there would be no sky and no sun.

Sed quoniam docui solidissima materiai

But since I-have-taught most-solid of-matter

corpora perpetuo volitare invicta per aevom,

the-bodies unceasingly to-fly unconquered through the-ages,

nunc age, summai quaedam sit finis eorum

now come, of-the-sum any there-is a-limit of-them

necne sit, evolvamus; item quod inane reptumst

or-not there-is, let-us-unroll; likewise what void has-been-found

seu locus ac spatium, res in quo quaeque gerantur,

or place and space, things in which each are-carried-on,

pervideamus utrum finitum funditus omne

let-us-see-through whether bounded utterly the-whole

constet an immensum pateat vasteque profundum.

stands or measureless spreads and-vastly deep.

Omne quod est igitur nulla regione viarum

The-whole which is therefore in-no quarter of-ways

finitumst; namque extremum debbat habere.

is-bounded; for an-outermost it-had-to have.

extremum porro nullius posse videtur

an-outermost further of-nothing can seems

esse, nisi ultra sit quod finiat, ut videatur

to-be, unless beyond there-is what bounds-it, so-that is-seen

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quo non longius haec sensus natura sequatur.

beyond-which not further this of-sense the-nature follows.

nunc extra summam quoniam nihil esse fatendum,

now beyond the-sum since nothing to-be must-be-confessed,

non habet extremum, caret ergo fine modoque.

not it-has an-outermost, it-lacks therefore bound and-measure.

965 nec refert quibus adsistas regionibus eius;

nor it-matters in-what you-stand quarters of-it;

usque adeo, quem quisque locum possedit, in omnis

right so-far, which each place has-taken, in all

tantundem partis infinitum omne relinquit.

just-as-much directions infinite the-whole it-leaves.

Praeterea si iam finitum constituatur

Besides if now bounded be-supposed

omne quod est spatium, si quis procurrat ad oras

all which is space, if anyone should-run-forth to the-shores

970 ultimus extremas iaciatque volatile telum,

farthest(-man) outermost and-burl a-flying dart,

id validis utrum contortum viribus ire

it with-strong whether burlled forces to-go

quo fuerit missum mavis longeque volare,

whither it-was sent you-prefer and-far to-fly,

an prohibere aliquid censes obstareque posse?

or to-binder something you-judge and-to-withstand can?

alterutrum fatearis enim sumasque necessest.

one-or-the-other you-confess for and-take must-needs.

975 quorum utrumque tibi effugium praecludit et omne

of-which each for-you escape shuts-off and the-whole

cogit ut exempta concedas fine patere.

compels that taken-away you-grant bound to-stretch.

nam sive est aliquid quod probeat efficiatque

for whether there-is something which binders and-brings-about

quo minus quo missum est veniat finique locet se,

whereby the-less whither sent it-was it-comes and-at-a-bound sets itself,

sive foras fertur, non est a fine profectum.

or outward it-is-borne, not is from a-bound it-has-set-out.

hoc pacto sequar atque, oras ubi cumque locaris

in-this way I-shall-follow and, the-shores where soever you-place

extremas, quaeram: quid telo denique fiet?

outermost, I-shall-ask: what to-the-dart finally will-happen?

fiet uti nusquam possit consistere finis

it-will-happen that nowhere can stand a-bound

effugiumque fugae prolatet copia semper.

and-escape of-flight prolongs the-chance always.

Praeterea spatium summai totius omne

Besides space of-the-sum whole all

undique si inclusum certis consisteret oris

everywhere if shut-in by-fixed stood shores

finitumque foret, iam copia materiai

and-bounded were, by-now the-store of-matter

undique ponderibus solidis confluxet ad imum

from-everywhere by-weights solid would-have-flowed-together to the-bottom

nec res ulla geri sub caeli tegmine posset

nor thing any to-be-carried-on beneath of-heaven the-cover could

nec foret omnino caelum neque lumina solis,

nor would-there-be at-all sky nor the-lights of-the-sun,

quippe ubi materies omnis cumulata iaceret

for where matter all heaped would-lie

ex infinito iam tempore subsidendo.

from infinite now time by-settling.

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at nunc ni mirum requies data principiorum

but now no wonder rest given of-the-first-elements

corporibus nullast, quia nil est funditus imum,

to-the-bodies there-is-none, because nothing is utterly lowest,

quo quasi confluere et sedes ubi ponere possint.

whither as-it-were to-flow-together and seats where to-set they-could.

995 semper in adsiduo motu res quaeque geruntur

always in unceasing motion things each are-carried-on

partibus in cunctis, infernaque suppeditantur

parts in all, and-from-below are-supplied

ex infinito cita corpora materiai.

from infinite swift bodies of-matter.

Postremo ante oculos res rem finire videtur;

Lastly before the-eyes thing thing to-bound seems;

aer dissaepit collis atque aera montes,

air divides hills and the-air mountains,

1000 terra mare et contra mare terras terminat omnis;

earth sea and conversely sea lands bounds all;

omne quidem vero nihil est quod finiat extra.

the-whole indeed truly nothing there-is which bounds outside.

Space is bottomless, and matter is infinite too, for each keeps the other from being bounded. Otherwise neither sea nor earth nor sky nor the holy bodies of the gods could hold out for the space of an hour: matter would be scattered through the void, or would never have compacted into anything at all. The first-beginnings took their places by no design and struck no covenant, but were harried through infinite time until they fell into the arrangements that make the world and renew it.

est igitur natura loci spatiumque profundi,

there-is therefore a-nature of-place and-a-space of-the-deep,

quod neque clara suo percurrere fulmina cursu

which neither bright in-their to-traverse thunderbolts course

perpetuo possint aevi labentia tractu

unending could of-time gliding in-a-stretch

nec prorsum facere ut restet minus ire meando;

nor at-all bring-it-about that remains less to-go by-traveling;

usque adeo passim patet ingens copia rebus

right so-far everywhere stretches a-vast store for-things

finibus exemptis in cunctas undique partis.

bounds taken-away into all everywhere directions.

Ipsa modum porro sibi rerum summa parare

Itself a-measure further for-itself of-things the-sum to-make

ne possit, natura tenet, quae corpus inane

lest it-can, nature holds, which body by-void

et quod inane autem est finiri corpore cogit,

and what void again is to-be-bounded by-body compels,

ut sic alternis infinita omnia reddat,

so-that thus by-turns infinite all-things it-renders,

aut etiam alterutrum, nisi terminet alterum eorum,

or else one-of-the-two, unless bounds the-other of-them,

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1010

simplice natura pateat tamen inmoderatum,

with-simple nature stretches still unmeasured,

nec mare nec tellus neque caeli lucida templa

neither sea nor earth nor of-heaven the-shining precincts

1015 nec mortale genus nec divum corpora sancta

nor mortal race nor of-gods bodies holy

exiguum possent horai sistere tempus;

a-scant could of-an-hour hold-out time;

nam dispulsa suo de coetu materiai

for driven-apart its from gathering of-matter

copia ferretur magnum per inane soluta,

the-store would-be-borne the-great through void dissolved,

sive adeo potius numquam concreta creasset

or indeed rather never compacted would-have-created

1020 ullam rem, quoniam cogi disiecta nequisset.

any thing, since to-be-gathered scattered it-could-not.

nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum

for surely neither by-design the-first-beginnings of-things

ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt

in-order themselves their-own each with-shrewd mind placed

nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto

nor what each would-give motions did-they-covenant assuredly

sed quia multa modis multis mutata per omne

but because many in-ways many changed through the-whole

1025 ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,

from infinite are-barried driven by-blows,

omne genus motus et coetus experiundo

every kind of-motion and gathering by-trying

tandem deveniunt in talis disposituras,

at-last they-come into such arrangements,

qualibus haec rerum consistit summa creata,
by-which this of-things stands sum created,
 et multos etiam magnos servata per annos
and many even great preserved through years
 ut semel in motus coniectast convenientis,
when once into motions it-has-been-thrown fitting,
 efficit ut largis avidum mare fluminis undis
it-brings-about that with-copious the-greedy sea of-river waves
 integrent amnes et solis terra vapore
renew the-streams and of-the-sun the-earth by-vapor
 fota novet fetus summissaque gens animantum
fostered renews offspring and-sent-up the-race of-living-things
 floreat et vivant labentis aetheris ignes.
flourishes and live of-the-gliding aether the-fires.
 quod nullo facerent pacto, nisi materiai
which in-no they-would-do way, unless of-matter
 ex infinito suboriri copia posset,
from infinite to-rise-up a-store could,
 unde amissa solent reparare in tempore quaeque.
whence what-is-lost they-are-wont to-restore in season each.
 nam vel uti privata cibo natura animantum
for even as deprived of-food the-nature of-living-things
 diffluit amittens corpus, sic omnia debent
wastes-away losing body, so all-things must
 dissolui simul ac defecit suppeditare
to-be-dissolved as-soon as has-failed to-supply
 materies aliqua ratione aversa viai.
matter in-some way turned-aside of-the-road.
 nec plagae possunt extrinsecus undique summam
nor blows can from-without everywhere the-sum

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conservare omnem, quae cumque est conciliata.

to-preserve whole, what soever is combined.

cudere enim crebro possunt partemque morari,

to-hammer for often they-can and-a-part to-bold-back,

1045 dum veniant aliae ac suppleri summa queatur;

until come others and to-be-filled-up the-sum can-be;

inter dum resilire tamen coguntur et una

between times to-spring-back yet they-are-forced and together

principiis rerum spatium tempusque fugai

to-the-first-elements of-things space and-time of-flight

largiri, ut possint a coetu libera ferri.

to-grant, so-that they-can from the-gathering free to-be-borne.

quare etiam atque etiam suboriri multa necessest,

wherefore again and again to-rise-up many must-needs,

1050 et tamen ut plagae quoque possint suppetere ipsae,

and yet that the-blows also can bold-out themselves,

infinita opus est vis undique materiai.

infinite need there-is force everywhere of-matter.

Memmius must not believe that everything presses toward a center, that the world stands firm without outward blows, and that creatures on the far side of the earth walk upside down. In an infinite void there is no middle at all, and even if there were, nothing could rest there rather than move on. The void cannot support anything; it must give way wherever weight goes.

Illud in his rebus longe fuge credere, Memmi,

This in these matters far shun to-believe, Memmius,

in medium summae quod dicunt omnia niti

to the-middle of-the-sum that they-say all-things to-press

atque ideo mundi naturam stare sine ullis

and therefore of-the-world the-nature to-stand without any

ictibus externis neque quoquam posse resolvi

blows outward nor anywhere can to-be-loosed

summa atque ima, quod in medium sint omnia nixa,

the-highest and the-lowest, because to the-middle are all-things leaning,

ipsum si quicquam posse in se sistere credis,

itself if anything can on itself to-rest you-believe,

et quae pondera sunt sub terris omnia sursum

and what weights are beneath the-earth all upward

nitier in terraque retro requiescere posta,

to-press on and-earth backward to-rest laid,

ut per aquas quae nunc rerum simulacra videmus;

as through waters which now of-things the-images we-see;

et simili ratione animalia suppa vagari

and in-like fashion living-things upside-down to-wander

contendunt neque posse e terris in loca caeli

they-maintain nor can from the-earth into regions of-heaven

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reccidere inferiora magis quam corpora nostra

to-fall lower more than bodies our

sponte sua possint in caeli templa volare;

ofaccord their-own could into of-heaven the-precincts fly;

1065 illi cum videant solem, nos sidera noctis

they when see the-sun, we the-stars of-night

cernere et alternis nobiscum tempora caeli

to-discern and by-turns with-us the-seasons of-heaven

dividere et noctes parilis agitare diebus.

to-divide and nights equal to-pass with-days.

sed vanus stolidis haec ***

but empty for-the-dull these (lacuna)

amplexi quod habent perv ***

having-embraced which they-hold (broken-off) (lacuna)

1070 nam medium nihil esse potest ***

for a-middle nothing to-be can (lacuna)

infinita; neque omnino, si iam medium sit,

infinite; nor at-all, if even a-middle there-is,

possit ibi quicquam consistere ***

could there anything stand (lacuna)

quam quavis alia longe ratione ***

than in-any other far way (lacuna)

omnis enim locus ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,

every for place and space, which void we-call,

1075 per medium, per non medium, concedere debet

through the-middle, through not the-middle, to-give-way must

aeque ponderibus, motus qua cumque feruntur.

alike to-weights, motions where soever they-are-borne.

nec quisquam locus est, quo corpora cum venerunt,

nor any place there-is, whither bodies when have-come,

ponderis amissa vi possint stare in inani;

of-weight lost force they-could to-stand in the-void;

nec quod inane autem est ulli subsistere debet,

nor what void again is to-any to-give-support must,

quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat.

but-that, its-own what nature seeks, to-give-way it-goes-on.

haud igitur possunt tali ratione teneri

not therefore can by-such reasoning to-be-held

res in concilium medii cuppedine victae.

things into combination of-the-middle by-a-craving overcome.

1080

I.27 · IF THE WORLD HAD A CENTER

Those who hold the doctrine make earth and water press to the center while air and fire fly from it, and have the topmost boughs leaf out only as nourishment creeps up to each from the soil. Against them: the walls of the world would fly apart like flame through the void, the sky would fall, the earth would drop from under our feet, and nothing would be left but deserted space and unseen first-beginnings. Wherever bodies are first supposed to fail, there is the door of death.

Praeterea quoniam non omnia corpora fingunt

Besides since not all bodies they-imagine

in medium niti, sed terrarum atque liquoris

to the-middle to-press, but of-earths and of-liquid

umorem ponti magnasque e montibus undas,

the-moisture of-the-sea and-the-great from mountains waves,

et quasi terreno quae corpore contineantur,

and as-it-were by-earthly which body are-held,

at contra tenuis exponunt aeris auras

but contrariwise thin they-set-forth of-air the-breezes

1085

et calidos simul a medio differrier ignis,
and hot likewise from the-middle to-be-scattered fires,

atque ideo totum circum tremere aethera signis
and therefore the-whole around to-tremble aether with-stars

1090 et solis flammam per caeli caerula pasci,
and of-the-sun the-flame through of-heaven the-blue to-be-fed,
 quod calor a medio fugiens se ibi conligat omnis,
because heat from the-middle fleeing itself there gathers all,

nec prorsum arboribus summos frondescere ramos
nor at-all on-trees the-topmost to-leaf-out boughs

posse, nisi a terris paulatim cuique cibatum
can, unless from the-earth little-by-little to-each nourishment

(lacuna)

ne volucris ritu flammaram moenia mundi
lest in-the-winged fashion of-flames the-walls of-the-world

diffugiant subito magnum per inane soluta
scatter suddenly the-great through void dissolved

et ne cetera consimili ratione sequantur
and lest the-rest in-like fashion follow

1105 neve ruant caeli tonitralia templa superne
and-lest rush-down of-heaven the-thundering precincts from-above

terraque se pedibus raptim subducat et omnis
and-the-earth itself from-beneath-the-feet swiftly withdraw and all

inter permixtas rerum caelique ruinas
amid the-mingled of-things and-of-heaven ruins

corpora solventes abeat per inane profundum,
bodies losing pass-away through void deep,

temporis ut puncto nihil extet reliquiarum
of-time so-that in-a-point nothing is-left of-remnants

desertum praeter spatium et primordia caeca.

1110

deserted except space and first-beginnings unseen.

nam qua cumque prius de parti corpora desse

for in-what soever first from part bodies to-be-wanting

constitues, haec rebus erit pars ianua leti,

you-shall-suppose, this for-things will-be part a-door of-death,

hac se turba foras dabit omnis materiai.

by-this itself the-throng outward will-give all of-matter.

Haec sic pernosces parva perductus opella;

These thus you-will-learn-through with-small led-on pains;

namque alid ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca

1115

for one-thing from another will-grow-clear nor from-you blind

nox iter eripiet, quin ultima naturai

night the-way will-snatch, but-that the-uttermost of-nature

pervideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

you-see-through: so things will-kindle lights for-things.

BOOK II

II.1 • SWEET IT IS TO WATCH FROM SHORE

It is sweet to watch another's struggle from the shore — not because his trouble pleases, but because it is sweet to see what one is free of. Sweetest of all is to hold the calm heights that wisdom builds. Nature asks little: a body free of pain and a mind free of fear. Gold adds nothing that a stream and soft grass do not give, and no parading legion drives out the fears that dread neither arms nor kings. Not daylight but the aspect and law of nature scatter them, for we fear in the light what children fear in the dark.

Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis

Sweet, on-the-sea great troubling the-waters winds

e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;

from land the-great of-another to-watch struggle;

non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas,

not because to-be-harassed anyone-is a-pleasant delight,

sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suavest.

but from-what yourself ill you-are-free because to-see is-sweet.

suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri

sweet also of-war the-contests great to-behold

per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli;

over the-plains drawn-up your without share of-danger;

sed nihil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere

but nothing sweeter is, well than fortified to-hold

edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,

lofty by-the-teaching of-the-wise precincts serene,

despicere unde queas alios passimque videre

to-look-down whence you-may-be-able others and-everywhere to-see

errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,

wander and the-way straying seek of-life,

5

10

certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,

to-strive in-wit, to-contend in-birth,

noctes atque dies niti praestante labore

nights and days to-strain with-surpassing toil

ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.

to the-highest to-rise riches and-of-affairs to-get-mastery.

o miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca!

o wretched of-men minds, o hearts blind!

15 qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periclis

what in darkness of-life and-in-how-great perils

degitur hoc aevi quod cumquest! nonne videre

is-passed this of-time which soever-it-is! do-you-not see

nihil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi ut qui

nothing else for-itself nature barks-for, except that somehow

corpore seiunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur

from-body severed pain be-away, with-mind it-enjoy

iucundo sensu cura semota metuque?

pleasant feeling from-care removed and-from-fear?

20 ergo corpoream ad naturam pauca videmus

therefore bodily for nature few-things we-see

esse opus omnino: quae demant cumque dolorem,

to-be need at-all: what take-away soever pain,

delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint

delights also so-that many to-spread-beneath they-can

gratius inter dum, neque natura ipsa requirit,

more-agreeably between times, nor nature herself requires,

si non aurea sunt iuvenum simulacra per aedes

if not golden there-are of-youths images through the-halls

25 lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,

torches fire-bearing in-bands holding right,

lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,

lights for-nightly feasts that may-be-supplied,

nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet

nor the-house with-silver gleams and-with-gold shines

nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templa,

nor lyres re-echo-through the-paneled and-gilded halls,

cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli

when yet among themselves stretched-out on grass soft

propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae

beside of-water a-stream beneath the-boughs of-a-tree tall

non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant,

not with-great riches pleasantly bodies they-tend,

praesertim cum tempestas adridet et anni

especially when the-weather smiles and of-the-year

tempora conspergunt viridantis floribus herbas.

the-seasons sprinkle greening with-flowers grasses.

nec calidae citius decedunt corpore febres,

nor hot sooner depart from-the-body fevers,

textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti

woven if on figures and-purple reddening

iacteris, quam si in plebeia veste cubandum est.

you-toss, than if in a-common garment to-lie it-is.

quapropter quoniam nihil nostro in corpore gazae

wherefore since nothing our in body treasures

proficiunt neque nobilitas nec gloria regni,

avail nor birth nor the-glory of-kingship,

quod super est, animo quoque nil prodesse putandum;

as-for-what over is, for-the-mind also nothing to-profit must-be-thought;

si non forte tuas legiones per loca campi

if not perchance your legions over the-tracts of-the-plain

30

35

40

fervere cum videas belli simulacra cientis,

swarm when you-see of-war the-shows rousing,

subsidiis magnis et opum vi constabilitas,

with-reserves great and of-resources force steadied,

ornatas armis statuas pariterque animatas,

fitted-out with-arms you-draw-up and-likewise spirited,

his tibi tum rebus timefactae religiones

by-these for-you then things frightened religions

45 effugiunt animo pavidae mortisque timores

flee from-the-mind trembling and-of-death the-fears

tum vacuum pectus lincunt curaque solutum.

then empty the-breast leave and-from-care freed.

quod si ridicula haec ludibriaque esse videmus,

but if laughable these and-mockeries to-be we-see,

re veraque metus hominum curaeque sequaces

in-fact and-truly fears of-men and-cares dogging

nec metuunt sonitus armorum nec fera tela

neither fear the-clash of-arms nor fierce weapons

50 audacterque inter reges rerumque potentis

and-boldly among kings and-of-affairs the-masters

versantur neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro

they-move nor the-glitter they-revere from gold

nec clarum vestis splendorem purpureai,

nor the-bright of-raiment splendor purple,

quid dubitas quin omnis sit haec rationis potestas,

why do-you-doubt but-that all is this of-reasoning the-power,

omnis cum in tenebris praesertim vita laboret?

all when in darkness especially life labors?

55 nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis

for even as children tremble and all-things blind

in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus

in darkness fear, so we in the-light fear

inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam

between times, by-nothing what are to-be-feared more than

quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.

what children in darkness dread and-imagine coming.

hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest

this therefore terror of-mind and-the-darkness must-needs

non radii solis neque lucida tela diei

not the-rays of-the-sun nor the-bright shafts of-day

discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

scatter, but of-nature the-aspect and-the-law.

60

II.2 • THE TORCH OF LIFE

Lucretius turns to the motions by which the first-beginnings beget things and dissolve them again. Matter does not cohere packed tight, for we see everything dwindle and flow away with age, though the sum stays whole: what leaves one thing joins another. So the sum of things is always renewed, and living creatures hand on the torch of life like runners.

Nunc age, quo motu genitalia materiai

Now come, by-what motion the-generative of-matter

corpora res varias gignant genitasque resolvant

bodies things varied beget and-once-begotten dissolve

et qua vi facere id cogantur quaeque sit ollis

and by-what force to-do that they-are-compelled and-what is to-them

reddita mobilitas magnum per inane meandi,

granted mobility the-great through void of-traveling,

expediam: tu te dictis praebere memento.

I-shall-set-forth: you yourself to-my-words to-lend remember.

65

nam certe non inter se stipata cohaeret

for surely not among themselves packed coheres

materies, quoniam minui rem quamque videmus

matter, since to-lessen thing each we-see

et quasi longinquo fluere omnia cernimus aevo

and as-it-were in-long to-flow-away all-things we-perceive age

70 ex oculisque vetustatem subducere nostris,

from and-eyes old-age to-withdraw our,

cum tamen incolumis videatur summa manere

although yet unharmed seems the-sum to-remain

propterea quia, quae decedunt corpora cuique,

therefore because, what depart bodies from-each,

unde abeunt minuunt, quo venere augmine donant.

whence they-go-away they-lessen, whither they-have-come with-increase they-endow.

illa senescere, at haec contra florescere cogunt,

those to-age, but these on-the-contrary to-bloom they-compel,

75 nec remorantur ibi. sic rerum summa novatur

nor do-they-linger there. so of-things the-sum is-renewed

semper, et inter se mortales mutua vivunt.

always, and among themselves mortals in-exchange live.

augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur,

increase some races, others dwindle,

inque brevi spatio mutantur saecula animantum

and-in a-short space are-changed the-generations of-living-things

et quasi cursores vitae lampada tradunt.

and as-it-were runners of-life the-torch hand-on.

The first-beginnings never pause. They are borne either by their own weight or by blows, and since the whole has no bottom, they have nowhere to come to rest. Those locked in dense combinations make rock and iron; the freest make air and sunlight. The motes that dance in a sunbeam let into a dark room are a small image of it, and their changes of course betray the unseen blows beneath.

Si cessare putas rerum primordia posse 80

If to-pause you-think of-things the-first-beginnings can

cessandoque novos rerum progignere motus,

and-by-pausing new of-things to-beget motions,

avius a vera longe ratione vagaris.

astray from true far reasoning you-wander.

nam quoniam per inane vagantur, cuncta necessest

for since through void they-wander, all must-needs

aut gravitate sua ferri primordia rerum

either by-weight their-own to-be-borne the-first-beginnings of-things

aut ictu forte alterius. nam cum cita saepe 85

or by-the-blow perchance of-another. for when swift often

obvia confluxere, fit ut diversa repente

meeting they-have-clashed, it-happens that apart suddenly

dissiliant; neque enim mirum, durissima quae sint

they-spring; nor for a-wonder, hardest which are

ponderibus solidis neque quicquam a tergibus obstet.

by-weights solid nor anything from behind withstands.

et quo iactari magis omnia materialia

and so-that to-be-tossed the-more all of-matter

corpora pervideas, reminiscere totius imum 90

bodies you-may-see-through, remember of-the-whole a-bottom

nil esse in summa, neque habere ubi corpora prima

nothing to-be in the-sum, nor to-have where bodies first

consistent, quoniam spatium sine fine modoquest

may-stand, since space without bound and-measure-is

inmensumque patere in cunctas undique partis

and-measureless to-stretch into all everywhere directions

pluribus ostendi et certa ratione probatumst.

in-many-ways has-been-shown and by-sure reasoning been-proved.

95 quod quoniam constat, ni mirum nulla quies est

which since stands, no wonder no rest is

reddita corporibus primis per inane profundum,

granted to-the-bodies first through void deep,

sed magis adsiduo varioque exercita motu

but rather by-unceasing and-varied driven motion

partim intervallis magnis confulta resultant,

some at-intervals great propped rebound,

pars etiam brevibus spatiis vexantur ab ictu.

a-part also at-short spaces are-harried by the-blow.

100 et quae cumque magis condenso conciliatu

and what soever more by-a-dense combination

exiguus intervallis convecta resultant,

at-scant intervals driven-together rebound,

indupedita suis perplexis ipsa figuris,

entangled by-their-own interlaced themselves shapes,

haec validas saxi radices et fera ferri

these strong of-rock the-roots and fierce of-iron

corpora constituunt et cetera de genere horum.

bodies make-up and the-rest of kind of-these.

105 paucula quae porro magnum per inane vagantur,

the-few which further the-great through void wander,

cetera dissiliunt longe longeque recursant

the-rest spring-apart far and-far run-back

in magnis intervallis; haec aera rarum

at great intervals; these air thin

sufficiunt nobis et splendida lumina solis.

supply for-us and bright the-lights of-the-sun.

multaque praeterea magnum per inane vagantur,

and-many besides the-great through void wander,

conciliis rerum quae sunt reiecta nec usquam

from-the-combinations of-things which are cast-out nor anywhere

consociare etiam motus potuere recepta.

to-join even motions have-they-been-able received.

Cuius, uti memoro, rei simulacrum et imago

Of-which, as I-tell, thing a-likeness and an-image

ante oculos semper nobis versatur et instat.

before the-eyes always for-us moves and is-at-hand.

contemplator enim, cum solis lumina cumque

look for, when of-the-sun the-lights soever

inserti fundunt radii per opaca domorum:

let-in pour rays through the-dark-places of-houses:

multa minuta modis multis per inane videbis

many tiny in-ways many through void you-will-see

corpora misceri radiorum lumine in ipso

bodies to-be-mingled of-the-rays the-light in itself

et vel ut aeterno certamine proelia pugnās

and even as in-everlasting struggle battles fights

edere turmatim certantia nec dare pausam,

to-wage troop-by-troop contending nor to-give a-pause,

conciliis et discidiis exercita crebris;

by-combinations and partings driven frequent;

110

115

120

conicere ut possis ex hoc, primordia rerum
to-infer so-that you-may-be-able from this, the-first-beginnings of-things

quale sit in magno iactari semper inani.

what-kind it-is in the-great to-be-tossed always void.

dum taxat, rerum magnarum parva potest res

at most, of-things great a-small can thing

exemplare dare et vestigia notitiae.

a-pattern give and traces of-knowledge.

125 Hoc etiam magis haec animum te advertere par est

This also the-more these mind you to-turn fitting it-is

corpora quae in solis radiis turbare videntur,

bodies which in of-the-sun rays to-stir seem,

quod tales turbae motus quoque materiai

because such stirrings motions also of-matter

significant clandestinos caecosque subesse.

betoken secret and-unseen to-lie-beneath.

multa videbis enim plagis ibi percita caecis

many you-will-see for by-blows there driven unseen

130 commutare viam retroque repulsa reverti

to-change the-way and-backward driven-back to-return

nunc huc nunc illuc in cunctas undique partis.

now hither now thither into all everywhere directions.

scilicet hic a principiis est omnibus error.

surely this from the-first-elements is all the-wandering.

prima moventur enim per se primordia rerum,

first are-moved for by themselves the-first-beginnings of-things,

inde ea quae parvo sunt corpora conciliatu

then those which of-a-small are bodies combination

135 et quasi proxima sunt ad viris principiorum,

and as-it-were nearest are to the-forces of-the-first-elements,

ictibus illorum caecis impulsa cientur,

by-the-blows of-those unseen struck are-set-moving,

ipsaque proporro paulo maiora lacesunt.

and-they-themselves in-their-turn a-little greater assail.

sic a principiis ascendit motus et exit

so from the-first-elements mounts motion and passes-out

paulatim nostros ad sensus, ut moveantur

little-by-little our to senses, so-that are-moved

illa quoque, in solis quae lumine cernere quimus

those also, in of-the-sun which light to-discern we-can

nec quibus id faciant plagis apparet aperte.

nor by-what that they-do blows appears openly.

140

II.4 · FASTER THAN SUNLIGHT

The first-beginnings move far faster than sunlight, because light must beat its way through air while they travel the void unhindered. Against those who say nature could not turn the seasons and make the crops so aptly for men without the will of the gods, Lucretius answers that from the workings of the sky alone he would dare to affirm that the gods did not make the world for us: it is far too flawed.

Nunc quae mobilitas sit reddita materiai

Now what mobility is granted of-matter

corporibus, paucis licet hinc cognoscere, Memmi.

to-the-bodies, in-few-words you-may hence learn, Memmius.

primum aurora novo cum spargit lumine terras

first the-dawn with-new when sprinkles light the-lands

et variae volucres nemora avia pervolitantes

and the-varied birds the-groves pathless flitting-through

aera per tenerum liquidis loca vocibus opplent,

the-air through soft with-liquid the-places voices fill,

145

quam subito soleat sol ortus tempore tali

how suddenly is-wont the-sun risen at-a-time such

convestire sua perfundens omnia luce,

to-clothe with-his flooding all-things light,

omnibus in promptu manifestumque esse videmus.

to-all in plain-view and-manifest to-be we-see.

150 at vapor is, quem sol mittit, lumenque serenum

but the-vapor that, which the-sun sends, and-the-light clear

non per inane meat vacuum; quo tardius ire

not through void travels empty; wherefore more-slowly to-go

cogitur, aerias quasi dum diverberat undas;

it-is-forced, airy as-it-were while it-beats-through waves;

nec singillatim corpuscula quaeque vaporis

nor one-by-one the-little-bodies each of-vapor

sed complexa meant inter se conquae globata;

but entwined travel among themselves and-together balled;

155 qua propter simul inter se retrahuntur et extra

for-which reason at-once among themselves they-are-drawn-back and from-without

officiuntur, uti cogantur tardius ire.

they-are-blocked, so-that they-are-forced more-slowly to-go.

at quae sunt solida primordia simplicitate,

but which are solid first-beginnings in-singleness,

cum per inane meat vacuum nec res remoratur

when through void they-travel empty nor thing delays

ulla foris atque ipsa suis e partibus unum,

any outside and themselves their-own from parts one,

160 unum, in quem coepere, locum conixa feruntur,

one, into which they-began, place straining they-are-borne,

debent ni mirum praecellere mobilitate

they-must no wonder to-excel in-mobility

et multo citius ferri quam lumina solis
and much faster to-be-borne than the-lights of-the-sun
 multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
and-manifold of-place the-stretch to-run-across in-the-same
 tempore quo solis pervolgant fulgura caelum.
time in-which of-the-sun range-through the-flashes heaven.

(lacuna)

nec persectari primordia singula quaeque,
nor to-follow-out the-first-beginnings one by-one,
 ut videant qua quicque geratur cum ratione.
so-as they-may-see by-what each is-carried-on with reason.

165

At quidam contra haec, ignari materiai,
But certain-men against these, ignorant of-matter,
 naturam non posse deum sine numine reddunt
nature not can of-gods without will they-declare
 tanto opere humanis rationibus admoderate
in-so-great measure to-human needs fitted

tempora mutare annorum frugesque creare
the-seasons to-change of-the-years and-crops to-create

170

et iam cetera, mortalis quae suadet adire
and now the-rest, mortals which persuades to-approach
 ipsaque deducit dux vitae dia voluptas
and-herself leads the-guide of-life divine pleasure
 et res per Veneris blanditur saecula propagent,
and things through of-Venus coaxes generations to-propagate,
 ne genus occidat humanum. quorum omnia causa
lest the-race perish human. of-which all for-the-sake
 constituisse deos cum fingunt, omnibus rebus
to-have-established the-gods when they-imagine, in-all things

175

magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur.

in-great measure from true fallen reasoning they-seem.

nam quamvis rerum ignorem primordia quae sint,

for however of-things I-may-not-know the-first-beginnings what are,

hoc tamen ex ipsis caeli rationibus ausim

this yet from the-very of-heaven workings I-would-dare

confirmare aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,

to-affirm and-other from things to-render many,

180 nequaquam nobis divinitus esse creatam

by-no-means for-us by-divine-power to-have-been created

naturam mundi: tanta stat praedita culpa.

the-nature of-the-world: with-so-great it-stands endowed fault.

quae tibi posterius, Memmi, faciemus aperta;

which for-you later, Memmius, we-shall-make plain;

nunc id quod super est de motibus expediemus.

now that which over is about motions we-shall-set-forth.

II.5 • NOTHING RISES OF ITS OWN WEIGHT

No bodily thing moves upward of its own force. Flames rise, but they are squeezed upward, as blood let out of the body spurts high and as beams held down under water leap out again. Night torches draw their long trails wherever nature gives them passage, falling stars drop to earth, the sun sheds its heat down onto the fields, and lightning falls. Whatever their apparent direction, all weights are borne downward through the void.

Nunc locus est, ut opinor, in his illud quoque rebus

Now place there-is, as I-think, in these that also matters

185 confirmare tibi, nullam rem posse sua vi

to-affirm to-you, no thing can by-its-own force

corpoream sursum ferri sursumque meare.

bodily upward to-be-borne and-upward travel.

ne tibi dent in eo flammaram corpora frudem;

lest for-you they-give in that of-flames the-bodies deceit;

sursus enim versus gignuntur et augmina sumunt

upward for turned they-are-begotten and increase they-take

et sursum nitidae fruges arbustaque crescunt,

and upward shining crops and-trees grow,

pondera, quantum in se est, cum deorsum cuncta ferantur. 190

weights, as-much-as in themselves is, although downward all are-borne.

nec cum subsiliunt ignes ad tecta domorum

nor when leap-up fires to the-roofs of-houses

et celeri flamma degustant tigna trabesque,

and with-swift flame they-taste the-beams and-rafters,

sponte sua facere id sine vi subiecta putandum est.

ofaccord their-own to-do that without force applied-beneath to-be-thought it-is.

quod genus e nostro com missus corpore sanguis

which kind from our when sent body blood

emicat exultans alte spargitque cruorem. 195

darts leaping high and-scatters gore.

nonne vides etiam quanta vi tigna trabesque

do-you-not see also with-how-great force beams and-rafters

respuat umor aquae? nam quo magis ursimus altum

spits-back the-moisture of-water? for whereby the-more we-have-pressed deep

derecta et magna vi multi pressimus aegre,

straight-down and with-great force many we-have-pushed with-effort,

tam cupide sursum removet magis atque remittit,

so eagerly upward it-thrusts the-more and sends-back,

plus ut parte foras emergant exilantque. 200

more so-that than-a-part outward they-emerge and-leap-forth.

nec tamen haec, quantum est in se, dubitamus, opinor,
nor yet these, as-much-as is in themselves, do-we-doubt, I-think,

quin vacuum per inane deorsum cuncta ferantur.
but-that empty through void downward all are-borne.

sic igitur debent flammae quoque posse per auras
so therefore must flames also can through the-breezes

aeris expressae sursum succedere, quamquam
of-air squeezed upward rise, although

205 pondera, quantum in se est, deorsum deducere pugnent.
weights, as-much-as in themselves is, downward to-draw-down they-fight.

nocturnasque faces caeli sublime volantis
and-nightly torches of-heaven aloft flying

nonne vides longos flammarum ducere tractus
do-you-not see long of-flames to-draw trails

in quas cumque dedit partis natura meatum?
into what soever has-given quarters nature passage?

non cadere in terras stellae et sidera cernis?
not to-fall to the-earth stars and constellations do-you-see?

210 sol etiam caeli de vertice dissipat omnis
the-sun also of-heaven from the-summit scatters all

ardorem in partis et lumine conserit arva;
the-heat into quarters and with-light sows the-fields;

in terras igitur quoque solis vergitur ardor.
to the-earth therefore also of-the-sun bends the-heat.

transversosque volare per imbris fulmina cernis,
and-crosswise to-fly through rains thunderbolts you-see,

nunc hinc nunc illinc abrupti nubibus ignes
now from-here now from-there burst from-the-clouds fires

215 concursant; cadit in terras vis flammea volgo.
clash; falls to the-earth the-force fiery everywhere.

As they fall through the void, the first-beginnings swerve a very little, at no fixed time and no fixed place. Without that swerve they would fall like raindrops and never meet, and nature would have made nothing. Nor can the heavier overtake the lighter in a void, where all fall alike. The swerve is also what breaks the covenants of fate and leaves living creatures a will of their own.

Illud in his quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus,
This in these also you matters to-learn we-desire,
 corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur
bodies when downward straight through void are-borne
 ponderibus propriis, incerto tempore ferme
by-weights their-own, at-an-uncertain time roughly
 incertisque locis spatio depellere paulum,
and-at-uncertain places from-their-course to-swerve a-little,
 tantum quod momen mutatum dicere possis.
only so-much-as a-shift changed to-call you-could.

220

quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum
but unless to-swerve they-were-wont, all-things downward
 imbris uti guttae caderent per inane profundum
of-rain as drops would-fall through void deep
 nec foret offensus natus nec plaga creata
nor would-there-be a-collision born nor a-blow created
 principiis; ita nihil umquam natura creasset.
for-the-first-elements; so nothing ever nature would-have-created.

Quod si forte aliquis credit graviora potesse
But if perchance someone believes the-heavier to-be-able
 corpora, quo citius rectum per inane feruntur,
bodies, inasmuch-as faster straight through void they-are-borne,

225

incidere ex supero levioribus atque ita plagas

to-fall from above on-the-lighter and so blows

gignere, quae possint genitales reddere motus,

to-beget, which can generative render motions,

avius a vera longe ratione recedit.

astray from true far reasoning he-departs.

230 nam per aquas quae cumque cadunt atque aera rarum,

for through waters what soever fall and air thin,

haec pro ponderibus casus celerare necessest

these in-proportion-to their-weights their-falls to-quicken must-needs

propterea quia corpus aquae naturaeque tenvis

therefore because the-body of-water and-the-nature thin

aeris haud possunt aequae rem quamque morari,

of-air not can equally thing each delay,

sed citius cedunt gravioribus exsuperata;

but sooner they-yield by-the-heavier overcome;

235 at contra nulli de nulla parte neque ullo

but contrariwise to-no from no side nor at-any

tempore inane potest vacuum subsistere rei,

time the-void can empty withstand a-thing,

quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergit;

but-that, its-own what nature seeks, to-give-way it-goes-on;

omnia qua propter debent per inane quietum

all-things for-which reason must through void still

aeque ponderibus non aequis concita ferri.

alike with-weights not equal driven to-be-borne.

240 haud igitur poterunt levioribus incidere umquam

not therefore will-be-able on-the-lighter to-fall ever

ex supero graviora neque ictus gignere per se,

from above the-heavier nor blows to-beget by themselves,

qui varient motus, per quos natura gerat res.

which may-vary motions, through which nature carries-on things.

quare etiam atque etiam paulum inclinare necessest

wherefore again and again a-little to-lean must-needs

corpora; nec plus quam minimum, ne fingere motus

the-bodies; and-not more than the-least, lest to-feign motions

obliquos videamur et id res vera refutet.

245

slanting we-seem and it fact true should-refute.

namque hoc in promptu manifestumque esse videmus,

for this in plain-view and-manifest to-be we-see,

pondera, quantum in se est, non posse obliqua meare,

weights, as-much-as in themselves is, not can slanting travel,

ex supero cum praecipitant, quod cernere possis;

from above when they-plunge, which to-see you-could;

sed nihil omnino recta regione viai

but nothing at-all from-the-straight quarter of-the-road

declinare quis est qui possit cernere sese?

250

to-swerve who is that could discern itself?

Denique si semper motu conectitur omnis

Finally if always with-motion is-linked all

et vetere exoritur motus novus ordine certo

and from-an-old arises motion new in-an-order fixed

nec declinando faciunt primordia motus

nor by-swerving make the-first-beginnings of-motion

principium quoddam, quod fati foedera rumpat,

a-beginning a-certain, which of-fate the-covenants breaks,

ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur,

255

from infinite lest cause cause follow,

libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,

free through the-lands whence this to-living-things exists,

unde est haec, inquam, fatis avolsa voluntas,

whence is this, I-say, from-the-fates torn will,

per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluptas,

by which we-go-forward whither leads each pleasure,

declinamus item motus nec tempore certo

we-swerve likewise motions nor at-a-time fixed

260 nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens?

nor in-a-quarter of-space fixed, but where itself has-carried the-mind?

nam dubio procul his rebus sua cuique voluntas

for doubt beyond in-these matters his-own to-each will

principium dat et hinc motus per membra rigantur.

a-beginning gives and hence motions through the-limbs are-watered.

nonne vides etiam patefactis tempore puncto

do-you-not see also thrown-open in-time a-point

carceribus non posse tamen prorumpere equorum

the-barriers not can yet to-burst-forth of-horses

265 vim cupidam tam de subito quam mens avet ipsa?

the-force eager so on a-sudden as the-mind desires itself?

omnis enim totum per corpus material

all for the-whole through body of-matter

copia conciri debet, concita per artus

the-store to-be-stirred must, stirred through the-frame

omnis ut studium mentis conixa sequatur;

all so-that the-purpose of-the-mind straining it-may-follow;

ut videas initum motus a corde creari

so-that you-may-see the-start of-motion from the-heart to-be-created

270 ex animique voluntate id procedere primum,

from and-of-the-mind the-will it to-go-forth first,

inde dari porro per totum corpus et artus.

then is-given further through the-whole body and frame.

nec similest ut cum impulsī procedimus ictu

nor is-it-alike as when driven we-go-forward by-a-blow

viribus alterius magnis magnoque coactu;

by-forces of-another great and-by-great constraint;

nam tum materiem totius corporis omnem

for then the-matter of-the-whole body all

perspicuumst nobis invitis ire rapique,

it-is-plain us unwilling goes and-is-swept,

donec eam refrenavit per membra voluntas.

until it has-reined-back through the-limbs the-will.

iamne vides igitur, quamquam vis extera multos

do-you-now see therefore, although a-force outward many

pellat et invitos cogat procedere saepe

drives and unwilling compels to-go-forward often

praecipitesque rapi, tamen esse in pectore nostro

and-headlong to-be-swept, yet there-is in breast our

quiddam quod contra pugnare obstareque possit?

something which against to-fight and-to-withstand can?

cuius ad arbitrium quoque copia materiai

of-which at the-bidding also the-store of-matter

cogitur inter dum flecti per membra per artus

is-forced between times to-bend through the-limbs through the-frame

et proiecta refrenatur retroque residit.

and flung-forward is-reined-back and-backward it-settles.

quare in seminibus quoque idem fateare necessest,

wherefore in the-seeds also the-same you-confess must-needs,

esse aliam praeter plagas et pondera causam

there-is another besides blows and weights cause

motibus, unde haec est nobis innata potestas,

of-motions, whence this is in-us inborn power,

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de nihilo quoniam fieri nihil posse videmus.

from nothing since to-be-made nothing can we-see.

pondus enim prohibet ne plagis omnia fiant

weight for forbids lest by-blows all-things come-about

externa quasi vi; sed ne res ipsa necessum

outward as-it-were force; but lest the-thing itself a-necessity

290 intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis

inward should-have all in things to-be-done

et devicta quasi cogatur ferre patique,

and overcome as-it-were be-forced to-bear and-to-suffer,

id facit exiguum clinamen principiorum

that does the-tiny swerve of-the-first-elements

nec regione loci certa nec tempore certo.

nor in-a-quarter of-space fixed nor at-a-time fixed.

II.7 • THE SUM NEVER CHANGES

The store of matter has never been more crowded or more scattered than it is now, for nothing is added to the whole and nothing is lost from it. The first-beginnings move as they have always moved and always will, and each kind is begotten on the same terms. No force can change the sum, because there is nowhere outside it for anything to escape to or to break in from.

Nec stipata magis fuit umquam materiai

Nor packed more was ever of-matter

295 copia nec porro maioribus intervallis;

the-store nor further with-greater intervals;

nam neque adaugescit quicquam neque deperit inde.

for neither grows-larger anything nor perishes from-it.

qua propter quo nunc in motu principiorum

for-which reason what now in motion of-the-first-elements

corpora sunt, in eodem ante acta aetate fuere

the-bodies are, in the-same before passed in-time they-were

et post haec semper simili ratione ferentur,

and after these always in-like fashion will-be-borne,

et quae consuerint gigni gignentur eadem

and what have-been-wont to-be-begotten will-be-begotten on-the-same

condicione et erunt et crescent vique valebunt,

condition and will-be and will-grow and-in-force will-be-strong,

quantum cuique datum est per foedera naturai.

as-much-as to-each given is by the-covenants of-nature.

nec rerum summam commutare ulla potest vis;

nor of-things the-sum to-change any can force;

nam neque quo possit genus ullum materiai

for neither whither could kind any of-matter

effugere ex omni quicquam est extra, neque in omne

escape from the-whole anything is outside, nor into the-whole

unde coorta queat nova vis inrumpere et omnem

whence sprung-up could a-new force burst-in and the-whole

naturam rerum mutare et vertere motus.

nature of-things change and overturn motions.

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Though every first-beginning is in motion, the sum seems to stand in utter stillness, because their nature lies far below our senses. Even things we can see hide their motion at a distance: sheep cropping a hillside look like a patch of white, and legions maneuvering on the plain look, from a mountain, like a flash of bronze standing still.

Illud in his rebus non est mirabile, quare,

This in these matters not is wonderful, why,

omnia cum rerum primordia sint in motu,

all although of-things the-first-beginnings are in motion,

310 summa tamen summa videatur stare quiete,

the-sum yet in-utmost seems to-stand stillness,

praeter quam siquid proprio dat corpore motus.

other than if-anything with-its-own gives body motions.

omnis enim longe nostris ab sensibus infra

all for far our from senses below

primorum natura iacet; qua propter, ubi ipsa

of-the-first the-nature lies; for-which reason, when themselves

cernere iam nequeas, motus quoque surpere debent;

to-see now you-cannot, motions also to-steal-away must;

315 praesertim cum, quae possimus cernere, celent

especially since, what we-can see, hide

saepe tamen motus spatio diducta locorum.

often yet motions by-a-stretch drawn-apart of-places.

nam saepe in colli tondentes pabula laeta

for often on a-hill cropping pastures glad

lanigeræ reptant pecudes, quo quamque vocantes

wool-bearing creep sheep, whither each calling

invitant herbae gemmantes rore recenti,
invite the-grasses gemmed with-dew fresh,
 et satiati agni ludunt blandeque coruscant; 320
and full-fed the-lambs play and-prettily butt;
 omnia quae nobis longe confusa videntur
all which to-us from-afar blurred seem
 et velut in viridi candor consistere colli.
and as-it-were on the-green a-whiteness to-rest bill.
 praeterea magnae legiones cum loca cursu
besides great legions when the-tracts at-a-run
 camporum complent belli simulacra cientes,
of-the-plains fill of-war the-shows rousing,
 fulgor ubi ad caelum se tollit totaque circum 325
the-flash when to heaven itself lifts and-the-whole around
 aere renidescit tellus supterque virum vi
with-bronze gleams earth and-beneath of-men by-the-force
 excitur pedibus sonitus clamoreque montes
is-roused by-feet a-noise and-by-the-shout the-mountains
 icti reiectant voces ad sidera mundi
struck throw-back the-voices to the-stars of-the-world
 et circum volitant equites mediosque repente
and around fly horsemen and-the-middle suddenly
 tramittunt valido quatientes impete campos; 330
they-cross with-strong shaking onset the-plains;
 et tamen est quidam locus altis montibus, unde
and yet there-is a-certain place on-high mountains, whence
 stare videntur et in campis consistere fulgor.
to-stand they-seem and on the-plains to-rest a-flash.

The first-beginnings differ in shape — not because no two are alike, but because they are not all alike. Their store is infinite, so they cannot all be of one pattern. Creatures know their own kind by these differences: the bereaved cow ranges the green glades, knows the cloven prints her calf pressed in the ground, and will take no comfort from other calves. Grain, and the shells that paint the shore, differ in the same way.

Nunc age, iam deinceps cunctarum exordia rerum

Now come, now next of-all the-beginnings of-things

qualia sint et quam longe distantia formis,

of-what-kind they-are and how far differing in-forms,

335 percipe, multigenis quam sint variata figuris;

learn, with-manifold how they-are varied shapes;

non quo multa parum simili sint praedita forma,

not that many too-little with-like are endowed form,

sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.

but because not commonly equal to-all all stand.

nec mirum; nam cum sit eorum copia tanta,

nor a-wonder; for since is of-them the-store so-great,

ut neque finis, uti docui, neque summa sit ulla,

that neither an-end, as I-have-taught, nor a-sum is any,

340 debent ni mirum non omnibus omnia prorsum

they-must no wonder not to-all all quite

esse pari filo similique adfecta figura.

to-be with-equal thread and-with-like furnished shape.

Praeterea genus humanum mutaeque natantes

Besides the-race human and-the-mute swimming

squamigerum pecudes et laeta armenta feraeque

scale-bearing herds and glad cattle and-wild-beasts

et variae volucres, laetantia quae loca aquarum

and the-varied birds, the-glad which places of-waters

concelebrant circum ripas fontisque lacusque,

throng around banks and-springs and-lakes,

et quae pervolgant nemora avia pervolitantes,

and which range-through the-groves pathless flitting-through,

quorum unum quidvis generatim sumere perge;

of-which one any-you-will kind-by-kind to-take go-on;

invenies tamen inter se differre figuris.

you-will-find still among themselves to-differ in-shapes.

nec ratione alia proles cognoscere matrem

nor in-a-way other the-offspring to-know its-mother

nec mater posset prolem; quod posse videmus

nor a-mother could its-offspring; which can we-see

nec minus atque homines inter se nota cluere.

and-not less than men among themselves known to-be.

nam saepe ante deum vitulus delubra decora

for often before of-gods a-calf the-shrines fair

turicremas propter mactatus concidit aras

incense-burning beside slaughtered falls altars

sanguinis expirans calidum de pectore flumen;

of-blood breathing-out a-warm from breast stream;

at mater viridis saltus orbata peragrans

but the-mother green glades bereaved ranging

novit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis,

knows on-the-ground by-hooves the-prints pressed cloven,

omnia convisens oculis loca, si queat usquam

all scanning with-eyes places, if she-can anywhere

conspicere amissum fetum, completque querellis

to-catch-sight-of the-lost calf, and-she-fills with-complaints

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frondiferum nemus adsistens et crebra revisit

the-leafy grove standing and often she-revisits

360 ad stabulum desiderio perfixa iuveni,

to the-stall with-longing pierced for-her-calf,

nec tenerae salices atque herbae rore vigentes

nor tender willows and grasses with-dew freshened

fluminaque ulla queunt summis labentia ripis

and-rivers any can at-the-brim gliding banks

oblectare animum subitamque avertere curam,

to-delight her-mind and-the-sudden to-turn-away care,

nec vitulorum aliae species per pabula laeta

nor of-calves other sights over the-pastures glad

365 derivare queunt animum curaque levare;

to-draw-off can her-mind and-of-care to-lighten;

usque adeo quiddam proprium notumque requirit.

right so-far something her-own and-known she-seeks.

praeterea teneri tremulis cum vocibus haedi

besides tender quavering with voices kids

cornigeras norunt matres agnique petulci

the-borned know mothers and-lambs butting

balantum pecudes; ita, quod natura reposit,

of-the-bleating flocks; so, what nature demands-back,

370 ad sua quisque fere decurrunt ubera lactis.

to their-own each mostly they-run-down the-udders of-milk.

Postremo quodvis frumentum non tamen omne

Lastly any grain not yet all

quidque suo genere inter se simile esse videbis,

and-each in-its-own kind among themselves alike to-be you-will-see,

quin intercurrat quaedam distantia formis.

but-that runs-between a-certain difference in-forms.

concharumque genus parili ratione videmus

and-of-shells the-race in-like fashion we-see

pingere telluris gremium, qua mollibus undis

to-paint of-earth the-lap, where with-soft waves

litoris incurvi bibulam pavit aequor harenam.

of-the-shore curving the-thirsty beats the-sea sand.

quare etiam atque etiam simili ratione necessest,

wherefore again and again in-like fashion must-needs,

natura quoniam constant neque facta manu sunt

by-nature since they-stand nor made by-hand are

unius ad certam formam primordia rerum,

of-one to a-fixed shape the-first-beginnings of-things,

dissimili inter se quaedam volitare figura.

with-unlike among themselves certain to-fly shape.

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II.10 • WHY LIGHTNING PIERCES

The fire of lightning is finer than the fire of a torch and made of smaller shapes, so it passes through openings that torch-fire cannot. Light goes through horn while rain is spurned; wine runs quickly through a strainer while olive oil lingers. Such differences come from the size and shape of the first-beginnings, and from how far they are hooked and interlaced.

Perfacile est animi ratione exsolvere nobis

Very-easy it-is of-mind by-the-reasoning to-unravel for-us

quare fulmineus multo penetratior ignis

why of-lightning much more-piercing fire

quam noster fluat e taedis terrestribus ortus;

than our flows from torches earthly sprung;

dicere enim possis caelestem fulminis ignem

to-say for you-could the-heavenly of-lightning fire

- 385 subtilem magis e parvis constare figuris
fine more of small to-consist shapes
 atque ideo transire foramina quae nequit ignis
and therefore to-pass the-openings which cannot fire
 noster hic e lignis ortus taedaeque creatus.
our this from logs sprung and-from-pine-torch created.
 praeterea lumen per cornum transit, at imber
besides light through horn passes, but rain
 respuitur. quare, nisi luminis illa minora
is-spurned. why, unless of-light those smaller
- 390 corpora sunt quam de quibus est liquor almus aquarum?
bodies are than of which is the-liquid kindly of-waters?
 et quamvis subito per colum vina videmus
and however quickly through a-strainer wines we-see
 perfluere, at contra tardum cunctatur olivom,
to-flow-through, but on-the-other-hand slow lingers olive-oil,
 aut quia ni mirum maioribus est elementis
either because no wonder of-greater it-is elements
 aut magis hamatis inter se perque plicatis,
or more hooked among themselves and-thoroughly interlaced,
- 395 atque ideo fit uti non tam diducta repente
and therefore it-comes that not so drawn-apart suddenly
 inter se possint primordia singula quaeque
among themselves can the-first-beginnings one by-one
 singula per cuiusque foramina permanare.
one through of-each the-openings soak-through.

What is pleasant to the senses is made of smooth round shapes; what is bitter or rough is hooked, and tears open the passages it enters. The same holds for sounds, smells, and colors. Touch is the sense of the whole body, and every sensation is a kind of touch. Hard things are hooked and branching, liquids smooth and rolling; sea water is smooth with rough bodies mixed in, which the earth filters out when the water seeps through it.

Huc accedit uti mellis lactisque liquores

Hereto is-added that of-honey and-of-milk the-liquids

iucundo sensu linguae tractentur in ore;

with-pleasant feeling of-the-tongue are-handled in the-mouth;

at contra taetra absinthi natura ferique

but contrariwise the-foul of-wormwood nature and-of-the-wild

centauri foedo pertorquent ora sapore;

centaury with-loathsome they-wrench the-mouth taste;

ut facile agnoscas e levibus atque rutundis

so-that easily you-may-recognize of smooth and round

esse ea quae sensus iucunde tangere possunt,

to-be those which the-senses pleasantly to-touch can,

at contra quae amara atque aspera cumque videntur,

but contrariwise what bitter and rough soever seem,

haec magis hamatis inter se nexa teneri

these more hooked among themselves bound to-be-held

proptereaue solere vias rescindere nostris

and-therefore to-be-wont passages to-tear-open our

sensibus introituque suo perrumpere corpus.

for-senses and-by-their-entry their-own to-break-through the-body.

omnia postremo bona sensibus et mala tactu

all-things lastly good to-the-senses and bad to-the-touch

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- dissimili inter se pugnant perfecta figura;
with-unlike among themselves fight formed shape;
- 410 ne tu forte putes serrae stridentis acerbum
lest you perchance should-think of-a-saw shrieking the-harsh
 horrorem constare elementis levibus aequae
shudder to-consist of-elements smooth as-much
 ac musaea mele, per chordas organici quae
as the-Muses' strains, over the-strings the-players which
 mobilibus digitis expergefacta figurant;
with-nimble fingers awakened they-shape;
 neu simili penetrare putes primordia forma
and-lest with-like to-pierce should-you-think the-first-beginnings form
- 415 in nares hominum, cum taetra cadavera torrent,
into the-nostrils of-men, when foul corpses they-burn,
 et cum scena croco Cilici perfusa recens est
and when the-stage with-saffron Cilician sprinkled freshly is
 araque Panchaeos exhalat propter odores;
and-the-altar Panchaeon breathes-out near-by scents;
 neve bonos rerum simili constare colores
and-lest fair of-things of-like to-consist colors
 semine constituas, oculos qui pascere possunt,
seed you-should-hold, the-eyes which to-feed can,
- 420 et qui compungunt aciem lacrimareque cogunt
and which sting the-sight and-to-weep compel
 aut foeda specie foedi turpesque videntur.
or with-bideous look bideous and-ugly seem.
 omnis enim, sensus quae mulcet cumque, tibi res
every for, the-senses which soothes soever, for-you thing
 haut sine principali aliquo levore creatast;
not without elemental some smoothness has-been-created;

at contra quae cumque molesta atque aspera constat,
but contrariwise what soever troublesome and rough stands,

non aliquo sine materiae squalore repertast.

425

not some without of-matter roughness has-been-found.

Sunt etiam quae iam nec levia iure putantur

There-are also which now neither smooth rightly are-thought

esse neque omnino flexis mucronibus unca,

to-be nor altogether with-bent points hooked,

sed magis angellis paulum prostantibus, ut quae

but rather with-little-corners a-little jutting, as which

titillare magis sensus quam laedere possint,

to-tickle rather the-senses than to-hurt can,

fecula iam quo de genere est inulaeque sapes.

430

wine-lees now which of kind is and-of-ecampagne the-flavors.

Denique iam calidos ignis gelidamque pruina

Finally now hot fires and-icy frost

dissimili dentata modo conpingere sensus

in-unlike toothed fasbion to-sting the-senses

corporis, indicio nobis est tactus uterque.

of-the-body, a-witness to-us is the-touch each.

tactus enim, tactus, pro divum numina sancta,

touch for, touch, by of-the-gods the-powers holy,

corporis est sensus, vel cum res externa sese

435

of-body is the-sense, either when a-thing outward itself

insinuat, vel cum laedit quae in corpore natat

worms-in, or when hurts what in the-body is-born

aut iuvat egrediens genitalis per Veneris res,

or delights going-forth the-generative through of-Venus acts,

aut ex offensu cum turbant corpore in ipso,

or from a-shock when they-disturb the-body in itself,

semina confundunt inter se concita sensum;
the-seeds confound among themselves stirred the-sense;

440 ut si forte manu quamvis iam corporis ipse
as if perchance with-the-hand any now of-the-body yourself
 tute tibi partem ferias atque experiare.
you for-yourself part should-strike and should-try.

qua propter longe formas distare necessest
for-which reason far shapes to-differ must-needs
 principiis, varios quae possint edere sensus.
for-the-first-elements, varied which can to-put-forth sensations.

Denique quae nobis durata ac spissa videntur,
Finally what to-us hardened and dense seem,

445 haec magis hamatis inter sese esse necessest
these more hooked among themselves to-be must-needs
 et quasi ramosis alte compacta teneri.
and as-it-were branching deeply fastened to-be-beld.

in quo iam genere in primis adamantina saxa
in which now kind in the-first adamantine rocks
 prima acie constant ictus contemnere sueta
the-first in-the-line stand blows to-scorn used
 et validi silices ac duri robora ferri
and hard flints and of-stubborn the-strength iron

450 aeraque quae claustris restantia vociferantur.
and-bronze which at-the-bolts resisting cry-out.

illa quidem debent e levibus atque rutundis
those indeed must of smooth and round
 esse magis, fluvido quae corpore liquida constant.
to-be rather, with-flowing which body liquid stand.

namque papaveris haustus itemst facilis quod aquarum;
for of-poppy-seed a-draft is-likewise easy as of-waters;

nec retinentur enim inter se glomeramina quaeque
nor are-held-back for among themselves the-little-globes each

et percussus item proclive volubilis exstat.

455

and struck likewise downhill rolling it-stands.

omnia postremo quae puncto tempore cernis

all-things lastly which in-a-point of-time you-see

diffugere ut fumum nebulas flammisque, necessest,

scatter as smoke mists and-flames, must-needs,

si minus omnia sunt e levibus atque rotundis,

if less all they-are of smooth and round,

at non esse tamen perplexis indupedita,

yet not to-be still with-tangled entangled,

pungere uti possint corpus penetrareque saxa,

460

to-prick so-that they-can the-body and-to-pierce rocks,

nec tamen haerere inter se; quod cumque videmus

nor yet to-cling among themselves; what soever we-see

sensibus dentatum, facile ut cognoscere possis

to-the-senses toothed, easily so-that to-know you-may-be-able

non e perplexis, sed acutis esse elementis.

not of tangled, but sharp to-be elements.

sed quod amara vides eadem quae fluvida constant,

but that bitter you-see the-same which fluid stand,

sudor uti maris est, minime mirabile debet

465

the-sweat as of-the-sea is, least-of-all wonderful ought

(lacuna)

nam quod fluidus est, e levibus atque rotundis

for because fluid it-is, of smooth and round

est, sed levibus sunt hamata admixta doloris

it-is, but with-the-smooth there-are hooked mingled of-pain

corpora. nec tamen haec retineri hamata necessust:

bodies. nor yet these to-be-held hooked must-needs:

scilicet esse globosa tamen, cum squalida constent,

surely to-be globed still, although rough they-stand,

470 provolvi simul ut possint et laedere sensus.

to-roll-on at-once so-that they-can and to-hurt the-senses.

et quo mixta putes magis aspera levibus esse

and so-that mingled you-may-think the-more rough with-smooth to-be

principiis, unde est Neptuni corpus acerbum,

first-elements, whence is of-Neptune the-body bitter,

est ratio secernendi seorsumque videndi,

there-is a-way of-separating and-apart of-seeing,

umor dulcis ubi per terras crebrius idem

the-moisture sweet when through the-earth repeatedly the-same

475 percolatur, ut in foveam fluat ac mansuescat;

is-filtered, so-that into a-pit it-flows and grows-mild;

linquit enim supera taetri primordia viri,

it-leaves for above of-the-foul the-first-beginnings brine,

aspera quo magis in terris haerescere possint.

rough whereby the-more in the-earth to-stick they-can.

Though the first-beginnings are countless, their shapes are limited in number. Within one small body only so many arrangements are possible, and to get more you must add bulk — so infinite variety would mean first-beginnings of monstrous size. If shapes were unlimited there would always be a brighter purple, a sweeter scent, and a better song, and also a fouler one; but nature holds both ends fixed, as she does between fire and frost.

Quod quoniam docui, pergam conectere rem quae

Which since I-have-taught, I-shall-go-on to-link a-matter which

ex hoc apta fidem ducat, primordia rerum

from this hanging credence draws, the-first-beginnings of-things

finita variare figurarum ratione.

finite to-vary of-shapes in-reckoning.

quod si non ita sit, rursum iam semina quaedam

but if not so it-is, again now seeds certain

esse infinito debebunt corporis auctu.

to-be with-infinite will-have-to of-body bulk.

namque in eadem una cuiusvis iam brevitatem

for in the-same one of-any now smallness

corporis inter se multum variare figurae

of-body among themselves much to-vary the-shapes

non possunt. fac enim minimis e partibus esse

not can. suppose for least of parts to-be

corpora prima tribus, vel paulo pluribus auge;

bodies first three, or a-little more increase;

nempe ubi eas partis unius corporis omnis,

surely when those parts of-one body all,

summa atque ima locans, transmutans dextera laevis,

the-top and the-bottom placing, shifting the-right for-the-left,

480

485

- omnimodis expertus eris, quam quisque det ordo
in-every-way tried you-shall-have, what each gives order
- 490 formai speciem totius corporis eius,
of-form the-look of-the-whole body of-it,
 quod super est, si forte voles variare figuras,
as-for-what over is, if perchance you-shall-wish to-vary the-shapes,
 addendum partis alias erit. inde sequetur,
to-be-added parts other it-will-be. thence it-will-follow,
 adsimili ratione alias ut postulet ordo,
in-like fashion others that demands the-order,
 si tu forte voles etiam variare figuras.
if you perchance shall-wish again to-vary the-shapes.
- 495 ergo formarum novitatem corporis augmen
therefore of-forms newness of-body an-increase
 subsequitur. quare non est ut credere possis
follows. wherefore not is-it that to-believe you-may-be-able
 esse infinitis distantia semina formis,
to-be with-infinite differing seeds forms,
 ne quaedam cogas inmani maximitate
lest certain you-force of-monstrous hugeness
 esse, supra quod iam docui non posse probari.
to-be, above which now I-have-taught not can to-be-proved.
- 500 iam tibi barbaricae vestes Meliboeaque fulgens
now for-you barbaric robes and-Meliboean gleaming
 purpura Thessalico concharum tacta colore,
purple Thessalian of-shellfish touched with-the-dye,
 aurea pavonum ridenti imbuta lepore
golden of-peacocks with-laughing steeped charm
 saecula novo rerum superata colore iacerent
the-generations by-a-new of-things surpassed color would-lie

et contemptus odor smyrnae mellisque sapes,
and scorned the-scent of-myrrh and-of-honey the-flavors,

et cycnea mele Phoebeaque daedala chordis
and swan strains and-Phoebean cunning on-strings

carmina consimili ratione oppressa silerent;
songs in-like fashion overborne would-be-silent;

namque aliis aliud praestantius exoreretur.
for than-others one-thing more-excellent would-arise.

cedere item retro possent in deteriores
to-give-way likewise backward they-could into worse

omnia sic partis, ut diximus in melioris;
all-things so directions, as we-said into better;

namque aliis aliud retro quoque taetrius esset
for than-others one-thing backward also fouler would-be

naribus auribus atque oculis orisque sapor.
to-the-nostrils to-the-ears and to-the-eyes and-of-the-mouth to-the-taste.

quae quoniam non sunt, sed rebus reddita certa
which since not are, but for-things appointed a-fixed

finis utrimque tenet summam, fateare necessest
limit on-both-sides holds the-sum, you-confess must-needs

materiem quoque finitis differre figuris.
matter also with-finite to-differ shapes.

denique ab ignibus ad gelidas hiemum usque pruinas
finally from fires to the-icy of-winters right frosts

finitumst retroque pari ratione remensumst.
it-is-bounded and-backward in-equal measure is-remeasured.

omnis enim calor ac frigus mediique tepores
all for heat and cold and-the-middle warmths

interutrasque iacent explentes ordine summam.
between-the-two lie filling-out in-order the-sum.

505

510

515

ergo finita distant ratione creata,

therefore finite they-differ in-fashion created,

520 ancipiti quoniam mucroni utrimque notantur,

by-a-double since point on-both-sides they-are-marked,

hinc flammis illinc rigidis infesta pruinis.

on-this-side by-flames on-that-side by-stiff beset frosts.

II.13 • EACH SHAPE IS INFINITE IN NUMBER

Since the kinds of shape are finite and matter is infinite, the first-beginnings of any one shape must be infinite in number. Creatures rare here are plentiful elsewhere, as elephants are in India. Were the supply of any one kind finite, its first-beginnings could never meet in so vast a sea of matter. So the war of the first-beginnings goes on evenly, and no day dawns without both a birth-cry and a black funeral.

Quod quoniam docui, pergam conectere rem quae

Which since I-have-taught, I-shall-go-on to-link a-matter which

ex hoc apta fidem ducat, primordia rerum,

from this hanging credence draws, the-first-beginnings of-things,

inter se simili quae sunt perfecta figura,

among themselves with-like which are formed shape,

525 infinita cluere. etenim distantia cum sit

infinite to-be. for-indeed the-difference since is

formarum finita, necesse est quae similes sint

of-forms finite, needful it-is which alike are

esse infinitas aut summam materiai

to-be infinite or the-sum of-matter

finitam constare, id quod non esse probavi.

finite to-stand, that which not to-be I-have-proved.

(lacuna)

versibus ostendam corpuscula materiai

in-verses I-shall-show the-little-bodies of-matter

ex infinito summam rerum usque tenere

from infinite the-sum of-things continually to-hold

undique protelo plagarum continuato.

from-everywhere in-a-team of-blows unbroken.

nam quod rara vides magis esse animalia quaedam

for that rare you-see more to-be creatures certain

fecundamque magis naturam cernis in illis,

and-fruitful more nature you-perceive in them,

at regione locoque alio terrisque remotis

yet in-a-region and-place other and-in-lands far-off

multa licet genere esse in eo numerumque repleri;

many may kind to-be in that and-the-number to-be-filled;

sicut quadripedum cum primis esse videmus

just-as of-four-footed among the-first to-be we-see

in genere anguimanus elephantos, India quorum

in the-kind snake-banded elephants, India of-which

milibus e multis vallo munitur eburno,

by-thousands of many with-a-rampart is-fenced of-ivory,

ut penitus nequeat penetrari: tanta ferarum

so-that deeply it-cannot to-be-penetrated: so-great of-beasts

vis est, quarum nos perpauca exempla videmus.

the-force is, of-which we very-few samples see.

sed tamen id quoque uti concedam, quam lubet esto

but yet that also that I-may-grant, as you-please let-there-be

unica res quaedam nativo corpore sola,

a-single thing a-certain with-a-born body alone,

cui similis toto terrarum non sit, in orbi;

to-which like in-the-whole of-lands not there-is, in the-circle;

530

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540

- infinita tamen nisi erit vis materiai,
infinite yet unless there-shall-be a-force of-matter,
- 545 unde ea progigni possit concepta, creati
whence it to-be-begotten could conceived, to-be-created
- non poterit neque, quod super est, procrecere aliqne.
not it-will-be-able nor, as-for-what over is, to-grow and-be-fed.
- quippe etenim sumant alii finita per omne
for indeed let-them-assume others finite through the-whole
- corpora iactari unius genitalia rei,
bodies to-be-tossed of-one generative thing,
- unde ubi qua vi et quo pacto congressa coibunt
whence where by-what force and in-what way having-met will-they-unite
- 550 materiae tanto in pelago turbaque aliena?
of-matter so-great in a-sea and-a-throng alien?
- non, ut opinor, habent rationem conciliandi:
not, as I-think, they-have a-way of-combining:
- sed quasi naufragiis magnis multisque coortis
but as-it-were shipwrecks great and-many having-arisen
- disiactare solet magnum mare transtra cavernas
to-toss-apart is-wont the-great sea thwarts bulls
- antennas prorem malos tonsasque natantis,
yard-arms prow masts and-oars floating,
- 555 per terrarum omnis oras fluitantia aplustra
along of-lands all the-shores drifting sternposts
- ut videantur et indicium mortalibus edant,
so-that they-may-be-seen and a-warning to-mortals they-may-give,
- infidi maris insidias virisque dolumque
of-the-faithless sea the-snares and-force and-guile
- ut vitare velint, neve ullo tempore credant,
that to-shun they-may-wish, and-lest at-any time they-trust,

subdola cum ridet placidi pellacia ponti,

the-treacherous when smiles of-the-calm allurements sea,

sic tibi si finita semel primordia quaedam

so for-you if finite once the-first-beginnings certain

constitues, aevom debebunt sparsa per omnem

you-shall-suppose, the-age they-will-have-to scattered through all

disiectare aestus diversi materiai,

to-toss-apart the-tides diverse of-matter,

numquam in concilium ut possint compulsa coire

never into combination so-that they-can driven to-come-together

nec remorari in concilio nec crescere adaucta;

nor to-linger in combination nor to-grow increased;

quorum utrumque palam fieri manifesta docet res,

of-which each openly to-happen manifest teaches fact,

et res progigni et genitas procreare posse.

both things to-be-begotten and once-begotten to-grow can.

esse igitur genere in quovis primordia rerum

there-are therefore kind in any the-first-beginnings of-things

infinita palam est, unde omnia suppeditantur.

infinite plain it-is, whence all-things are-supplied.

Nec superare queunt motus itaque exitiales

Nor to-prevail can motions and-so destroying

perpetuo neque in aeternum sepelire salutem,

forever nor for eternity to-bury safety,

nec porro rerum genitales auctificique

nor further of-things begetting and-increasing

motus perpetuo possunt servare creata.

motions forever can to-keep what-is-created.

sic aequo geritur certamine principiorum

so in-even is-waged struggle of-the-first-elements

560

565

570

ex infinito contractum tempore bellum.

from infinite joined time the-war.

575 nunc hic nunc illic superant vitalia rerum

now here now there prevail the-life-forces of-things

et superantur item. miscetur funere vapor,

and are-overcome likewise. is-mingled with-the-funeral the-wail,

quem pueri tollunt visentis luminis oras;

which children raise beholding of-light the-shores;

nec nox ulla diem neque noctem aurora secutast,

nor night any day nor night dawn has-followed,

quae non audierit mixtos vagitibus aegris

which not has-heard mingled with-wailings sick

580 ploratus, mortis comites et funeris atri.

laments, of-death companions and of-a-funeral black.

II.14 • THE GREAT MOTHER

Nothing is made of one kind of first-beginning only, and the more powers a thing has, the more kinds it holds. The earth holds them all, and so the old poets sang of her as the Great Mother, drawn by lions and crowned with towers. Lucretius allows the name if its user keeps his mind clean of religion, for the earth has no feeling at all. Sheep, horses, and oxen fed from one field still differ, so even grass holds unlike matter.

Illud in his obsignatum quoque rebus habere

This in these sealed also matters to-hold

convenit et memori mandatum mente tenere,

it-is-fitting and in-a-mindful entrusted mind to-keep,

nil esse, in promptu quorum natura videtur,

nothing there-is, in plain-view of-which the-nature is-seen,

quod genere ex uno consistat principiorum,

which kind of one consists of-first-elements,

nec quicquam quod non permixto semine constet.

nor anything which not of-mingled seed consists.

et quod cumque magis vis multas possidet in se

and what soever more powers many possesses in itself

atque potestates, ita plurima principiorum

and faculties, so most of-first-elements

in sese genera ac varias docet esse figuras.

in itself kinds and varied it-shows to-be shapes.

Principio tellus habet in se corpora prima,

First the-earth has in itself bodies first,

unde mare immensum volventes frigora fontes

whence the-sea measureless rolling cold springs

adsidue renovent, habet ignes unde oriantur;

unceasingly may-renew, it-has fires whence may-rise;

nam multis succensa locis ardent sola terrae,

for in-many kindled places burn the-floors of-earth,

ex imis vero furit ignibus impetus Aetnae.

from the-lowest indeed rages fires the-onrush of-Aetna.

tum porro nitidas fruges arbustaque laeta

then further shining crops and-trees glad

gentibus humanis habet unde extollere possit,

for-the-races human it-has whence to-raise it-can,

unde etiam fluvios frondes et pabula laeta

whence also rivers leafage and pastures glad

montivago generi possit praebere ferarum.

to-the-mountain-roaming kind it-can furnish of-wild-beasts.

quare magna deum mater materque ferarum

wherefore the-great of-gods mother and-mother of-wild-beasts

585

590

595

et nostri genetrix haec dicta est corporis una.

and of-our the-parent she called is of-body alone.

600 Hanc veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae

Her the-old of-the-Greeks learned have-sung poets

sedibus in curru biiugos agitare leones,

on-her-seat in a-car a-yoked-pair to-drive of-lions,

aeris in spatio magnam pendere docentes

of-air in the-space great to-hang teaching

tellurem neque posse in terra sistere terram.

the-earth nor can on earth to-rest earth.

adiunxere feras, quia quamvis effera proles

they-yoked wild-beasts, because however savage offspring

605 officii debet molliri victa parentum.

by-the-services must to-be-softened overcome of-parents.

muralique caput summum cinxere corona,

and-with-a-mural her-head topmost they-girt crown,

eximiis munita locis quia sustinet urbes.

in-chosen fortified places because she-upholds cities.

quo nunc insigni per magnas praedita terras

with-which now emblem through great endowed lands

horrifice fertur divinae matris imago.

awfully is-borne of-the-divine mother the-image.

610 hanc variae gentes antiquo more sacrorum

her diverse nations in-the-ancient custom of-rites

Idaeam vocitant matrem Phrygiasque catervas

Idaeian they-call mother and-Phrygian troops

dant comites, quia primum ex illis finibus edunt

they-give as-companions, because first from those borders they-declare

per terrarum orbis fruges coepisse creari.

over of-lands the-circles crops to-have-begun to-be-created.

Gallos attribuunt, quia, numen qui violarint

the-Galli they-assign, because, the-godhead who have-violated

Matris et ingrati genitoribus inventi sint,

of-the-Mother and thankless to-their-parents found are,

significare volunt indignos esse putandos,

to-signify they-mean unworthy to-be to-be-thought,

vivam progeniem qui in oras luminis edant.

living offspring who into the-shores of-light bring-forth.

tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum

drums taut thunder with-palms and cymbals around

concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu,

hollow, and-with-harsh-sounding threaten horns note,

et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentis,

and with-Phrygian goads measure the-hollow pipe their-minds,

telaque praeportant, violenti signa furoris,

and-weapons they-carry-before, of-violent the-signs frenzy,

ingratos animos atque impia pectora volgi

the-thankless minds and impious hearts of-the-crowd

conterrere metu quae possint numine divae.

to-terrify with-fear which can by-the-power of-the-goddess.

ergo cum primum magnas invecta per urbis

therefore when first great borne through cities

munificat tacita mortalis muta salute,

she-blesses with-silent mortals mute greeting,

aere atque argento sternunt iter omne viarum

with-bronze and silver they-strew the-path the-whole of-the-roads

largifica stipe ditantes ninguntque rosarum

with-bountiful alms enriching and-they-snow of-roses

floribus umbrantes matrem comitumque catervam.

with-the-blossoms shading the-mother and-of-attendants the-troop.

615

620

625

hic armata manus, Curetas nomine Grai

here an-armed band, Curetes by-name the-Greeks

630 quos memorant, Phrygias inter si forte catervas

whom call, the-Phrygian among if perchance troops

ludunt in numerumque exultant sanguine laeti

they-sport in and-measure they-leap with-blood gladdened

terrificas capitum quatientes numine cristas,

the-terrifying of-their-heads shaking with-the-nod crests,

Dictaeos referunt Curetas, qui Iovis illum

the-Dictaeon they-recall Curetes, who of-Jove that

vagitum in Creta quondam occultasse feruntur,

wailing in Crete once to-have-bidden are-said,

635 cum pueri circum puerum pernice chorea

when boys around the-boy with-nimble dance

armati in numerum pulsarent aeribus aera,

armed in measure struck with-bronze bronze,

ne Saturnus eum malis mandaret adeptus

lest Saturn him to-his-jaws should-consign having-seized

aeternumque daret matri sub pectore volnus.

and-an-everlasting should-give to-the-mother beneath breast wound.

640 propterea magnam armati matrem comitantur,

therefore the-great armed mother they-attend,

aut quia significant divam praedicere ut armis

or because they-signify the-goddess to-proclaim that with-arms

ac virtute velint patriam defendere terram

and valor they-should-wish their-native to-defend land

praesidioque parent decorique parentibus esse.

and-a-defense they-should-prepare and-a-glory to-their-parents to-be.

quae bene et eximie quamvis disposita ferantur,

which well and finely however set-out are-told,

longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa.

645

far they-are yet from true reasoning driven-back.

omnis enim per se divom natura necessest

the-whole for by itself of-gods nature must-needs

immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur

immortal age highest with peace enjoy

semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;

withdrawn from our affairs and-severed far;

nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,

for deprived of-pain all, deprived of-perils,

ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,

650

itself in-its-own strong resources, nothing needing of-us,

nec bene promeritis capitur neque tangitur ira.

neither by-good services is-it-won nor is-it-touched by-anger.

terra quidem vero caret omni tempore sensu,

the-earth indeed truly lacks at-all time feeling,

et quia multarum potitur primordia rerum,

and because of-many it-possesses the-first-beginnings of-things,

multa modis multis effert in lumina solis.

many-things in-ways many it-brings-forth into the-light of-the-sun.

hic siquis mare Neptunum Cereremque vocare

655

here if-anyone the-sea Neptune and-Ceres to-call

constituet fruges et Bacchi nomine abuti

shall-determine the-crops and of-Bacchus the-name to-misuse

mavolt quam laticis proprium proferre vocamen,

he-prefers than of-the-liquid the-proper to-utter name,

concedamus ut hic terrarum dictitet orbem

let-us-grant that he of-lands keeps-calling the-globe

esse deum matrem, dum vera re tamen ipse

to-be of-gods the-mother, so-long-as in-true fact yet himself

- 680 *religione animum turpi contingere parcat.*
with-religion the-mind base to-touch let-him-forbear.
- 660 *Saepe itaque ex uno tondentes gramina campo*
Often and-so from one cropping the-grass field
lanigerae pecudes et equorum duellica proles
wool-bearing flocks and of-horses warlike the-breed
buceriaeque greges eodem sub tegmine caeli
and-of-oxen herds the-same beneath covering of-heaven
ex unoque sitim sedantes flumine aquai
from and-one their-thirst slaking river of-water
dissimili vivont specie retinentque parentum
with-unlike live look and-keep of-their-parents
- 665 *naturam et mores generatim quaeque imitantur.*
the-nature and ways kind-by-kind each they-copy.
tanta est in quovis genere herbae materiai
so-great is in any kind of-grass of-matter
dissimilis ratio, tanta est in flumine quoque.
unlike the-measure, so-great is in the-river also.
- Hinc porro quamvis animantem ex omnibus unam*
Hence further any living-thing of all one
ossa cruor venae calor umor viscera nervi
bones blood veins heat moisture flesh sinews
- 670 *constituunt, quae sunt porro distantia longe,*
make-up, which are further differing far,
dissimili perfecta figura principiorum.
with-unlike formed shape of-first-elements.
- Tum porro quae cumque igni flammata cremantur.*
Then further what soever by-fire kindled are-burned.
si nil praeterea, tamen haec in corpore tradunt,
if nothing besides, yet these in body they-carry,

unde ignem iacere et lumen submittere possint

whence fire to-hurl and light to-send-up they-can

scintillasque agere ac late differre favillam.

and-sparks to-drive and widely to-scatter ash.

cetera consimili mentis ratione peragrans

the-rest in-like of-mind by-the-reasoning ranging-over

invenies igitur multarum semina rerum

you-will-find therefore of-many seeds of-things

corpore celare et varias cohibere figuras.

in-body to-hide and varied to-hold shapes.

Denique multa vides, quibus et color et sapor una

Finally many-things you-see, to-which both color and taste together

reddita sunt cum odore in primis pleraque poma.

given are with scent in the-first most fruits.

II.15 · WHY THINGS ARE MIXED

Smell, taste, and color reach the senses by different paths, so unlike shapes must come together in one thing. As in verse many letters are shared by many words, so in things many first-beginnings are common to many kinds. But not everything can be joined with everything, or monsters would be born; each kind is held to its own combinations, and takes from its food only what fits.

haec igitur variis debent constare figuris;

these therefore of-varied must consist shapes;

nidor enim penetrat qua fucus non it in artus,

the-smell for pierces where the-dye not goes into the-frame,

fucus item sorsum, sorsum sapor insinuatur

the-dye likewise apart, apart taste steals-in

sensibus; ut noscas primis differre figuris.

into-the-senses; so-that you-may-know in-first to-differ shapes.

675

685

dissimiles igitur formae glomeramen in unum

unlike therefore forms a-cluster into one

conveniunt et res permixto semine constant.

come-together and things of-mingled seed consist.

Quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis

Nay even everywhere our in verses themselves

multa elementa vides multis communia verbis,

many elements you-see to-many common words,

690 cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necesse est

although yet among themselves verses and words needful it-is

confiteare alia ex aliis constare elementis;

you-confess some of others to-consist letters;

non quo multa parum communis littera currat

not that many too-little a-common letter runs

aut nulla inter se duo sint ex omnibus isdem,

or no among themselves two are of all the-same,

sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.

but because not commonly equal to-all all stand.

695 sic aliis in rebus item communia multa

so other in things likewise common many

multarum rerum cum sint, primordia rerum

of-many things although they-are, the-first-beginnings of-things

dissimili tamen inter se consistere summa

with-unlike yet among themselves to-stand sum

possunt; ut merito ex aliis constare feratur

can; so-that rightly of others to-consist is-said

humanum genus et fruges arbustaque laeta.

human the-race and crops and-trees glad.

700 Nec tamen omnimodis conecti posse putandum est

Nor yet in-every-way to-be-joined can to-be-thought it-is

omnia; nam volgo fieri portenta videres,
all-things; for everywhere to-happen monsters you-would-see,

semiferas hominum species existere et altos
half-bestial of-men shapes to-arise and tall

inter dum ramos egigni corpore vivo
between times boughs to-grow-out from-a-body living

multaque conecti terrestria membra marinis,
and-many to-be-joined land limbs to-sea-ones,

tum flammam taetro spirantis ore Chimaeras
then flame from-a-foul breathing mouth Chimaeras

705

pascere naturam per terras omniparentis.
to-feed nature over the-lands all-bearing,

quorum nil fieri manifestum est, omnia quando
of-which nothing to-happen manifest it-is, all-things since

seminibus certis certa genetrice creata
from-seeds fixed from-a-fixed mother created

conservare genus crescentia posse videmus.
to-keep their-kind growing can we-see.

scilicet id certa fieri ratione necessust.
surely that by-a-fixed to-happen law must-needs.

710

nam sua cuique cibus ex omnibus intus in artus
for its-own to-each foods from all within into the-frame

corpora discedunt conexaque convenientis
bodies part and-joined fitting

efficiunt motus; at contra aliena videmus
they-make motions; but on-the-contrary alien we-see

reicere in terras naturam, multaque caecis
to-cast-back on the-earth nature, and-many by-unseen

corporibus fugiunt e corpore percita plagis,
bodies flee from the-body driven blows,

715

quae neque conec̄ti quoquam potuere neque intus

which neither to-be-joined anywhere have-been-able nor within

vitalis motus consentire atque imitari.

the-vital motions to-feel-with and to-copy.

sed ne forte putes animalia sola teneri

but lest perchance you-think living-things alone are-held

legibus his, quaedam ratio res terminat omnis

by-laws these, a-certain law things bounds all

720 nam vel uti tota natura dissimiles sunt

for even as in-their-whole nature unlike are

inter se genitae res quaeque, ita quamque necessest

among themselves begotten things each, so each must-needs

dissimili constare figura principiorum;

with-unlike to-consist shape of-first-elements;

non quo multa parum simili sint praedita forma,

not that many too-little with-like are endowed form,

sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.

but because not commonly equal to-all all stand.

725 semina cum porro distent, differre necessust

the-seeds since further differ, to-differ must-needs

intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas

intervals paths connections weights blows

concursum motus; quae non animalia solum

meetings motions; which not living only

corpora seiungunt, sed terras ac mare totum

bodies sunder, but the-lands and sea the-whole

secernunt caelumque a terris omne retentant.

divide and-heaven from the-earth the-whole they-hold-off.

White things are not made of white first-beginnings, nor black of black: the first-beginnings have no color at all. Every color changes into every other, and so color cannot belong to what must never change; if the sea were made of blue seeds it could never turn to white marble under the wind. The blind, who know bodies by touch alone, prove that a body can be conceived without any color.

Nunc age dicta meo dulci quaesita labore

730

Now come the-words by-my sweet sought-out toil

percipe, ne forte haec albis ex alba rearis

learn, lest perchance these white from white you-think

principiis esse, ante oculos quae candida cernis,

first-elements to-be, before the-eyes which shining-white you-see,

aut ea quae nigrant nigro de semine nata;

or those which are-black black from seed born;

nive alium quemvis quae sunt inbuta colorem,

nor another any which are steeped color,

propterea gerere hunc credas, quod materiai

735

therefore to-bear this you-should-believe, because of-matter

corpora consimili sint eius tincta colore;

the-bodies with-like are of-it dyed color;

nullus enim color est omnino materiai

no for color is at-all of-matter

corporibus, neque par rebus neque denique dispar.

to-the-bodies, neither like to-things nor in-short unlike.

in quae corpora si nullus tibi forte videtur

into which bodies if no to-you perchance seems

posse animi iniectus fieri, procul avius erras.

740

can of-mind a-casting to-be-made, far astray you-wander.

nam cum caecigeni, solis qui lumina numquam

for since the-blind-born, of-the-sun who the-lights never

dispexere, tamen cognoscant corpora tactu

have-described, yet know bodies by-touch

ex ineunte aevo nullo coniuncta colore,

from entering life with-no joined color,

scire licet nostrae quoque menti corpora posse

to-know one-may to-our also mind bodies can

745 vorti in notitiam nullo circum lita fuco.

to-be-turned into knowledge with-no around smeared dye.

denique nos ipsi caecis quaecumque tenebris

finally we ourselves in-blind whatsoever darkness

tangimus, haud ullo sentimus tincta colore.

we-touch, not with-any we-feel dyed color.

Quod quoniam vinco fieri, nunc esse docebo.

Which since I-prove to-be-possible, now to-be-so I-shall-teach.

omnis enim color omnino mutatur in omnis;

every for color altogether is-changed into all;

750 quod facere haud ullo debent primordia pacto;

which to-do not in-any must the-first-beginnings way;

immutabile enim quiddam superare necessest,

unchangeable for something to-survive must-needs,

ne res ad nihilum redigantur funditus omnes;

lest things to nothing be-reduced utterly all;

nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,

for what soever from-its-own changed bounds passes-out,

continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

straightway this the-death is of-that which was before.

755 proinde colore cave contingas semina rerum,

therefore with-color beware you-touch the-seeds of-things,

ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.

lest for-you things return to nothing utterly all.

Praeterea si nulla coloris principiis est

Besides if no of-color to-the-first-elements is

reddita natura et variis sunt praedita formis,

granted nature and with-varied they-are endowed forms,

e quibus omnigenus gignunt variantque colores,

of which of-every-kind they-beget and-vary colors,

propterea magni quod refert, semina quaeque

therefore greatly because it-matters, seeds each

cum quibus et quali positura contineantur

with which and in-what position they-are-held

et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,

and what among themselves they-give motions and-receive,

perfacile extemplo rationem reddere possis,

very-easily at-once an-account to-render you-could,

cur ea quae nigro fuerint paulo ante colore,

why those which black have-been a-little before in-color,

marmoreo fieri possint candore repente,

with-marble to-become can whiteness suddenly,

ut mare, cum magni commorunt aequora venti,

as the-sea, when great have-stirred the-levels winds,

vertitur in canos candenti marmore fluctus;

is-turned into hoary with-gleaming marble waves;

dicere enim possis, nigrum quod saepe videmus,

to-say for you-could, black what often we-see,

materies ubi permixta est illius et ordo

the-matter when mingled is of-it and the-order

principiis mutatus et addita demptaque quaedam,

of-the-first-elements changed and added and-taken-away certain,

760

765

770

continuo id fieri ut candens videatur et album.

straightway it to-happen that gleaming seems and white.

quod si caeruleis constarent aequora ponti

but if of-blue consisted the-levels of-the-sea

seminibus, nullo possent albescere pacto;

seeds, in-no they-could grow-white way;

nam quo cumque modo perturbes caerulea quae sint,

for in-what soever way you-stir blue which are,

775 numquam in marmoreum possunt migrare colorem.

never into marble can-they pass color.

sin alio atque alio sunt semina tincta colore,

but-if with-one and another are seeds dyed color,

quae maris efficiunt unum purumque nitorem,

which of-the-sea make one and-pure sheen,

ut saepe ex aliis formis variisque figuris

as often of other forms and-varied shapes

efficitur quiddam quadratum unaque figura,

is-made something square and-one shape,

780 conveniebat, ut in quadrato cernimus esse

it-would-be-fitting, as in a-square we-see to-be

dissimiles formas, ita cernere in aequore ponti

unlike forms, so to-see in the-level of-the-sea

aut alio in quovis uno puroque nitore

or another in any one and-pure sheen

dissimiles longe inter se variosque colores.

unlike far among themselves and-varied colors.

praeterea nihil officiunt obstantque figurae

besides nothing hinder and-withstand shapes

785 dissimiles, quo quadratum minus omne sit extra;

unlike, whereby square the-less the-whole is outside;

at varii rerum inpediunt prohibentque colores,
but varied of-things hamper and-forbid colors,
 quo minus esse uno possit res tota nitore.
whereby the-less to-be of-one can a-thing whole sheen.
 Tum porro quae ducit et inlicit ut tribuamus
Then further what leads and entices that we-assign
 principiis rerum non numquam causa colores,
to-the-first-elements of-things not never the-reason colors,
 occidit, ex albis quoniam non alba creantur,
falls, from white since not white are-created,
 nec quae nigra cluent de nigris, sed variis ex.
nor which black are-called from black, but varied from.
 quippe etenim multo proclivius exorientur
for indeed much more-readily will-arise
 candida de nullo quam nigro nata colore
white-things from no than black born color
 aut alio quovis, qui contra pugnet et obstet.
or another any, which against fights and withstands.

790

There can be no color without light, and the first-beginnings never come into the light. A dove's neck shows red bronze-gold at one angle and green among the blue at another; a peacock's tail changes as it turns. Since color is born of a stroke of light, and the pupil takes one kind of blow for white and another for black, the first-beginnings need no color to make the difference.

- 795 Praeterea quoniam nequeunt sine luce colores
Besides since cannot without light colors
 esse neque in lucem existunt primordia rerum,
be nor into the-light come-forth the-first-beginnings of-things,
 scire licet quam sint nullo velata colore;
to-know one-may how they-are with-no veiled color;
 qualis enim caecis poterit color esse tenebris?
of-what-sort for in-blind could a-color be darkness?
 lumine quin ipso mutatur propterea quod
by-light nay itself it-is-changed therefore because
 800 recta aut obliqua percussus luce refulget;
by-straight or slanting struck light it-flashes-back;
 pluma columbarum quo pacto in sole videtur,
the-plumage of-doves in-what way in the-sun is-seen,
 quae sita cervices circum collumque coronat;
which set the-neck around and-the-throat crowns;
 namque alias fit uti claro sit rubra pyropo,
for at-one-time it-comes that with-bright it-is red bronze-gold,
 inter dum quodam sensu fit uti videatur
between times in-a-certain view it-comes that it-seems
 805 inter caeruleum viridis miscere zmaragdus.
among the-blue green to-mingle emeralds.

caudaque pavonis, larga cum luce repleta est,
and-the-tail of-a-peacock, with-plentiful when light filled is,
 consimili mutat ratione obversa colores;
in-like changes fashion turned colors;
 qui quoniam quodam gignuntur luminis ictu,
which since by-a-certain are-begotten of-light blow,
 scire licet, sine eo fieri non posse putandum est.
to-know one-may, without it to-happen not can to-be-thought it-is.

Et quoniam plagae quoddam genus excipit in se 810
And since of-blow a-certain kind takes into itself
 pupula, cum sentire colorem dicitur album,
the-pupil, when to-feel the-color it-is-said white,
 atque aliud porro, nigrum cum et cetera sentit,
and another further, black when and the-rest it-feels,
 nec refert ea quae tangas quo forte colore
and-not it-matters those which you-touch with-what perchance color
 praedita sint, verum quali magis apta figura,
endowed are, but with-what rather fitted shape,
 scire licet nihil principiis opus esse colore, 815
to-know one-may nothing for-the-first-elements need to-be of-color,
 sed variis formis variantes edere tactus.
but with-varied forms varying to-give touches.

If color were not tied to particular shapes, crows would sometimes throw off white plumage and swans be born black. As a thing is torn into smaller pieces its color fades and is quenched — purple pulled apart thread by thread loses all of it — which shows that the particles breathe out their color before they reach the seeds of things. Some bodies have no sound or smell, and some have no color either.

Praeterea quoniam non certis certa figuris

Besides since not to-fixed a-fixed shapes

est natura coloris et omnia principiorum

is the-nature of-color and all of-the-first-elements

formamenta queunt in quovis esse nitore,

shapings can in any be shewn,

820 cur ea quae constant ex illis non pariter sunt

why those which consist of them not alike are

omnigenus perfusa coloribus in genere omni?

of-every-kind flooded with-colors in kind every?

conveniebat enim corvos quoque saepe volantis

it-would-be-fitting for crows also often flying

ex albis album pinnis iactare colorem

from white a-white feathers to-throw color

et nigros fieri nigro de semine cynos

and black to-become black from seed swans

825 aut alio quovis uno varioque colore.

or with-another any one and-varied color.

Quin etiam quanto in partes res quaeque minutas

Nay even by-how-much into parts thing each tiny

distrahitur magis, hoc magis est ut cernere possis

is-torn more, by-this more is-it that to-see you-may-be-able

evanescere paulatim stinguique colorem;

to-fade little-by-little and-be-quenched the-color;

ut fit ubi in parvas partis discerpitur austrum:

as it-happens when into small parts is-torn-apart purple:

purpura poeniceusque color clarissimus multo,

830

the-purple and-scarlet color brightest by-far,

filatim cum distractum est, disperditur omnis;

thread-by-thread when pulled-apart it-is, is-destroyed all;

noscere ut hinc possis prius omnem efflare colorem

to-know so-that hence you-may-be-able sooner all to-breathe-out color

particulas, quam discedant ad semina rerum.

the-particles, than they-part to the-seeds of-things.

Postremo quoniam non omnia corpora vocem

Lastly since not all bodies a-voice

mittere concedis neque odorem, propterea fit

835

to-send you-grant nor a-scent, therefore it-comes

ut non omnibus adtribuas sonitus et odores:

that not to-all you-assign sounds and scents:

sic oculis quoniam non omnia cernere quimus,

so with-eyes since not all-things to-see we-can,

scire licet quaedam tam constare orba colore

to-know one-may certain as to-stand bereft of-color

quam sine odore ullo quaedam sonituque remota,

as without scent any certain and-of-sound deprived,

nec minus haec animum cognoscere posse sagacem

840

and-not less these the-mind to-know can keen

quam quae sunt aliis rebus privata notare.

than what are of-other things deprived to-mark.

The first-beginnings lack not only color but warmth, cold, sound, taste, and smell — as a perfumer looks first for the most scentless oil he can find. Everything that has these qualities is soft, brittle, or hollow, and so mortal. Yet the senses are made of senseless things: worms come out of dung, and rivers turn into leaves, leaves into cattle, and cattle into us. What matters is the arrangement.

Sed ne forte putes solo spoliata colore

But lest perchance you-think alone stripped of-color

corpora prima manere, etiam secreta teporis

bodies first remain, also cut-off from-warmth

sunt ac frigoris omnino calidique vaporis,

they-are and from-cold altogether and-from-hot vapor,

845 et sonitu sterila et suco ieiuna feruntur,

and of-sound barren and of-juice empty they-are-borne,

nec iaciunt ullum proprium de corpore odorem.

nor they-cast any of-their-own from body scent.

sicut amaracini blandum stactaeque liquorem

just-as of-marjoram the-sweet and-of-myrrh-oil liquid

et nardi florem, nectar qui naribus halat,

and of-nard the-flower, nectar which for-the-nostrils breathes,

cum facere instituas, cum primis quaerere par est,

when to-make you-set-about, among the-first to-seek fitting it-is,

850 quod licet ac possis reperire, inolentis olivi

what is-allowed and you-could to-find, of-scentless oil

naturam, nullam quae mittat naribus auram,

the-nature, no which sends to-the-nostrils breath,

quam minime ut possit mixtos in corpore odores

as least so-that it-can the-mingled in the-body scents

concoctosque suo contractans perdere viro,
and-blended by-its-own handling to-spoil pungency,
 propter eandem rem debent primordia rerum
for the-same reason must the-first-beginnings of-things
 non adhibere suum gignundis rebus odorem 855
not to-bring their-own to-being-begotten things scent
 nec sonitum, quoniam nihil ab se mittere possunt,
nor sound, since nothing from themselves to-send they-can,
 nec simili ratione saporem denique quemquam
nor in-like fashion taste finally any
 nec frigus neque item calidum tepidumque vaporem,
nor cold nor likewise hot and-warm vapor,
 cetera, quae cum ita sunt tamen ut mortalia constant,
the-rest, which since so are yet that mortal they-stand,
 molli lenta, fragosa putri, cava corpore raro, 860
with-soft pliant, brittle with-crumbly, hollow with-a-body rare,
 omnia sint a principiis seiuncta necessest,
all be from the-first-elements sundered must-needs,
 immortalia si volumus subiungere rebus
immortal if we-wish to-set-under for-things
 fundamenta, quibus nitatur summa salutis;
foundations, on-which may-rest the-sum of-safety;
 ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.
lest for-you things return to nothing utterly all.
 Nunc ea quae sentire videmus cumque necessest 865
Now those which to-feel we-see soever must-needs
 ex insensilibus tamen omnia confiteare
of senseless yet all you-confess
 principiis constare. neque id manifesta refutant
first-elements to-consist. nor that plain-facts refute

nec contra pugnant, in promptu cognita quae sunt,
 nor against fight, in plain-view known which are,
 sed magis ipsa manu ducunt et credere cogunt
 but rather themselves by-the-hand they-lead and to-believe compel

870 ex insensilibus, quod dico, animalia gigni.

of senseless-things, what I-say, living-things are-begotten.

quippe videre licet vivos existere vermes

for to-see one-may living to-arise worms

stercore de taetro, putorem cum sibi nacta est
 dung from foul, rottenness when for-itself gained has

intempestivis ex imbribus umida tellus.

untimely from rains the-wet earth.

Praeterea cunctas itidem res vertere sese.

Besides all likewise things to-turn themselves.

875 vertunt se fluvii in frondes et pabula laeta

they-turn themselves rivers into leafage and pastures glad

in pecudes, vertunt pecudes in corpora nostra

into cattle, they-turn cattle into bodies our

naturam, et nostro de corpore saepe ferarum

their-nature, and our from body often of-wild-beasts

augescunt vires et corpora pennipotentum.

increase the-strength and the-bodies of-the-strong-winged.

ergo omnes natura cibos in corpora viva

therefore all nature foods into bodies living

880 vertit et hinc sensus animantium procreat omnes,

turns and hence the-senses of-living-things begets all,

non alia longe ratione atque arida ligna

not other far in-a-way than dry logs

explicat in flammas et in ignis omnia versat.

it-unfolds into flames and into fires all-things it-turns.

iamne vides igitur magni primordia rerum
do-you-now see therefore greatly the-first-beginnings of-things
 referre in quali sint ordine quaeque locata
it-matters in what are order each placed
 et commixta quibus dent motus accipiantque?
and mingled with-which they-give motions and-receive?

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II.20 • SENSE OUT OF THE SENSELESS

Stones and logs mixed together do not feel; but whether a thing feels depends on how small its bodies are, and on their shapes, motions, and order. Rotting wood breeds worms. If the first-beginnings themselves felt, they would be living creatures — mortal like all living creatures, and able to beget nothing but a crowd of animals. Eggs turn into chicks, so sense can be born of what has none.

Tum porro, quid id est, animum quod percutit, ipsum,
Then further, what that is, the-mind which strikes, itself,
 quod movet et varios sensus expromere cogit,
which moves and varied feelings to-utter compels,
 ex insensilibus ne credas sensile gigni?
from senseless-things lest you-believe the-sentient is-begotten?
 ni mirum lapides et ligna et terra quod una
no wonder stones and logs and earth because together
 mixta tamen nequeunt vitalem reddere sensum.
mingled yet cannot vital render feeling.
 illud in his igitur rebus meminisse decebit,
this in these therefore matters to-remember it-will-be-fitting,
 non ex omnibus omnino, quaecumque creant res
not from all at-all, whatsoever create things
 sensilia, extemplo me gigni dicere sensus,
sentient-things, forthwith that-I to-be-begotten say senses,

890

sed magni referre ea primum quantula constant,

but greatly it-matters those first how-tiny they-stand,

895 sensile quae faciunt, et qua sint praedita forma,

the-sentient which make, and with-what are endowed shape,

motibus ordinibus posituris denique quae sint.

in-motions orders positions finally what they-are.

quarum nil rerum in lignis glaebisque videmus;

of-which nothing things in logs and-clods we-see;

et tamen haec, cum sunt quasi putrefacta per imbres,

and yet these, when they-are as-it-were rotted by rains,

vermiculos pariunt, quia corpora materiai

little-worms they-bear, because the-bodies of-matter

900 antiquis ex ordinibus permota nova re

old from arrangements stirred by-a-new thing

conciliantur ita ut debent animalia gigni.

are-combined so as they-must living-things to-be-begotten.

Deinde ex sensilibus qui sensile posse creari

Next from sentient-things who the-sentient can to-be-created

constituunt, porro ex aliis sentire sueti

hold, further from others to-feel accustomed

(lacuna)

mollia cum faciunt; nam sensus iungitur omnis

soft when they-make; for sense is-joined all

905 visceribus nervis venis, quae cumque videmus

to-flesh sinews veins, which soever we-see

mollia mortali consistere corpore creta.

soft of-mortal to-consist body made.

sed tamen esto iam posse haec aeterna manere;

but yet let-it-be now can these everlasting remain;

nempe tamen debent aut sensum partis habere

surely yet they-must either feeling of-a-part to-have

aut similis totis animalibus esse putari.

or like to-whole living-things to-be to-be-thought.

at nequeant per se partes sentire necesse est:

but cannot by themselves parts feel needful it-is:

namque animus sensus membrorum respuit omnis,

for the-mind feelings of-limbs spurns all,

nec manus a nobis potis est secreta neque ulla

nor a-hand from us able is severed nor any

corporis omnino sensum pars sola tenere.

of-body at-all feeling part alone to-hold.

linquitur ut totis animantibus adsimulentur,

it-remains that to-whole living-things they-are-likened,

vitali ut possint consentire undique sensu.

with-vital so-that they-can to-feel-with everywhere feeling.

qui poterunt igitur rerum primordia dici

how will-they-be-able therefore of-things the-first-beginnings to-be-called

et leti vitare vias, animalia cum sint,

and of-death to-shun the-ways, living-things since they-are,

atque animalia sint mortalibus una eademque?

and living-things are with-mortals one and-the-same?

quod tamen ut possint, at coetu concilioque

which yet though they-can, yet by-gathering and-combination

nil facient praeter vulgum turbamque animantium,

nothing they-will-make besides a-crowd and-a-throng of-living-things,

scilicet ut nequeant homines armenta feraeque

surely as cannot men herds and-wild-beasts

inter sese ullam rem gignere conveniundo.

among themselves any thing beget by-coming-together.

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sic itidem quae sentimus sentire necessest.

so likewise what we-feel to-feel must-needs.

quod si forte suum dimittunt corpore sensum

but if perchance their-own they-let-go from-body feeling

925 atque alium capiunt, quid opus fuit adtribui id quod

and another take, what need was to-be-assigned that which

detrahitur? tum praeterea, quod fudimus ante,

is-taken-away? then besides, what we-poured-out before,

quatinus in pullos animalis vertier ova

inasmuch-as into chicks living to-be-turned eggs

cernimus alituum vermisque effervere terra,

we-see of-birds and-worms to-swarm-forth from-earth,

intempestivos quom putor cepit ob imbris,

untimely when rottenness has-taken because-of rains,

930 scire licet gigni posse ex non sensibus sensus.

to-know one-may to-be-begotten can from not senses senses.

II.21 • WHAT A BLOW DOES

If someone says that sense arises from the senseless only by a kind of birth, the answer is that no birth happens without a combination first. A blow too heavy for a creature's nature scatters the positions of its first-beginnings and drives the spirit out through the pores; a lighter blow lets the remaining vital motions win. And since pain is a disturbance of matter within, the first-beginnings themselves can feel neither pain nor pleasure.

Quod si forte aliquis dicet, dum taxat oriri

But if perchance someone shall-say, at most to-arise

posse ex non sensu sensus mutabilitate,

can from not sense sensation by-change,

aut aliquo tamquam partu quod proditur extra,
or by-some as-it-were birth which is-brought-forth outside,
 huic satis illud erit planum facere atque probare,
to-him enough that it-will-be plain to-make and to-prove,
 non fieri partum nisi concilio ante coacto,
not to-happen a-birth unless a-combination before gathered,
 nec quicquam commutari sine conciliatu.
nor anything to-be-changed without combination.

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Principio nequeunt ullius corporis esse
First cannot of-any body be
 sensus ante ipsam genitam naturam animantis,
senses before the-very begotten nature of-a-living-thing,
 ni mirum quia materies disiecta tenetur
no wonder because the-matter scattered is-held
 aere fluminibus terris terraque creatis,
in-air rivers lands and-by-earth created-things,
 nec congressa modo vitalis convenientes
nor having-met yet vital fitting
 contulit inter se motus, quibus omnituentes
has-brought among themselves motions, by-which all-beholding
 accensi sensus animantem quamque tuentur.
kindled the-senses the-living-thing each watch-over.

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Praeterea quamvis animantem grandior ictus,
Besides any living-thing a-heavier blow,
 quam patitur natura, repente adfligit et omnis
than bears nature, suddenly strikes-down and all
 corporis atque animi pergit confundere sensus.
of-body and of-mind it-goes-on to-confound senses.
 dissoluuntur enim positurae principiorum
are-dissolved for the-positions of-the-first-elements

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et penitus motus vitales inpediuntur,

and deeply motions vital are-bindered,

donec materies omnis concussa per artus

until the-matter all shaken through the-frame

950 vitalis animae nodos a corpore solvit

the-vital of-the-spirit knots from the-body looses

dispersamque foras per caulas eiecit omnis;

and-scattered outward through the-pores casts all;

nam quid praeterea facere ictum posse reamur

for what besides to-do a-blow can should-we-think

oblatum, nisi discutere ac dissolvere quaeque?

dealt, except to-shatter and to-dissolve each?

fit quoque uti soleant minus oblato acriter ictu

it-comes also that they-are-wont less dealt sharply a-blow

955 reliqui motus vitalis vincere saepe,

the-remaining motions vital to-conquer often,

vincere et ingentis plagae sedare tumultus

to-conquer and of-the-huge blow to-calm the-tumults

inque suos quicquid rursus revocare meatus

and-into their-own whatever again to-recall courses

et quasi iam leti dominantem in corpore motum

and as-it-were now of-death mastering in the-body the-motion

discutere ac paene amissos accendere sensus;

to-shatter and almost lost to-rekindle the-senses;

960 nam qua re potius leti iam limine ab ipso

for by-what reason rather of-death now threshold from the-very

ad vitam possint conlecta mente reverti,

to life could-they collected with-mind return,

quam quo decursum prope iam siet ire et abire?

than whither the-course-run nearly now is to-go and depart?

Praeterea, quoniam dolor est, ubi materiai

Besides, since pain is, when of-matter

corpora vi quadam per viscera viva per artus

the-bodies by-a-force certain through the-flesh living through the-frame

sollicitata suis trepidant in sedibus intus,

disturbed their-own quiver in seats within,

inque locum quando remigrant, fit blanda voluptas,

and-into place when they-move-back, comes soothing pleasure,

scire licet nullo primordia posse dolore

to-know one-may by-no the-first-beginnings can pain

temptari nullamque voluptatem capere ex se;

to-be-assailed and-no pleasure to-take from themselves;

quandoquidem non sunt ex ullis principiorum

since-indeed not they-are of any of-first-elements

corporibus, quorum motus novitate laborent

bodies, whose of-motion by-newness they-suffer

aut aliquem fructum capiant dulcedinis almae.

or any fruit they-take of-sweetness kindly.

haut igitur debent esse ullo praedita sensu.

not therefore must-they be with-any endowed feeling.

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If the first-beginnings that make men must feel, then they must shake with laughter, wet their cheeks with tears, and discourse on the mixture of things — and they in turn must be made of others that do the same, with no place to stop. Since laughter can come from what does not laugh, and wisdom from seeds that are not wise, sense can come from seeds that have none.

Denique uti possint sentire animalia quaeque,

Finally that they-can feel living-things each,

principiis si iam est sensus tribuendus eorum,

to-the-first-elements if now is feeling to-be-assigned of-them,

975 quid, genus humanum propritim de quibus auctumst?

what, the-race human properly of which is-made-up?

scilicet et risu tremulo concussa cachinnant

surely and with-laughter shaking convulsed they-guffaw

et lacrimis spargunt rorantibus ora genasque

and with-tears they-sprinkle dripping faces and-cheeks

multaque de rerum mixtura dicere callent

and-many-things about of-things the-mixture to-say they-are-skilled

et sibi proporro quae sint primordia quaerunt;

and for-themselves in-their-turn what are the-first-beginnings they-ask;

980 quando quidem totis mortalibus adsimulata

since indeed to-whole mortals likened

ipsa quoque ex aliis debent constare elementis,

themselves also of others must consist elements,

inde alia ex aliis, nusquam consistere ut ausis;

then others of others, nowhere to-stop that you-would-dare;

quippe sequar, quod cumque loqui ridereque dices

for I-shall-follow, what soever to-speak and-to-laugh you-shall-say

et sapere, ex aliis eadem haec facientibus ut sit.

and to-be-wise, of others the-same these doing that it-is.

quod si delira haec furiosaque cernimus esse

but if crazy these and-frantic we-see to-be

et ridere potest non ex ridentibus auctus,

and to-laugh can not of laughing-things made,

et sapere et doctis rationem reddere dictis

and to-be-wise and in-learned an-account to-render words

non ex seminibus sapientibus atque disertis,

not of seeds wise and eloquent,

qui minus esse queant ea quae sentire videmus

how the-less to-be can those which to-feel we-see

seminibus permixta carentibus undique sensu?

of-seeds mingled lacking everywhere feeling?

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II.23 · HEAVEN THE FATHER, EARTH THE MOTHER

We are all sprung from heavenly seed: rain falls from the father sky to mother earth, and returns as crops, beasts, and men; what came from earth goes back to earth. Death scatters matter's gatherings rather than destroying it, and what matters is which first-beginnings meet, and in what position and motion — as the same letters, differently arranged, spell heaven, sea, and sun. A new doctrine now nears Memmius' ears, and he must not spit it out for its strangeness.

Denique caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi;

Finally of-heavenly we-are all seed sprung;

omnibus ille idem pater est, unde alma liquentis

to-all that same father is, whence kindly of-liquid

umoris guttas mater cum terra recepit,

moisture the-drops mother when earth has-received,

feta parit nitidas fruges arbustaque laeta

teeming she-bears shining crops and-trees glad

995 et genus humanum, parit omnia saecula ferarum,

and the-race human, she-bears all the-generations of-wild-beasts,

pabula cum praebet, quibus omnes corpora pascunt

pastures when she-furnishes, by-which all their-bodies feed

et dulcem ducunt vitam prolemque propagant;

and sweet they-lead life and-offspring they-propagate;

qua propter merito maternum nomen adepta est.

for-which reason rightly the-mother's name gained she-has.

cedit item retro, de terra quod fuit ante,

passes likewise back, from earth what was before,

1000 in terras, et quod missumst ex aetheris oris,

into the-lands, and what was-sent from of-aether the-shores,

id rursum caeli rellatum templa receptant.

that again of-heaven carried-back the-precincts receive.

nec sic interemit mors res ut materiai

nor so destroys death things that of-matter

corpora conficiat, sed coetum dissupat ollis;

the-bodies it-undoes, but the-gathering it-scatters of-them;

inde aliis aliud coniungit et efficit, omnis

then with-others one it-joins and brings-about, all

1005 res ut convertant formas mutentque colores

things that change forms and-shift colors

et capiant sensus et puncto tempore reddant;

and take feelings and in-a-point of-time give-them-back;

ut noscas referre earum primordia rerum

so-that you-may-know it-matters of-those the-first-beginnings things

cum quibus et quali positura contineantur

with which and in-what position they-are-held

et quos inter se dent motus accipiantque,

and what among themselves they-give motions and-receive,

neve putes aeterna penes residere potesse

and-lest you-think everlasting with to-abide can

corpora prima quod in summis fluitare videmus

bodies first because on the-surface to-float we-see

rebus et interdum nasci subitoque perire.

of-things and sometimes to-be-born and-suddenly to-perish.

quin etiam refert nostris in versibus ipsis

may even it-matters our in verses themselves

cum quibus et quali sint ordine quaeque locata;

with which and in-what are order each placed;

namque eadem caelum mare terras flumina solem

for the-same heaven sea lands rivers sun

significant, eadem fruges arbusta animantis;

they-signify, the-same crops trees living-things;

si non omnia sunt, at multo maxima pars est

if not all they-are, yet by-far the-greatest part is

consimilis; verum positura discrepitant res.

alike; but by-position they-differ things.

sic ipsis in rebus item iam materiai

so the-very in things likewise now of-matter

concursus motus ordo positura figurae

meetings motions order position shapes

cum permutantur, mutari res quoque debent.

when are-interchanged, to-be-changed things also must.

Nunc animum nobis adhibe veram ad rationem.

Now the-mind to-us bring true to reasoning.

nam tibi vehementer nova res molitur ad auris

for for-you mightily a-new matter strives to the-ears

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- 1025 accedere et nova se species ostendere rerum.
to-come and a-new itself aspect to-show of-things.
 sed neque tam facilis res ulla est, quin ea primum
but nor so easy thing any is, but-that it at-first
 difficilis magis ad credendum constet, itemque
difficult more for believing stands, and-like-wise
 nil adeo magnum neque tam mirabile quicquam,
nothing so great nor so wonderful anything,
 quod non paulatim minuant mirarier omnes,
which not little-by-little they-lessen to-wonder-at all,
- 1030 principio caeli clarum purumque colorem
first of-heaven the-bright and-pure color
 quaeque in se cohibet, palantia sidera passim,
and-what in itself it-holds, wandering stars everywhere,
 lunamque et solis praeclara luce nitorem;
and-the-moon and of-the-sun with-glorious light the-splendor;
 omnia quae nunc si primum mortalibus essent
all which now if for-the-first-time to-mortals were
 ex improviso si sint obiecta repente,
from the-unforeseen if they-are cast suddenly,
- 1035 quid magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici,
what more than-these things could wonderful to-be-called,
 aut minus ante quod auderent fore credere gentes?
or less before which would-dare to-be to-believe the-nations?
 nil, ut opinor; ita haec species miranda fuisset.
nothing, as I-think; so this sight wonderful would-have-been.
 quam tibi iam nemo fessus satiate videndi,
which for-you now no-one wearied with-satiety of-seeing,
 suspicere in caeli dignatur lucida templa.
to-look-up into of-heaven deigns the-shining precincts.

desine qua propter novitate exterritus ipsa

cease for-which reason by-the-newness terrified itself

expuere ex animo rationem, sed magis acri

to-spit from the-mind the-reasoning, but rather with-keen

iudicio perpende, et si tibi vera videntur,

judgment weigh, and if to-you true they-seem,

dede manus, aut, si falsum est, accingere contra.

yield hands, or, if false it-is, gird-yourself against.

quaerit enim rationem animus, cum summa loci sit

seeks for an-account the-mind, since the-sum of-space is

infinita foris haec extra moenia mundi,

infinite outside these beyond the-walls of-the-world,

quid sit ibi porro, quo prospicere usque velit mens

what is there further, whither to-look-forward ever would-wish the-mind

atque animi iactus liber quo pervolet ipse.

and of-mind the-cast free whither flies itself

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II.24 · OTHER WORLDS

Since space is boundless and the seeds are countless, it is not credible that this one world was made and all that matter outside does nothing. Nothing in nature is unique and of its own kind alone; there must be other earths, other skies, and other races of men and beasts. Nature, freed of proud masters, does everything herself — for who could rule the measureless, or hurl the bolt that spares the guilty and kills the innocent?

Principio nobis in cunctas undique partis

First for-us into all everywhere directions

et latere ex utroque supra supterque per omne

and side on either above and-beneath through the-whole

- 1050 nulla est finis; uti docui, res ipsaque per se
no there-is end; as I-have-taught, the-fact and-itself by itself
 vociferatur, et elucet natura profundi.
cries-aloud, and shines-out the-nature of-the-deep.
 nullo iam pacto veri simile esse putandumst,
in-no now way of-truth like to-be must-it-be-thought,
 undique cum vorsum spatium vacet infinitum
everywhere since turned space lies-empty infinite
 seminaque innumero numero summaque profunda
and-seeds in-countless number and-in-a-sum unfathomed
- 1055 multimodis volitent aeterno percita motu,
in-many-ways fly by-everlasting driven motion,
 hunc unum terrarum orbem caelumque creatum,
this one of-lands globe and-heaven created,
 nil agere illa foris tot corpora materiai;
nothing do those outside so-many bodies of-matter;
 cum praesertim hic sit natura factus et ipsa
since especially this is by-nature made and themselves
 sponte sua forte offensando semina rerum
ofaccord their-own by-chance by-colliding the-seeds of-things
- 1060 multimodis temere in cassum frustra que coacta
in-many-ways at-random in vain and-fruitlessly driven
 tandem coluerunt ea quae coniecta repente
at-last have-settled-together those which thrown-together suddenly
 magnarum rerum fierent exordia semper,
of-great things should-become the-beginnings ever,
 terrai maris et caeli generisque animantum.
of-earth sea and heaven and-of-the-race of-living-things.
 quare etiam atque etiam talis fateare necesse est
wherefore again and again such you-confess needful it-is

esse alios alibi congressus materiai,

there-are other elsewhere gatherings of-matter,

qualis hic est, avido complexu quem tenet aether.

such-as this is, in-a-greedy embrace which holds aether.

Praeterea cum materies est multa parata,

Besides when matter is much ready,

cum locus est praesto nec res nec causa moratur

when place is at-hand nor thing nor cause delays

ulla, geri debent ni mirum et confieri res.

any, to-be-carried-on must no wonder and to-be-brought-about things.

nunc et seminibus si tanta est copia, quantam

now also of-seeds if so-great is a-store, as

enumerare aetas animantum non queat omnis,

to-count the-age of-living-things not could whole,

quis eadem natura manet, quae semina rerum

in-which the-same nature abides, which seeds of-things

conicere in loca quaeque queat simili ratione

to-throw into places each could in-like fashion

atque huc sunt coniecta, necesse est confiteare

as hither they-are thrown, needful it-is you-confess

esse alios aliis terrarum in partibus orbis

there-are other other of-lands in parts globes

et varias hominum gentis et saecula ferarum.

and varied of-men races and the-generations of-wild-beasts.

Huc accedit ut in summa res nulla sit una,

Hereto is-added that in the-sum thing no is single,

unica quae gignatur et unica solaque crescat,

alone which is-begotten and alone and-only grows,

quin aliquoius siet saeculi permultaque eodem

but-that of-some it-is kind and-very-many of-the-same

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- 1080 sint genere. in primis animalibus indice mente
are kind. in the-first among-living-things with-a-guide mind
 invenies sic montivagum genus esse ferarum,
you-will-find so the-mountain-roaming race to-be of-wild-beasts,
 sic hominum geminam prolem, sic denique mutas
so of-men the-twofold offspring, so finally the-mute
 squamigerum pecudes et corpora cuncta volantum.
of-scale-bearers herds and the-bodies all of-flying-things.
 qua propter caelum simili ratione fatendumst
for-which reason heaven in-like fashion must-be-confessed
- 1085 terramque et solem, lunam mare cetera quae sunt,
and-earth and sun, moon sea the-rest which are,
 non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali;
not to-be single, but in-number rather uncountable;
 quando quidem vitae depactus terminus alte
since indeed of-life driven-in the-boundary deep
 tam manet haec et tam nativo corpore constant
as awaits these and as with-a-born body they-stand
 quam genus omne, quod his generatimst rebus abundans.
as kind every, which in-these kind-by-kind-is things abounding.
- 1090 Quae bene cognita si teneas, natura videtur
Which well learned if you-hold, nature seems
 libera continuo, dominis privata superbis,
free straightway, of-masters bereft proud,
 ipsa sua per se sponte omnia dis agere expers.
herself her-own by herself of-accord all-things of-gods to-do without-part.
 nam pro sancta deum tranquilla pectora pace
for by the-holy of-the-gods tranquil hearts peace
 quae placidum degunt aevom vitamque serenam,
which a-calm pass age and-life serene,

quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi

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who to-rule of-the-measureless the-sum, who to-hold of-the-deep

indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas,

in hand the-strong able is masterfully reins,

quis pariter caelos omnis convertere et omnis

who alike the-heavens all to-turn and all

ignibus aetheriis terras suffire feracis,

with-fires ethereal lands to-warm fruitful,

omnibus inve locis esse omni tempore praesto,

in-all or-in places to-be at-every time at-hand,

nubibus ut tenebras faciat caelique serena

1100

with-clouds that darkness he-makes and-of-heaven the-clear-spaces

concutiat sonitu, tum fulmina mittat et aedis

shakes with-thunder, then bolts sends and temples

saepe suas disturbet et in deserta recedens

often his-own shatters and into the-wastes withdrawing

saeviat exercens telum, quod saepe nocentes

rages plying the-sbafi, which often the-guilty

praeterit exanimatque indignos inque merentes?

passes-by and-slays the-unworthy and-not deserving?

After the world's birth, more bodies were added from outside, and sea, earth, and sky grew until nature brought them to their limit. A thing grows while it takes in more than it gives back; when it is large and broad it scatters more than it gains, and food no longer reaches every vein. So growth halts, and age breaks what it had built.

- 1105 **Multaque post mundi tempus genitale diemque**
And-many after of-the-world the-time birth and-the-day
primigenum maris et terrae solisque coortum
first-born of-sea and earth and-of-the-sun the-uprising
addita corpora sunt extrinsecus, addita circum
added bodies have-been from-without, added around
semina, quae magnum iaculando contulit omne,
seeds, which the-great by-hurling has-brought the-whole,
unde mare et terrae possent augescere et unde
whence sea and lands could grow and whence
- 1110 **appareret spatium caeli domus altaque tecta**
might-appear the-space of-heaven the-house and-lofty roofs
tolleret a terris procul et consurgeret aer.
might-raise from the-earth far and might-rise the-air.
nam sua cuique, locis ex omnibus, omnia plagis
for its-own to-each, places from all, all by-blows
corpora distribuuntur et ad sua saecula recedunt,
bodies are-distributed and to their-own kinds withdraw,
umor ad umorem, terreno corpore terra
moisture to moisture, by-an-earthly body earth
- 1115 **crescit et ignem ignes procudunt aetheraque aether,**
grows and fire fires forge and-aether aether,
donique ad extremum crescendi perfica finem
until to the-last of-growing the-perfecting bound

omnia perduxit rerum natura creatrix;

all-things has-brought of-things the-nature creating;

ut fit ubi nihilo iam plus est quod datur intra

as it-happens when by-nothing now more is what is-given within

vitalis venas quam quod fluit atque recedit.

the-vital veins than what flows and withdraws.

omnibus hic aetas debet consistere rebus,

1120

for-all here growth must halt things,

hic natura suis refrenat viribus auctum.

here nature with-her-own reins-in forces the-increase.

nam quae cumque vides hilario grandescere adauctu

for what soever you-see with-glad to-grow-big increase

paulatimque gradus aetatis scandere adultae,

and-little-by-little the-steps of-age to-climb grown,

plura sibi adsumunt quam de se corpora mittunt,

more to-themselves they-take than from themselves bodies they-send,

dum facile in venas cibus omnis inditur et dum

1125

while easily into the-veins food all is-put and while

non ita sunt late dispessa, ut multa remittant

not so they-are widely spread-out, that much they-give-back

et plus dispendi faciant quam vescitur aetas.

and more of-waste they-make than feeds-on their-age.

nam certe fluere atque recedere corpora rebus

for surely to-flow and to-withdraw bodies from-things

multa manus dandum est; sed plura accedere debent,

many hands to-be-given it-is; but more to-come must,

donec alescendi summum tetigere cacumen.

1130

until of-growing the-topmost they-have-touched peak.

inde minutatim vires et robur adultum

then bit-by-bit the-strength and vigor full-grown

frangit et in partem peiorem liquitur aetas.

breaks and into the-part worse melts age.

quippe etenim quanto est res amplior, augmine adempto,

for indeed by-how-much is a-thing larger, the-increase taken-away,

et quo latior est, in cunctas undique partis

and by-how-much broader it-is, into all everywhere directions

1135 plura modo dispargit et a se corpora mittit,

more just it-scatters and from itself bodies it-sends,

nec facile in venas cibus omnis diditur ei

nor easily into the-veins food all is-spread for-it

nec satis est, pro quam largos exaestuat aestus,

nor enough is-it, in-proportion as copious it-seethes tides,

unde queat tantum suboriri ac subpeditare.

whence it-could so-much to-rise-up and to-supply.

iure igitur pereunt, cum rarefacta fluendo

rightly therefore they-perish, when rarefied by-flowing

1140 sunt et cum externis succumbunt omnia plagis,

they-are and when to-outward they-succumb all blows,

quando quidem grandi cibus aevo denique defit,

since indeed in-great food age finally fails,

nec tuditantia rem cessant extrinsecus ullam

nor hammering a-thing cease from-without any

corpora conficere et plagis infesta domare.

bodies to-destroy and with-blows hostile to-tame.

The walls of the great world will one day be stormed and fall in crumbling ruin, for food cannot forever renew what age wears out. The earth is already broken and outworn: she who once bore huge beasts now scarcely makes small ones. The aging plowman shakes his head at his wasted labor and praises his father's luck, and the planter of a shriveled vine blames the times, neither grasping that everything wastes little by little and goes to the grave worn out by length of time.

Sic igitur magni quoque circum moenia mundi

So therefore of-the-great also around the-walls world

expugnata dabunt labem putrisque ruinas;

stormed will-give collapse and-crumbling ruins;

omnia debet enim cibus integrare novando

all-things must for food renew by-renewing

et fulcire cibus, cibus omnia sustentare,

and prop food, food all-things sustain,

ne ququam, quoniam nec venae perpetiuntur

to-no purpose, since neither the-veins endure

quod satis est, neque quantum opus est natura ministrat.

what enough is, nor as-much-as need is nature supplies.

Iamque adeo fracta est aetas effetaque tellus

And-now so-far broken is the-age and-outworn the-earth

vix animalia parva creat, quae cuncta creavit

scarcely creatures small she-creates, who all created

saecla deditque ferarum ingentia corpora partu.

the-generations and-gave of-wild-beasts huge bodies in-birth.

haud, ut opinor, enim mortalia saecla superne

not, as I-think, for mortal the-generations from-above

aurea de caelo demisit funis in arva

a-golden from heaven let-down rope into the-fields

1145

1150

- 1155 nec mare nec fluctus plangentis saxa crearunt,
nor sea nor the-waves beating the-rocks created,
 sed genuit tellus eadem quae nunc alit ex se.
but bore the-earth the-same which now feeds from itself.
 praeterea nitidas fruges vinetaque laeta
besides shining crops and-vineyards glad
 sponte sua primum mortalibus ipsa creavit,
of-accord her-own first for-mortals herself created,
 ipsa dedit dulcis fetus et pabula laeta;
herself gave sweet fruits and pastures glad;
- 1160 quae nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore,
which now scarcely by-our grow-big increased toil,
 conterimusque boves et viris agricolarum,
and-we-wear-out oxen and the-strength of-farmers,
 conficimus ferrum vix arvis suppeditati:
we-use-up iron scarcely by-the-fields supplied:
 usque adeo parcunt fetus augentque laborem.
right so-far they-grudge the-crops and-increase toil.
 iamque caput quassans grandis suspirat arator
and-now his-head shaking the-aged sighs plowman
- 1165 crebrius, in cassum magnos cecidisse labores,
more-often, in vain great to-have-fallen labors,
 et cum tempora temporibus praesentia confert
and when times with-times present he-compares
 praeteritis, laudat fortunas saepe parentis.
with-past, he-praises the-fortunes often of-his-father.
 tristis item vetulae vitis sator atque vietae
sad likewise of-an-old vine the-planter and shrieved
 temporis incusat momen saeculumque fatigat,
of-time blames the-course and-the-age he-wearies,

et crepat, antiquum genus ut pietate repletum

and he-grumbles, the-ancient race how with-piety filled

perfacile angustis tolerarit finibus aevom,

very-easily within-narrow bore bounds life,

cum minor esset agri multo modus ante viritim;

although smaller was of-land by-much the-measure before per-man;

nec tenet omnia paulatim tabescere et ire

nor does-he-grasp all-things little-by-little to-waste and to-go

ad capulum spatio aetatis defessa vetusto.

to the-bier by-a-span of-time worn-out long.

BOOK III

III.1 • THE WALLS OF THE WORLD FALL AWAY

Lucretius follows Epicurus, who first raised so bright a light out of such darkness. When his teaching begins to speak, the terrors of the mind flee, the walls of the world part, and the untroubled seats of the gods appear, where no wind or snow reaches. Having shown what the first-beginnings are, he now turns to the nature of mind and spirit, and to driving out the fear of Acheron.

E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen

From darkness so-great so bright to-raise a-light

qui primus potuisti inlustrans commodā vitae,

who first were-able lighting-up the-blessings of-life,

te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc

you I-follow, o of-the-Greek race glory, and-in your now

ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,

planted of-feet I-set pressed footsteps marks,

non ita certandi cupidus quam propter amorem

not so of-contending desirous as because-of love

quod te imitari aveo; quid enim contendat hirundo

that you to-copy I-long; what for should-vie a-swallow

cycnis, aut quid nam tremulis facere artibus haedi

with-swans, or what pray with-quivering to-do limbs kids

consimile in cursu possint et fortis equi vis?

like in the-race could as of-a-strong horse the-power?

tu, pater, es rerum inventor, tu patria nobis

you, father, are of-things the-finder, you fatherly to-us

suppeditas praecepta, tuisque ex, inclute, chartis,

supply precepts, and-your from, renowned-one, pages,

5

10

floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,

flowery as bees in glades all-things sip,

omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta,

all we likewise feed-on golden sayings,

aurea, perpetua semper dignissima vita.

golden, of-everlasting ever most-worthy life.

nam simul ac ratio tua coepit vociferari

for as-soon as reasoning your has-begun to-cry-aloud

15 naturam rerum divina mente coorta

the-nature of-things from-a-divine mind sprung

diffugiunt animi terrores, moenia mundi

they-flee of-mind the-terrors, the-walls of-the-world

discedunt. totum video per inane geri res.

part. the-whole I-see through the-void carried-on things.

apparet divum numen sedesque quietae,

appears of-the-gods the-godhead and-the-seats quiet,

quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis

which neither shake winds nor clouds with-rain

20 aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina

sprinkle nor snow with-keen congealed frost

cana cadens violat semperque innubilus aether

white falling violates and-always cloudless the-aether

integrit et large diffuso lumine ridet:

covers and widely with-outspread light laughs:

omnia suppeditat porro natura neque ulla

all-things supplies further nature nor any

res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo.

thing of-mind the-peace nibbles at-a-time in any.

25 at contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa,

but contrariwise nowhere appear the-Acherusian precincts,

nec tellus obstat quin omnia dispiciantur,
nor the-earth hinders but-that all-things are-described,
 sub pedibus quae cumque infra per inane geruntur.
beneath our-feet what soever below through the-void are-carried-on.
 his ibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas
by-these then me things a-certain divine delight
 percipit atque horror, quod sic natura tua vi
seizes and awe, because so nature by-your force
 tam manifesta patens ex omni parte resecta est. 30
so manifest lying-open from every side uncovered is.
 Et quoniam docui, cunctarum exordia rerum
And since I-have-taught, of-all the-beginnings things
 qualia sint et quam variis distantia formis
of-what-kind they-are and how with-varied differing forms
 sponte sua volitent aeterno percita motu,
ofaccord their-own they-fly by-everlasting driven motion,
 quove modo possint res ex his quaeque creari,
or-in-what way can things from these each to-be-created,
 hasce secundum res animi natura videtur 35
these after matters of-mind the-nature seems
 atque animae claranda meis iam versibus esse
and of-spirit to-be-made-clear by-my now verses to-be
 et metus ille foras praeceps Acheruntis agendus,
and fear that out headlong of-Acheron to-be-driven,
 funditus humanam qui vitam turbat ab imo
utterly human which life troubles from the-depths
 omnia suffundens mortis nigrore neque ullam
all-things steeping of-death with-the-blackness nor any
 esse voluptatem liquidam puramque relinquit. 40
to-be pleasure clear and-pure it-leaves.

Men say they fear disease and disgrace more than death, and claim to know that the mind is blood or wind — but this is said for show. Exiled and disgraced, they still sacrifice to the dead and turn all the harder to religion. Greed, ambition, envy, and even suicide are fed by the dread of death; men have betrayed country and parents to escape it. It is a darkness no sunlight scatters, but only the aspect and law of nature.

nam quod saepe homines morbos magis esse timendos

for that often men diseases more to-be to-be-feared

infamemque ferunt vitam quam Tartara leti

and-infamous they-say life than the-Tartarus of-death

et se scire animi naturam sanguinis esse,

and that-they know of-mind the-nature of-blood to-be,

aut etiam venti, si fert ita forte voluntas,

or even of-wind, if carries so perchance their-fancy,

45 nec prosum quicquam nostrae rationis egere,

and-not at-all anything of-our reasoning to-need,

hinc licet advertas animum magis omnia laudis

hence you-may turn your-mind rather all-things of-praise

iactari causa quam quod res ipsa probetur.

to-be-banded for-the-sake than because the-matter itself is-proved.

extorres idem patria longeque fugati

exiles the-same-men from-their-country and-far driven

conspectu ex hominum, foedati crimine turpi,

the-sight from of-men, befouled with-a-charge base,

50 omnibus aerumnis adfecti denique vivunt,

by-all troubles afflicted finally they-live,

et quo cumque tamen miseri venere parentant

and whither soever still the-wretches have-come they-make-offerings

et nigras mactant pecudes et manibus divis

and black they-slaughter beasts and to-the-shades divine

inferias mittunt multoque in rebus acerbis

offerings they-send and-much in circumstances bitter

acrius advertunt animos ad religionem.

more-keenly they-turn their-minds to religion.

quo magis in dubiis hominem spectare periclis

wherefore the-more in doubtful a-man to-observe perils

convenit adversisque in rebus noscere qui sit;

it-is-fitting and-in-adverse in circumstances to-know what he-is;

nam verae voces tum demum pectore ab imo

for true voices then at-last the-breast from the-deep

eliciuntur et eripitur persona manet res.

are-drawn and is-torn-off the-mask remains the-reality.

denique avarities et honorum caeca cupido,

finally greed and of-honors blind the-lust,

quae miseros homines cogunt transcendere fines

which wretched men force to-overstep the-bounds

iuris et inter dum socios scelerum atque ministros

of-right and between times as-partners of-crimes and helpers

noctes atque dies niti praestante labore

nights and days to-strain with-surpassing toil

ad summas emergere opes, haec vulnera vitae

to the-highest to-rise riches, these wounds of-life

non minimam partem mortis formidine aluntur.

not the-smallest part of-death by-the-dread are-fed.

turpis enim ferme contemptus et acris egestas

base for commonly contempt and sharp want

semota ab dulci vita stabilique videtur

far-removed from sweet life and-steadfast seems

55

60

65

et quasi iam leti portas cunctarier ante;

and as-it-were now of-death the-gates to-linger before;

unde homines dum se falso terrore coacti

whence men while themselves by-a-false terror driven

effugisse volunt longe longeque remosse,

to-have-escaped they-wish far and-far to-have-removed,

70 sanguine civili rem conflant divitiasque

with-blood civil a-fortune they-amass and-riches

conduplicant avidi, caedem caede accumulantes,

they-double greedy, slaughter on-slaughter heaping,

crudeles gaudent in tristi funere fratris

cruel they-rejoice in the-sad funeral of-a-brother

et consanguineum mensas odere timentque.

and of-kinsmen the-tables they-hate and-fear.

consimili ratione ab eodem saepe timore

in-like fashion from the-same often fear

75 macerat invidia ante oculos illum esse potentem,

it-galls envy before their-eyes that-man to-be powerful,

illum aspectari, claro qui incedit honore,

that-man to-be-gazed-at, in-bright who walks honor,

ipsi se in tenebris volvi caenoque queruntur.

they-themselves themselves in darkness to-wallow and-in-mire they-complain.

intereunt partim statuarum et nominis ergo.

they-perish some of-statues and of-a-name for-the-sake.

et saepe usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitae

and often right so-far, of-death by-the-dread, of-life

80 percipit humanos odium lucisque videndae,

seizes humans hatred and-of-the-light of-seeing,

ut sibi consciscant maerenti pectore letum

that for-themselves they-resolve with-a-mourning breast death

obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem:

forgetting the-fountain of-cares this to-be fear:

hunc vexare pudorem, hunc vincula amicitiai

this to-harass shame, this the-bonds of-friendship

rumpere et in summa pietate evertere suadet:

to-break and in the-height of-duty to-overthrow it-persuades:

nam iam saepe homines patriam carosque parentis

for now often men their-country and-dear parents

prodiderunt vitare Acherusia templa petentes.

have-betrayed to-shun the-Acherusian precincts seeking

nam vel uti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis

for even as children tremble and all-things in-blind

in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus

in darkness fear, so we in the-light fear

inter dum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam

between times, by-nothing what are to-be-feared more than

quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.

what children in the-darkness dread and-imagine coming.

hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest

this therefore terror of-mind and-the-darkness must-needs

non radii solis neque lucida tela diei

not the-rays of-the-sun nor the-bright shafts of-day

discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

scatter, but of-nature the-aspect and-the-law.

85

90

The mind, in which the counsel of life is placed, is a part of a man as much as hand or foot. It is not a condition of the whole body, a harmony as the Greeks say: the body can be sick while the mind is glad, and the mind wretched while the body is well. Much of the body can be lost and life remain. Let the musicians keep the word, and let us go on.

Primum animum dico, mentem quem saepe vocamus,

First the-mind I-say, mind [intellect] which often we-call,

95 in quo consilium vitae regimenque locatum est,

in which the-counsel of-life and-the-guidance placed is,

esse hominis partem nihilo minus ac manus et pes

to-be of-man a-part by-nothing less than hand and foot

atque oculi partes animantis totius extant.

and eyes parts of-the-living-thing whole stand.

(lacuna)

sensum animi certa non esse in parte locatum,

the-sense of-mind a-fixed not to-be in part placed,

verum habitum quendam vitalem corporis esse,

but a-condition certain vital of-body to-be,

100 harmoniam Grai quam dicunt, quod faciat nos

a-harmony the-Greeks which call, which makes us

vivere cum sensu, nulla cum in parte siet mens;

to-live with feeling, no when in part is mind;

ut bona saepe valetudo cum dicitur esse

as good often health when is-said to-be

corporis, et non est tamen haec pars ulla valentis,

of-body, and not is yet this part any of-the-healthy-man,

sic animi sensum non certa parte reponunt;

so of-mind the-sense not in-a-fixed part they-place;

magno opere in quo mi diversi errare videntur.

in-great measure in which to-me widely to-err they-seem.

105

Saepe itaque, in promptu corpus quod cernitur, aegret,

Often and-so, in plain-view the-body which is-seen, is-sick,

cum tamen ex alia laetamur parte latenti;

although yet in another we-are-glad part hidden;

et retro fit ubi contra sit saepe vicissim,

and backward it-happens when the-contrary is often in-turn,

cum miser ex animo laetatur corpore toto;

when wretched in mind rejoices in-body whole;

non alio pacto quam si, pes cum dolet aegri,

not in-another way than if, the-foot when pains of-a-sick-man,

110

in nullo caput interea sit forte dolore.

in no the-head meanwhile is perchance pain.

Praeterea molli cum somno dedita membra

Besides to-soft when sleep given-up the-limbs

effusumque iacet sine sensu corpus honustum,

and-outstretched lies without feeling the-body heavy,

est aliud tamen in nobis quod tempore in illo

there-is something-else yet in us which at-a-time in that

multimodis agitur et omnis accipit in se

in-many-ways is-stirred and all takes into itself

115

laetitiae motus et curas cordis inanis.

of-gladness motions and cares of-the-heart empty.

Nunc animam quoque ut in membris cognoscere possis

Now the-spirit also that in the-limbs to-learn you-may-be-able

esse neque harmonia corpus sentire solere,

is nor by-harmony the-body to-feel is-wont,

principio fit uti detracto corpore multo

first it-happens that withdrawn body much

120 saepe tamen nobis in membris vita moretur.

often yet for-us in the-limbs life lingers.

Atque eadem rursum, cum corpora pauca calor

And the-same again, when bodies a-few of-beat

diffugere forasque per os est editus aër,

have-fled and-outward through the-mouth has-been sent-out air,

deserit extemplo venas atque ossa relinquit;

it-deserts forthwith the-veins and the-bones it-leaves;

noscere ut hinc possis non aequas omnia partis

to-know so-that hence you-may-be-able not equal all parts

125 corpora habere neque ex aequo fulcire salutem,

bodies to-have nor on equal-terms to-prop safety,

sed magis haec, venti quae sunt calidique vaporis

but rather these, of-wind which are and-of-hot vapor

semina, curare in membris ut vita moretur.

seeds, to-take-care in the-limbs that life lingers.

est igitur calor ac ventus vitalis in ipso

there-is therefore heat and wind vital in the-very

corpore, qui nobis moribundos deserit artus.

body, which from-us the-dying deserts limbs.

130 quapropter quoniam est animi natura reperta

wherefore since is of-mind the-nature found

atque animae quasi pars hominis, redde harmoniai

and of-spirit as-it-were a-part of-man, give-back of-harmony

nomen, ad organicos alto delatum Heliconi,

the-name, to the-musicians from-lofty brought-down Helicon,

sive aliunde ipsi porro traxere et in illam

or from-elsewhere they-themselves further have-drawn and to that

transtulerunt, proprio quae tum res nomine egebat.

have-transferred, a-proper which then thing name lacked.

quidquid id est, habeant: tu cetera percipe dicta.

whatever it is, let-them-have-it: you the-rest learn the-words.

135

III.4 • MIND IN THE BREAST, SPIRIT THROUGH THE FRAME

Mind and spirit are joined and make one nature, but the mind is the head of it and sits in the middle of the breast, where dread and gladness are felt. The spirit is spread through the rest of the body and obeys the mind. Because terror makes men sweat, stammer, and fall, mind and spirit must both be bodily: what drives the limbs must touch them, and only a body can touch.

Nunc animum atque animam dico coniuncta teneri

Now mind and spirit I-say joined are-held

inter se atque unam naturam conficere ex se,

among themselves and one nature to-make of themselves,

sed caput esse quasi et dominari in corpore toto

but the-head to-be as-it-were and to-rule in body the-whole

consilium, quod nos animum mentemque vocamus.

the-counsel, which we mind and-mind [intellect] call.

idque situm media regione in pectoris haeret.

and-it placed the-middle region in of-the-breast clings.

hic exultat enim pavor ac metus, haec loca circum

here leaps for dread and fear, these places around

laetitiae mulcent: hic ergo mens animusquest.

gladnesses soothe: here therefore mind [intellect] and-the-mind-is.

cetera pars animae per totum dissita corpus

the-rest part of-spirit through the-whole scattered body

paret et ad numen mentis momenque movetur.

obeys and at the-nod of-the-mind and-impulse is-moved.

140

- 145 idque sibi solum per se sapit et sibi gaudet,
and-it for-itself alone by itself feels and for-itself rejoices,
 cum neque res animam neque corpus commovet una.
when neither a-thing the-spirit nor the-body stirs together.
 et quasi, cum caput aut oculus temptante dolore
and as-it-were, when the-head or the-eye with-assailing pain
 laeditur in nobis, non omni concruciamur
is-hurt in us, not in-all we-are-tortured
 corpore, sic animus nonnumquam laeditur ipse
body, so the-mind sometimes is-hurt itself
- 150 laetitiaque viget, cum cetera pars animai
and-with-gladness thrives, when the-rest part of-the-spirit
 per membra atque artus nulla novitate cietur;
through the-limbs and the-frame by-no newness is-stirred;
 verum ubi vementi magis est commota metu mens,
but when by-violent more is shaken fear the-mind,
 consentire animam totam per membra videmus
to-feel-with the-spirit whole through the-limbs we-see
 sudoresque ita palloremque existere toto
and-sweats so and-pallor to-arise over-the-whole
- 155 corpore et infringi linguam vocemque aboriri,
body and to-be-broken the-tongue and-the-voice to-fail,
 caligare oculos, sonere auris, succidere artus,
to-grow-dim the-eyes, to-ring the-ears, to-give-way the-limbs,
 denique concidere ex animi terrore videmus
finally to-fall from of-mind terror we-see
 saepe homines; facile ut quivis hinc noscere possit
often men; easily so-that anyone hence to-know may-be-able
 esse animam cum animo coniunctam, quae cum animi vi
is the-spirit with the-mind joined, which when of-mind by-the-force

percutsa est, exim corpus propellit et icit.

160

struck is, thereupon the-body it-drives and strikes.

Haec eadem ratio naturam animi atque animai

This same reasoning the-nature of-mind and of-spirit

corpoream docet esse; ubi enim propellere membra,

bodily teaches to-be; when for to-drive the-limbs,

corripere ex somno corpus mutareque vultum

to-snatch from sleep the-body and-to-change the-face

atque hominem totum regere ac versare videtur,

and the-man whole to-govern and to-turn it-is-seen,

quorum nil fieri sine tactu posse videmus

165

of-which nothing to-happen without touch can we-see

nec tactum porro sine corpore, nonne fatendumst

nor touch further without body, must-it-not be-confessed

corporea natura animum constare animamque?

of-bodily nature the-mind to-consist and-the-spirit?

praeterea pariter fungi cum corpore et una

besides alike to-be-affected with the-body and together

consentire animum nobis in corpore cernis.

to-feel-with the-mind for-us in the-body you-see.

si minus offendit vitam vis horrida teli

170

if less strikes life the-force dread of-a-weapon

ossibus ac nervis disclusis intus adacta,

bones and sinews laid-open within driven,

at tamen insequitur languor terraeque petitus

yet still follows faintness and-of-the-ground a-seeking

suavis et in terra mentis qui gignitur aestus

sweet and on the-ground of-mind which is-born a-turmoil

inter dumque quasi exsurgendi incerta voluntas.

between and-times as-it-were of-rising an-uncertain will.

- 175 **ergo corpoream naturam animi esse necessest,**
therefore bodily the-nature of-mind to-be must-needs,
corporeis quoniam telis ictuque laborat.
by-bodily since weapons and-a-blow it-suffers.
Is tibi nunc animus quali sit corpore et unde
That for-you now mind of-what-kind is body and whence
constiterit pergam rationem reddere dictis.
it-has-come-together I-shall-go-on an-account to-render in-words.
principio esse aio persuptilem atque minutis
first it-is I-say very-fine and of-tiny
180 **perquam corporibus factum constare. id ita esse**
exceedingly bodies made to-consist. that so to-be
hinc licet advertas animum, ut pernoscere possis.
hence you-may turn your-mind, so-that to-know-fully you-may-be-able.

III.5 • HOW FINE THE MIND'S MATTER IS

Nothing moves as fast as the mind, so it must be made of very small and very round seeds — as water flows at a touch where honey lingers. And when a man dies, nothing is taken from the look or the weight of the body, though feeling and warmth are gone: just as a wine's bloom or a perfume's breath goes off without lessening the bulk.

- Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur,**
Nothing so to-be-done by-a-swift way seems,
quam si mens fieri proponit et inchoat ipsa;
as if mind to-be-done proposes and begins itself;
ocius ergo animus quam res se perciet ulla,
more-swiftly therefore the-mind than thing itself rouses any,
185 **ante oculos quorum in promptu natura videtur.**
before the-eyes of-which in plain-view the-nature is-seen.

at quod mobile tanto operest, constare rutundis

but what mobile in-so-great a-measure-is, to-consist of-round

perquam seminibus debet perquamque minutis,

exceedingly seeds it-must and-exceedingly tiny,

momine uti parvo possint impulsa moveri.

by-a-push so-that small they-can struck to-be-moved.

namque movetur aqua et tantillo momine flutat,

for is-moved water and by-so-slight a-push flows,

quippe volubilibus parvisque creata figuris.

for of-rolling and-small made shapes.

190

at contra mellis constantior est natura

but contrariwise of-honey more-steadfast is the-nature

et pigri latices magis et cunctantior actus:

and sluggish the-liquids more and more-lingering the-movement:

haeret enim inter se magis omnis materiai

clings for among themselves more all of-matter

copia, ni mirum quia non tam levibus extat

the-store, no wonder because not so of-smooth it-stands

corporibus neque tam suptilibus atque rutundis.

bodies nor so fine and round.

195

namque papaveris aura potest suspensa levisque

for of-poppy-seed a-breath can hanging and-light

cogere ut ab summo tibi diffluat altus acervus,

force that from the-top for-you flows-apart the-high heap,

at contra lapidum coniectum spicarumque

but contrariwise of-stones a-pile and-of-ears-of-corn

noenu potest. igitur parvissima corpora pro quam

not it-can. therefore the-tiniest bodies in-proportion as

et levissima sunt, ita mobilitate fruuntur;

and the-smoothest they-are, so mobility they-enjoy;

200

at contra quae cumque magis cum pondere magno

but contrariwise what soever more with weight great

asperaque inveniuntur, eo stabilita magis sunt.

and-rough are-found, by-that steadied the-more they-are.

nunc igitur quoniamst animi natura reperta

now therefore since-is of-mind the-nature found

mobilis egregie, perquam constare necessest

mobile exceedingly, exceedingly to-consist must-needs

205 corporibus parvis et levibus atque rutundis.

of-bodies small and smooth and round.

quae tibi cognita res in multis, o bone, rebus

which for-you learned matter in many, o good-man, things

utilis invenietur et opportuna cluebit.

useful will-be-found and timely will-be-called.

Haec quoque res etiam naturam dedicat eius,

This also fact even the-nature declares of-it,

quam tenui constet textura quamque loco se

how of-fine it-consists texture and-how in-a-place itself

210 contineat parvo, si possit conglomerari,

it-would-hold small, if it-could to-be-balled-up,

quod simul atque hominem leti secreta quies est

because as-soon as a-man of-death the-untroubled rest has

indepta atque animi natura animaeque recessit,

seized and of-mind the-nature and-of-spirit has-withdrawn,

nil ibi libatum de toto corpore cernas

nothing there taken from the-whole body you-would-see

ad speciem, nihil ad pondus: mors omnia praestat,

to the-look, nothing to weight: death all preserves,

215 vitalem praeter sensum calidumque vaporem.

the-vital except feeling and-warm vapor.

ergo animam totam perparvis esse necessest
therefore the-spirit whole of-very-small to-be must-needs
 seminibus nexam per venas viscera nervos,
seeds woven through veins flesh sinews,
 qua tenus, omnis ubi e toto iam corpore cessit,
in-so-far as, all when from the-whole now body it-has-gone,
 extima membrorum circumcaesura tamen se
the-outermost of-the-limbs outline yet itself
 incolumem praestat nec deficit ponderis hilum. 220
unharm'd shows nor is-wanting of-weight a-jot.
 quod genus est, Bacchi cum flos evanuit aut cum
which kind is, of-Bacchus when the-bloom has-vanished or when
 spiritus unguenti suavis diffugit in auras
the-breath of-ointment sweet has-fled into the-breezes
 aut aliquo cum iam sucus de corpore cessit;
or from-some when now the-juice from body has-gone;
 nil oculis tamen esse minor res ipsa videtur
nothing to-the-eyes yet to-be smaller the-thing itself seems
 propterea neque detractum de pondere quicquam, 225
therefore nor taken-away from the-weight anything,
 ni mirum quia multa minutaque semina sucos
no wonder because many and-tiny seeds the-juices
 efficiunt et odorem in toto corpore rerum.
make and scent in the-whole body of-things.

Mind and spirit are made of breath, vapor, and air, and these three are not enough to make sensation. A fourth nature is needed, finer and more mobile than any, and it has no name at all. It is stirred first and passes motion on to breath, vapor, and air, and then to blood, flesh, and bone. Latin is too poor to say how the four are blended, and Lucretius will only sketch it.

quare etiam atque etiam mentis naturam animaeque

wherefore again and again of-mind the-nature and-of-spirit

scire licet perquam paucillis esse creatam

to-know one-may exceedingly of-tiny to-be created

230 seminibus, quoniam fugiens nil ponderis aufert.

seeds, since fleeing nothing of-weight it-carries-off.

Nec tamen haec simplex nobis natura putanda est.

Nor yet this single by-us nature to-be-thought is.

tenvis enim quaedam moribundos deserit aura

a-thin for certain the-dying deserts breath

mixta vapore, vapor porro trahit aëra secum;

mingled with-vapor, vapor further draws air with-it;

nec calor est quisquam, cui non sit mixtus et aër;

nor heat is any, with-which not is mingled also air;

235 rara quod eius enim constat natura, necessest

rare because its for stands nature, must-needs

aëris inter eum primordia multa moveri.

of-air among it first-beginnings many to-be-moved.

iam triplex animi est igitur natura reperta;

now threefold of-mind is therefore the-nature found;

nec tamen haec sat sunt ad sensum cuncta creandum,

nor yet these enough are for feeling all to-be-created,

nil horum quoniam recipit mens posse creare

nothing of-these since admits mind can create

sensiferos motus, quae denique mente volutat.

sense-bearing motions, what finally with-mind it-turns-over.

240

quarta quoque his igitur quaedam natura necessest

a-fourth also to-these therefore a-certain nature must-needs

adtribuat; east omnino nominis expers;

be-assigned; it-is altogether of-a-name without;

qua neque mobilius quicquam neque tenuius extat

than-which neither more-mobile anything nor finer stands

nec magis e parvis et levibus ex elementis;

nor more of small and smooth of elements;

sensiferos motus quae didit prima per artus.

sense-bearing motions which deals-out first through the-frame.

245

prima cietur enim, parvis perfecta figuris,

first it-is-stirred for, of-small formed shapes,

inde calor motus et venti caeca potestas

then heat motions and of-wind the-unseen power

accipit, inde aër, inde omnia mobilitantur:

takes, then air, then all-things are-set-moving:

concutitur sanguis, tum viscera persentiscunt

is-shaken the-blood, then the-flesh feel-through

omnia, postremis datur ossibus atque medullis

all, to-the-last it-is-given bones and marrow

250

sive voluptas est sive est contrarius ardor.

whether pleasure it-is or is the-opposite burning.

nec temere huc dolor usque potest penetrare neque acre

nor lightly hither pain right can pierce nor sharp

permanare malum, quin omnia perturbentur

to-soak-through evil, but-that all-things are-thrown-into-confusion

usque adeo ut vitae desit locus atque animai
right so-far that for-life is-wanting place and of-the-spirit

255 diffugiant partes per caulas corporis omnis.

scatter the-parts through the-pores of-the-body all.

sed plerumque fit in summo quasi corpore finis
but mostly comes on the-surface as-it-were of-the-body an-end

motibus: hanc ob rem vitam retinere valemus.

to-the-motions: this for cause life to-keep we-are-able.

Nunc ea quo pacto inter sese mixta quibusque
Now these in-what way among themselves mingled and-by-what

compta modis vigeant rationem reddere aventem

ordered ways they-thrive an-account to-render longing

260 abstrahit invitum patrii sermonis egestas;

drags-away unwilling of-ancestral speech the-poverty;

sed tamen, ut potero summatim attingere, tangam.

but yet, as I-shall-be-able in-outline to-touch, I-shall-touch.

III.7 • HOW THE FOUR ARE BLENDED

The first-beginnings of the four run among one another so that none can be separated out: they are many forces of one body, as smell, color, and taste are in a piece of flesh. The nameless nature lies deepest of all and is the soul of the whole spirit. Heat, breath, and air must thrive mingled through the frame, or feeling would be destroyed.

inter enim cursant primordia principiorum

among for they-run the-first-beginnings of-first-elements

motibus inter se, nihil ut secernier unum

in-motions among themselves, nothing that be-separated one

possit nec spatio fieri divisa potestas,

can nor by-space to-be-made divided a-power,

sed quasi multae vis unius corporis extant.

265

but as-it-were many forces of-one body stand.

quod genus in quovis animantium viscere volgo

which kind in any of-living-things flesh commonly

est odor et quidam color et sapor, et tamen ex his

there-is a-smell and a-certain color and taste, and yet of these

omnibus est unum perfectum corporis augmen,

all is one completed of-body bulk,

sic calor atque aër et venti caeca potestas

so heat and air and of-wind the-unseen power

mixta creant unam naturam et mobilis illa

270

mingled create one nature and the-mobile that

vis, initum motus ab se quae dividit ollis,

force, the-start of-motion from itself which deals to-them,

sensifer unde oritur primum per viscera motus.

sense-bearing whence arises first through the-flesh motion.

nam penitus prorsum latet haec natura subestque

for deeply quite lies-hidden this nature and-lies-beneath

nec magis hac infra quicquam est in corpore nostro

nor more than-this below anything is in body our

atque anima est animae proporro totius ipsa.

275

and the-spirit [soul] it-is of-the-spirit in-its-turn whole itself

quod genus in nostris membris et corpore toto

which kind in our limbs and body whole

mixta latens animi vis est animaeque potestas,

mingled lurking of-mind the-force is and-of-spirit the-power,

corporibus quia de parvis paucisque creatast,

bodies because from small and-few it-is-created,

sic tibi nominis haec expers vis, facta minutis

so for-you of-a-name this without force, made of-tiny

- 280 corporibus, latet atque animae quasi totius ipsa
 bodies, lies-hidden and of-the-spirit as-it-were whole itself
 proporrost anima et dominatur corpore toto.
 in-its-turn-is the-spirit [soul] and rules in-body the-whole.
 consimili ratione necessest ventus et aër
 in-like fashion must-needs wind and air
 et calor inter se vigeant commixta per artus
 and beat among themselves thrive mingled through the-frame
 atque aliis aliud subsit magis emineatque,
 and than-others one lies-under more and-stands-out,
 285 ut quiddam fieri videatur ab omnibus unum,
 so-that something to-be-made seems of all one,
 ni calor ac ventus seorsum seorsumque potestas
 lest beat and wind apart and-apart the-power
 aëris interemant sensum diductaque solvant.
 of-air destroy feeling and-drawn-asunder dissolve.

III.8 • LIONS, STAGS, AND OXEN

Anger has more heat in it, fear more cold breath, and calm more still air. Lions burst their breasts with roaring, stags are chilled and quivering, oxen are placid. Men differ in the same way, and teaching cannot pull out the last traces of what each was born with — but it leaves so little that nothing hinders a life worthy of the gods. Mind and body cling by common roots and cannot be torn apart without ruin.

- est etiam calor ille animo, quem sumit, in ira
 there-is also heat that to-the-mind, which it-takes, in anger
 cum fervescit et ex oculis micat acrius ardor;
 when it-grows-hot and from the-eyes flashes more-keenly the-fire;
 290 est et frigida multa, comes formidinis, aura,
 there-is and cold much, the-companion of-dread, breath,

quae ciet horrorem membris et concitat artus;
which rouses shuddering in-the-limbs and stirs the-frame;

est etiam quoque pacati status aëris ille,
there-is also too of-calm the-state air that,

pectore tranquillo fit qui voltuque sereno.
with-a-breast tranquil comes which and-with-a-face serene.

sed calidi plus est illis quibus acria corda
but of-heat more there-is in-those whose keen hearts

iracundaque mens facile effervescit in ira,
and-wrathful mind easily boils-up in anger,

quo genere in primis vis est violenta leonum,
of-which kind in the-first the-force is violent of-lions,

pectora qui fremitu rumpunt plerumque gementes
their-breasts who with-roaring burst mostly groaning

nec capere irarum fluctus in pectore possunt.
nor to-hold of-rages the-waves in their-breast can.

at ventosa magis cervorum frigida mens est
but windy more of-stags cold the-mind is

et gelidas citius per viscera concitat auras,
and icy more-swiftly through the-flesh it-stirs breaths,

quae tremulum faciunt membris existere motum.
which a-quivering make in-the-limbs to-arise motion.

at natura boum placido magis aëre vivit
but the-nature of-oxen with-calm more air lives

nec nimis irai fax umquam subdita percit
nor too-much of-wrath the-torch ever set-beneath rouses

fumida, suffundens caecae caliginis umbra,
smoky, spreading of-blind gloom with-a-shadow,

nec gelidis torpet telis perfixa pavoris;
nor by-icy is-numbed shafts transfixed of-panic;

295

300

305

interutrasque sitast cervos saevosque leones.

between-the-two it-is-set stags and-savage lions.

sic hominum genus est: quamvis doctrina politos

so of-men the-race is: however by-teaching polished

constituat pariter quosdam, tamen illa relinquit

it-makes alike certain-men, yet it leaves

naturae cuiusque animi vestigia prima.

of-nature of-each of-mind the-traces first.

310 nec radicitus evelli mala posse putandumst,

nor root-and-branch to-be-torn-out the-evils can must-be-thought,

quin proclivius hic iras decurrat ad acris,

but-that more-readily this-man rages runs-down to keen,

ille metu citius paulo temptetur, at ille

that-man by-fear more-quickly a-little is-assailed, but that

tertius accipiat quaedam clementius aequo.

third takes certain-things more-mildly than-is-fair.

inque aliis rebus multis differre necessest

and-in other things many to-differ must-needs

315 naturas hominum varias moresque sequacis;

natures of-men varied and-ways that-follow;

quorum ego nunc nequeo caecas exponere causas

of-which I now cannot the-hidden to-set-forth causes

nec reperire figurarum tot nomina quot sunt

nor to-find of-shapes so-many names as there-are

principiis, unde haec oritur variantia rerum.

for-the-first-elements, whence this arises variety of-things.

illud in his rebus video firmare potesse,

this in these matters I-see to-affirm to-be-possible,

320 usque adeo naturarum vestigia linqui

right so-far of-natures traces are-left

parvola, quae nequeat ratio depellere nobis,

so-tiny, which cannot reasoning drive-away for-us,

ut nihil inpediat dignam dis degere vitam.

that nothing hinders worthy of-gods to-lead a-life.

Haec igitur natura tenetur corpore ab omni

This therefore nature is-held body by the-whole

ipsaque corporis est custos et causa salutis;

and-itself of-body is the-guardian and the-cause of-safety;

nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent

for by-common among themselves roots they-cling

nec sine pernicie divelli posse videntur.

nor without ruin to-be-torn-apart can they-seem.

quod genus e thuris glaebris evellere odorem

which kind from of-incense lumps to-tear-out the-scent

haud facile est, quin intereat natura quoque eius,

not easy it-is, but-that perishes the-nature also of-it,

sic animi atque animae naturam corpore toto

so of-mind and of-spirit the-nature from-body the-whole

extrahere haut facile est, quin omnia dissoluantur.

to-draw-out not easy it-is, but-that all-things are-dissolved.

inplexis ita principiis ab origine prima

with-interwoven so first-elements from the-origin first

inter se fiunt consorti praedita vita,

among themselves they-become with-a-shared endowed life,

nec sibi quaeque sine alterius vi posse videtur

nor for-itself each without of-the-other the-force can seems

corporis atque animi seorsum sentire potestas,

of-body and of-mind apart to-feel the-power,

sed communibus inter eas conflatur utrimque

but by-common among them is-kindled from-both-sides

325

330

335

motibus accensus nobis per viscera sensus.

motions fired for-us through the-flesh sense.

Praeterea corpus per se nec gignitur umquam

Besides the-body by itself neither is-begotten ever

nec crescit neque post mortem durare videtur.

nor grows nor after death to-last it-seems.

non enim, utumor aquae dimittit saepe vaporem,

not for, as the-moisture of-water gives-off often vapor,

340 qui datus est, neque ea causa convellitur ipse,

which given has-been, nor for-that cause is-shattered itself,

sed manet incolumis, non, inquam, sic animai

but it-remains unharmed, not, I-say, so of-the-spirit

discidium possunt artus perferre relict,

the-sundering can the-limbs endure left,

sed penitus pereunt convulsi conque putrescunt.

but utterly they-perish torn and-together they-rot.

ex ineunte aevo sic corporis atque animai

from entering life so of-body and of-spirit

345 mutua vitalis discunt contagia motus,

mutual vital they-learn contacts motions,

maternis etiam membris alvoque reposita,

in-a-mother's even limbs and-womb laid,

discidium ut nequeat fieri sine peste maloque;

a-sundering that cannot happen without destruction and-harm;

ut videas, quoniam coniunctast causa salutis,

so-that you-may-see, since is-joined the-cause of-safety,

coniunctam quoque naturam consistere eorum.

joined also the-nature stands of-them.

The body does feel, and whoever denies it fights the plain facts. When the spirit leaves, the body loses what was never its own. Nor does the mind look out through the eyes as through open doors — the eyes themselves are dazzled by bright light, and doors take no hurt from being looked through. Democritus was wrong to set first-beginnings of body and spirit alternately: the spirit's are smaller, fewer, and lie further apart.

Quod super est, siquis corpus sentire refutat

350

As-for-what over is, if-anyone the-body to-feel denies

atque animam credit permixtam corpore toto

and the-spirit believes mingled through-body the-whole

suscipere hunc motum quem sensum nominamus,

to-take-up this motion which feeling we-name,

vel manifestas res contra verasque repugnat.

even manifest facts against and-true he-fights.

quid sit enim corpus sentire quis adferet umquam,

what is for the-body to-feel who will-bring ever,

si non ipsa palam quod res dedit ac docuit nos?

355

if not itself openly what the-fact has-given and taught us?

‘at dimissa anima corpus caret undique sensu.’

‘but sent-away the-spirit the-body lacks everywhere feeling.’

perdit enim quod non proprium fuit eius in aevo

it-loses for what not its-own was of-it in life

multaque praeterea perdit quom expellitur aevo.

and-many-things besides it-loses when it-is-driven from-life.

Dicere porro oculos nullam rem cernere posse,

To-say further the-eyes no thing to-see can,

sed per eos animum ut foribus spectare reclusis,

360

but through them the-mind as doors to-look unbarred,

difficilest, contra cum sensus ducat eorum;

it-is-hard, contrariwise since the-sense leads of-them;

sensus enim trahit atque acies detrudit ad ipsas,
the-sense for draws and the-pupils thrusts to themselves,

fulgida praesertim cum cernere saepe nequimus,
bright-things especially when to-see often we-cannot,

lumina luminibus quia nobis praepediuntur.
the-lights [eyes] by-lights because for-us are-hindered.

365 quod foribus non fit; neque enim, qua cernimus ipsi,
which to-doors not happens; nor for, where we-see we-ourselves,

ostia suscipiunt ullum reclusa laborem.
the-doorways undergo any unbarred labor.

praeterea si pro foribus sunt lumina nostra,
besides if instead-of doors are the-lights [eyes] our,

iam magis exemptis oculis debere videtur
then the-more removed the-eyes ought it-seems

cernere res animus sublati postibus ipsis.
to-see things the-mind taken-away the-doorposts themselves.

370 Illud in his rebus nequaquam sumere possis,
This in these matters by-no-means to-take you-may-be-able,

Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit,
of-Democritus which the-holy of-the-man opinion lays-down,

corporis atque animi primordia singula primis
of-body and of-mind the-first-beginnings one with-first

adposita alternis, variare acnectere membra.
set alternately, to-vary and to-weave the-limbs.

nam cum multo sunt animae elementa minora
for since much are of-spirit the-elements smaller

375 quam quibus e corpus nobis et viscera constant,
than which of the-body for-us and the-flesh consist,

tum numero quoque concedunt et rara per artus
then in-number also they-yield and thinly through the-frame
 dissita sunt, dum taxat ut hoc promittere possis,
scattered they-are, at most that this to-promise you-may-be-able,
 quantula prima queant nobis iniecta ciere
how-tiny first can in-us thrown-in to-rouse
 corpora sensiferos motus in corpore, tanta
bodies sense-bearing motions in the-body, so-great
 intervalla tenere exordia prima animai.
intervals hold the-beginnings first of-the-spirit.

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III.10 • HOW FAR APART THE SPIRIT'S SEEDS LIE

We do not feel dust settling on us, a spider's threads as we walk into them, or the tread of a small creature, which shows how much must be stirred before the spirit's first-beginnings notice. The mind holds the bolts of life more firmly than the spirit does: a man mangled all round can live on while the mind stays, even when much of the spirit is gone, as an eye still sees if the pupil is left whole.

nam neque pulveris inter dum sentimus adhaesum
for neither of-dust between times we-feel the-clinging
 corpore nec membris incussam sidere cretam,
on-the-body nor on-the-limbs dashed to-settle chalk,
 nec nebulam noctu neque arani tenvia fila
nor mist by-night nor of-a-spider fine threads
 obvia sentimus, quando obretimur euntes,
meeting-us we-feel, when we-are-netted going,
 nec supra caput eiusdem cecidisse vietam
nor above the-head of-the-same to-have-fallen shriveled
 vestem nec plumas avium papposque volantis,
a-coat nor feathers of-birds and-thistledown flying,

385

qui nimia levitate cadunt plerumque gravatim,

which by-excessive lightness fall mostly heavily,

nec repentis itum cuiusvis cumque animantis

nor of-a-creeping the-going of-any soever living-thing

sentimus nec priva pedum vestigia quaeque,

we-feel nor separate of-feet the-prints each,

390 corpore quae in nostro culices et cetera ponunt.

body which on our gnats and the-rest set.

usque adeo prius est in nobis multa ciendum

right so-far sooner it-is in us many-things to-be-stirred

quam primordia sentiscant concussa animai,

than the-first-beginnings feel shaken of-the-spirit,

semina corporibus nostris inmixta per artus,

seeds with-bodies our mingled through the-frame,

et quam in his intervallis tuditantia possint

and than in these intervals hammering they-can

395 concursare coire et dissultare vicissim.

to-run-together to-meet and to-leap-apart in-turn.

Et magis est animus vitae claustra coercens

And more is the-mind of-life the-bolts holding

et dominantior ad vitam quam vis animai.

and more-masterful for life than the-force of-spirit.

nam sine mente animoque nequit residere per artus

for without mind [intellect] and-mind cannot stay through the-frame

temporis exiguum partem pars ulla animai,

of-time a-scant part part any of-spirit,

400 sed comes insequitur facile et discedit in auras

but a-companion it-follows easily and departs into the-breezes

et gelidos artus in leti frigore linquit.

and the-chill limbs in of-death the-cold it-leaves.

at manet in vita cui mens animusque remansit,
but remains in life in-whom mind [intellect] and-the-mind has-stayed,

quamvis est circum caesis lacer undique membris;
although he-is around cut mangled everywhere limbs;

truncus adempta anima circum membrisque remota
the-trunk taken-away the-spirit around and-limbs removed

vivit et aetherias vitalis suscipit auras;
lives and the-ethereal life-giving takes breezes;

si non omnimodis, at magna parte animai
if not in-every-way, yet of-a-great part of-spirit

privatus, tamen in vita cunctatur et haeret;
deprived, still in life it-lingers and clings;

ut, lacerato oculo circum si pupula mansit
as, torn the-eye around if the-pupil has-stayed

incolumis, stat cernundi vivata potestas,
unharmd, stands of-seeing quickened the-power,

dum modo ne totum corrumpas luminis orbem
so only not the-whole you-destroy of-the-light [eye] orb

et circum caedas aciem solamque relinquis;
and around you-cut the-pupil and-alone you-leave;

id quoque enim sine pernicie non fiet eorum.
that also for without ruin not will-happen of-them.

at si tantula pars oculi media illa peresa est,
but if so-tiny part of-the-eye the-middle that eaten-away is,

occidit extemplo lumen tenebraeque secuntur,
goes-out forthwith the-light and-darkness follow,

incolumis quamvis alioqui splendidus orbis.
unharmd although otherwise bright the-orb.

hoc anima atque animus vincti sunt foedere semper.
by-this spirit and mind bound are covenant always.

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Lucretius now sets out to show that mind and spirit are born and mortal, and asks that whichever word he uses be taken for both. Since the spirit's matter is finer than water, mist, or smoke, and since a shattered vessel lets its liquid run out, the spirit must scatter far faster when the body that held it is broken open.

Nunc age, natos animantibus et mortalis

Now come, born for-living-things and mortal

esse animos animasque levis ut noscere possis,

to-be minds and-spirits light that to-know you-may-be-able,

conquisita diu dulcique reperta labore

sought-out long and-with-sweet found toil

420 digna tua pergam disponere carmina vita.

worthy of-your I-shall-go-on to-set-out songs life.

tu fac utrumque uno subiungas nomine eorum

you see both under-one you-put name of-them

atque animam verbi causa cum dicere pergam,

and the-spirit of-the-word for-the-sake when to-speak I-shall-go-on,

mortalem esse docens, animum quoque dicere credas,

mortal to-be teaching, the-mind also to-speak believe,

qua tenus est unum inter se coniunctaque res est.

in-so-far as it-is one among themselves and-joined a-thing it-is.

425 Principio quoniam tenuem constare minutis

First since fine to-consist of-tiny

corporibus docui multoque minoribus esse

bodies I-have-taught and-by-much smaller to-be

principiis factam quam liquidus umor aquai

first-elements made than the-liquid moisture of-water

aut nebula aut fumus — nam longe mobilitate

or mist or smoke —for far in-mobility

praestat et a tenui causa magis icta movetur,

it-excels and by a-slight cause more struck it-is-moved,

quippe ubi imaginibus fumi nebulaeque movetur;

for when by-the-images of-smoke and-mist it-is-moved;

quod genus in somnis sopiti ubi cernimus alte

which kind in sleep lulled when we-see high

exhalare vaporem altaria ferreque fumum;

to-breathe-out vapor altars and-to-bear smoke;

nam procul haec dubio nobis simulacra geruntur

for beyond these doubt for-us images are-borne

nunc igitur quoniam quassatis undique vasis

now therefore since shattered everywhere vessels

diffluere umorem et laticem discedere cernis,

to-flow-away moisture and liquid to-depart you-see,

et nebula ac fumus quoniam discedit in auras,

and mist and smoke since departs into the-breezes,

crede animam quoque diffundi multoque perire

believe the-spirit also is-scattered and-much perishes

ocius et citius dissolvi in corpora prima,

more-swiftly and more-quickly is-dissolved into bodies first,

cum semel ex hominis membris ablata recessit;

when once from a-man's limbs taken it-has-withdrawn;

quippe etenim corpus, quod vas quasi constitit eius,

for indeed the-body, which a-vessel as-it-were has-stood of-it,

cum cohibere nequit conquassatum ex aliqua re

when to-hold it-cannot shattered from some cause

ac rarefactum detracto sanguine venis,

and rarefied drawn-off the-blood from-the-veins,

aëre qui credas posse hanc cohiberier ullo,

by-air how would-you-believe can this be-held any,

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corpore qui nostro rarus magis incohíbens sit?

than-body which our rare more unholding is?

III.12 · IT GROWS YOUNG AND GROWS OLD

Mind is born with the body, grows with it, and ages with it: a child's judgment is slight, a grown man's fuller, an old man's wandering. It sickens as the body sickens, wanders and raves in disease, and is dulled by wine, which entangles the legs, slows the tongue, and clouds the mind. What can be disturbed and hindered in this way can also be destroyed.

445 Praeterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una

Besides to-be-born alike with the-body and together

crescere sentimus pariterque senescere mentem.

to-grow we-feel and-alike to-grow-old the-mind.

nam vel ut infirmo pueri teneroque vagantur

for even as with-a-feeble children and-tender wander

corpore, sic animi sequitur sententia tenvis.

body, so of-mind follows the-judgment slight.

inde ubi robustis adolevit viribus aetas,

then when with-sturdy has-grown strength their-age,

450 consilium quoque maius et auctior est animi vis.

the-counsel also greater and fuller is of-mind the-force.

post ubi iam validis quassatum est viribus aevi

afterward when now by-the-strong shaken has-been forces of-time

corpus et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,

the-body and with-blunted have-fallen powers the-limbs,

claudicat ingenium, delirat lingua labat mens,

limps the-wit, raves the-tongue totters the-mind,

omnia deficiunt atque uno tempore desunt.

all-things fail and at-one time are-wanting.

ergo dissolui quoque convenit omnem animai
therefore to-be-dissolved also it-is-fitting all of-the-spirit
 naturam, ceu fumus, in altas aëris auras;
the-nature, like smoke, into the-high of-air breezes;
 quando quidem gigni pariter pariterque videmus
since indeed to-be-born alike and-alike we-see
 crescere et, ut docui, simul aevo fessa fatisci.
to-grow and, as I-have-taught, together by-age wearied to-crack.
 Huc accedit uti videamus, corpus ut ipsum
Hereto is-added that we-see, the-body as itself
 suscipere inmanis morbos durumque dolorem,
to-take-up monstrous diseases and-hard pain,
 sic animum curas acris luctumque metumque;
so the-mind cares keen and-grief and-fear;
 quare participem leti quoque convenit esse.
wherefore a-partaker of-death also it-is-fitting to-be.
 quin etiam morbis in corporis avius errat
nay even diseases in of-the-body astray wanders
 saepe animus; dementit enim deliraeque fatur,
often the-mind; it-is-demented for and-crazed-things it-utters,
 inter dumque gravi lethargo fertur in altum
between and-times by-a-heavy lethargy it-is-borne into deep
 aeternumque soporem oculis nutuque cadenti;
and-everlasting slumber with-eyes and-with-a-nod falling;
 unde neque exaudit voces nec noscere voltus
whence neither it-hears voices nor to-know the-faces
 illorum potis est, ad vitam qui revocantes
of-those able is-it, to life who calling-back
 circum stant lacrimis rorantes ora genasque.
around stand with-tears bedewing faces and-cheeks.

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- 470 quare animum quoque dissolui fateare necessest,
wherefore the-mind also to-be-dissolved you-confess must-needs,
 quandoquidem penetrant in eum contagia morbi;
since-indeed pierce into it the-contacts of-disease;
 nam dolor ac morbus leti fabricator uterquest,
for pain and disease of-death a-fashioner each-is,
 multorum exitio perdocti quod sumus ante.
of-many by-the-death well-taught which we-have-been before.
 denique cur, hominem cum vini vis penetravit
finally why, a-man when of-wine the-force has-pierced
 acris et in venas discessit diditus ardor,
keen and into the-veins has-spread diffused the-glow,
 consequitur gravitas membrorum, praepediuntur
there-follows heaviness of-the-limbs, are-entangled
 crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,
the-legs as-be-staggers, grows-slow the-tongue, is-sodden the-mind,
- 480 nant oculi, clamor singultus iurgia gliscunt,
swim the-eyes, shouting hiccups quarrels swell,
 et iam cetera de genere hoc quae cumque secuntur,
and now the-rest of kind this what soever follow,
 cur ea sunt, nisi quod vehemens violentia vini
why those are, unless because the-violent force of-wine
 conturbare animam consuevit corpore in ipso?
to-confound the-spirit is-wont the-body in itself?
 at quae cumque queunt conturbari inque pediri,
but what soever can to-be-confounded and-in snared,
- 485 significant, paulo si durior insinuarit
they-signify, a-little if harsher shall-have-crept-in
 causa, fore ut pereant aevo privata futuro.
a-cause, it-will-be that they-perish of-life deprived future.

A man struck down by disease foams, groans, and thrashes, because the force of the disease drives the spirit through his frame as wind drives the sea; then, as the cause turns back, he rises staggering and takes his senses again. What can be tossed like this inside the body could hardly last outside it. The mind is healed by medicine as a sick body is, and what can be changed is destroyed. And a man may die by degrees, losing feeling limb by limb, so the spirit does not leave whole.

Quin etiam subito vi morbi saepe coactus

Nay even suddenly by-force of-disease often overcome

ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,

before the-eyes someone our, as of-lightning by-a-stroke,

concidit et spumas agit, ingemit et tremit artus,

falls and foam drives, he-groans and trembles in-limbs,

desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat

he-is-witless, he-stretches sinews, he-is-twisted, he-pants

inconstanter, et in iactando membra fatigat,

fitfully, and in the-tossing his-limbs he-wearies,

ni mirum quia vis morbi distracta per artus

no wonder because the-force of-disease spread through the-frame

turbat agens animam, spumans ut in aequore salso

confounds driving the-spirit, foaming as in the-level salt

ventorum validis fervescunt viribus undae.

of-winds with-strong boil-up forces the-waves.

exprimitur porro gemitus, quia membra dolore

is-forced-out further a-groan, because the-limbs with-pain

adfiuntur et omnino quod semina vocis

are-afflicted and altogether because the-seeds of-voice

eliciuntur et ore foras glomerata feruntur

are-drawn-out and by-the-mouth outward massed are-borne

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qua quasi consuerunt et sunt munita viai.

where as-it-were they-are-wont and are paved of-the-road.

desipientia fit, quia vis animi atque animai

witlessness comes, because the-force of-mind and of-spirit

500 conturbatur et, ut docui, divisa seorsum

is-confounded and, as I-have-taught, divided apart

disiectatur eodem illo distracta veneno.

is-scattered by-that-same that rent poison.

inde ubi iam morbi reflexit causa, reditque

then when now of-the-disease has-turned-back the-cause, and-returns

in latebras acer corrupti corporis umor,

into its-lurking-place the-sharp of-the-tainted body humor,

tum quasi vaccillans primum consurgit et omnis

then as-it-were staggering at-first he-rises and all

505 paulatim redit in sensus animamque receptat.

little-by-little returns into his-senses and-the-spirit he-takes-back.

haec igitur tantis ubi morbis corpore in ipso

these therefore by-so-great when diseases body in itself

iactentur miserisque modis distracta laborent,

are-tossed and-in-wretched ways rent they-suffer,

cur eadem credis sine corpore in aëre aperto

why the-same do-you-believe without body in the-air open

cum validis ventis aetatem degere posse?

with strong winds a-lifetime to-pass can?

510 Et quoniam mentem sanari corpus ut aegrum

And since the-mind to-be-healed the-body as sick

cernimus et flecti medicina posse videmus,

we-see and to-be-bent by-medicine can we-see,

id quoque praesagit mortalem vivere mentem.

that also forebodes mortal to-live the-mind.

addere enim partis aut ordine traiecere aecumst

to-add for parts or in-order to-transpose it-is-right

aut aliquid prosum de summa detrahere hilum,

or something at-all from the-sum to-take a-jot,

commutare animum qui cumque adoritur et infit

to-change the-mind who soever undertakes and begins

aut aliam quamvis naturam flectere quaerit.

or another any nature to-bend seeks.

at neque transferri sibi partis nec tribui vult

but neither to-be-transferred to-itself parts nor to-be-given wills

immortale quod est quicquam neque defluere hilum;

immortal what is anything nor to-flow-away a-jot;

nam quod cumque suis mutatum finibus exit,

for what soever from-its-own changed bounds passes-out,

continuo hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

straightway this the-death is of-that which was before.

ergo animus sive aegrescit, mortalia signa

therefore the-mind whether falls-sick, mortal signs

mittit, uti docui, seu flectitur a medicina.

it-sends, as I-have-taught, or is-bent by medicine.

usque adeo falsae rationi vera videtur

right so-far the-false reasoning the-true seems

res occurrere et effugium praecludere eunti

fact to-meet and escape to-shut-off as-it-goes

ancipitique refutatu convincere falsum.

and-with-a-double-edged refutation to-convict the-false.

Denique saepe hominem paulatim cernimus ire

Finally often a-man little-by-little we-see to-go

et membratim vitalem deperdere sensum;

and limb-by-limb the-vital to-lose feeling;

in pedibus primum digitos livescere et unguis,

in the-feet first the-toes to-grow-livid and the-nails,

inde pedes et crura mori, post inde per artus

then the-feet and the-legs to-die, after then through the-limbs

530 ire alios tractim gelidi vestigia leti.

to-go other gradually of-chill the-footprints death.

scinditur atque animae haec quoniam natura nec uno

is-cleft and of-spirit this since the-nature nor at-one

tempore sincera existit, mortalis habendast.

time whole comes-forth, mortal must-it-be-held.

quod si forte putas ipsam se posse per artus

but if perchance you-think it itself can through the-frame

introsum trahere et partis conducere in unum

inward to-draw and its-parts to-gather into one

535 atque ideo cunctis sensum diducere membris,

and therefore from-all feeling to-withdraw limbs,

at locus ille tamen, quo copia tanta animai

yet the-place that still, whither a-store so-great of-spirit

cogitur, in sensu debet maiore videri;

is-gathered, in feeling must greater to-be-seen;

qui quoniam nusquamst, ni mirum, ut diximus ante,

which since is-nowhere, no wonder, as we-said before,

dilaniata foras dispargitur, interit ergo.

torn-in-pieces outward it-is-scattered, it-perishes therefore.

540 quin etiam si iam libeat concedere falsum

nay even if now it-should-please to-grant a-falsehood

et dare posse animam glomerari in corpore eorum,

and to-give can the-spirit to-be-massed in the-body of-those,

lumina qui lincunt moribundi particulatim,

the-lights who leave dying bit-by-bit,

mortalem tamen esse animam fateare necesse

mortal still to-be the-spirit you-confess needful

nec refert utrum pereat dispersa per auras

nor does-it-matter whether it-perishes scattered through the-breezes

an contracta suis e partibus obbrutescat,

or drawn-together its-own from parts grows-numb,

quando hominem totum magis ac magis undique sensus

since a-man whole more and more everywhere feeling

deficit et vitae minus et minus undique restat.

fails and of-life less and less everywhere remains.

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III.14 · NEITHER CAN LIVE WITHOUT THE OTHER

The mind is fixed in one place, as the ears and eyes are, and a hand or an eye severed from us can neither feel nor be. So the mind cannot be without the body that is its vessel; neither can put forth vital motions alone. Held fast among veins, sinews, and bones, the first-beginnings cannot make the same motions in the open air. When the body rots, the spirit has already oozed out through its passages.

Et quoniam mens est hominis pars una loquere

And since mind is of-man a-part one and-in-a-place

fixa manet certo, vel ut aures atque oculi sunt

fixed it-stays sure, even as the-ears and the-eyes are

atque alii sensus qui vitam cumque gubernant,

and the-other senses which life soever govern,

et vel uti manus atque oculus naresve seorsum

and even as a-hand and an-eye or-nostrils apart

secreta ab nobis nequeunt sentire neque esse,

severed from us cannot feel nor be,

sed tamen in parvo lincuntur tempore tali,

but yet in a-small are-left time such,

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- sic animus per se non quit sine corpore et ipso
so the-mind by itself not can without the-body and the-very
- 555 esse homine, illius quasi quod vas esse videtur,
be man, of-it as-it-were which a-vessel to-be seems,
 sive aliud quid vis potius coniunctius ei
or something-else what you-will rather more-closely-joined to-it
 fingere, quandoquidem conexu corpus adhaeret.
to-imagine, since-indeed by-a-bond the-body clings.
- Denique corporis atque animi vivata potestas
Finally of-body and of-mind the-quickenened power
 inter se coniuncta valent vitaeque fruuntur;
among themselves joined are-strong and-life they-enjoy;
- 560 nec sine corpore enim vitalis edere motus
nor without body for vital to-put-forth motions
 sola potest animi per se natura nec autem
alone can of-mind by itself the-nature nor again
 cassum anima corpus durare et sensibus uti.
bereft of-spirit the-body to-last and senses to-use.
- scilicet avolsus radicibus ut nequit ullam
surely torn from-its-roots as cannot any
 dispicere ipse oculus rem seorsum corpore toto,
to-descry itself the-eye thing apart from-the-body whole,
- 565 sic anima atque animus per se nil posse videtur.
so spirit and mind by themselves nothing can seems.
 ni mirum quia per venas et viscera mixtim,
no wonder because through veins and flesh mingled,
 per nervos atque ossa tenentur corpore ab omni
through sinews and bones they-are-held body by the-whole
 nec magnis intervallis primordia possunt
nor at-great intervals the-first-beginnings can

libera dissultare, ideo conclusa moventur

free leap-apart, therefore shut-in they-move

sensiferos motus, quos extra corpus in auras

sense-bearing motions, which outside the-body into the-breezes

aëris haut possunt post mortem eiecta moveri

of-air not they-can after death cast-out to-be-moved

propterea quia non simili ratione tenentur;

therefore because not in-like fashion they-are-held;

corpus enim atque animans erit aër, si cohibere

a-body for and a-living-thing will-be air, if to-hold

sese anima atque in eos poterit concludere motus,

itself the-spirit and into those shall-be-able to-shut motions,

quos ante in nervis et in ipso corpore agebat.

which before in the-sinews and in the-very body it-carried-on.

quare etiam atque etiam resoluta corporis omni

wherefore again and again loosed of-the-body the-whole

tegmine et eiectis extra vitalibus auris

covering and cast-out outside the-vital breaths

dissolui sensus animi fateare necessest

to-be-dissolved the-sense of-mind you-confess must-needs

atque animam, quoniam coniunctast causa duobus.

and the-spirit, since is-joined the-cause for-the-two.

Denique cum corpus nequeat perferre animai

Finally since the-body cannot endure of-the-spirit

discidium, quin in taetro tabescat odore,

the-sundering, but-that in foul it-rots smell,

quid dubitas quin ex imo penitusque coorta

why do-you-doubt but-that from the-depths and-deeply risen

emanarit uti fumus diffusa animae vis,

has-oozed-out as smoke scattered of-spirit the-force,

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- atque ideo tanta mutatum putre ruina
and therefore with-so-great changed rotten a-fall
- 585 conciderit corpus, penitus quia mota loco sunt
has-fallen the-body, deeply because moved from-place are
- fundamenta foras manant animaeque per artus
the-foundations outward they-ooze and-of-spirit through the-frame
- perque viarum omnis flexus, in corpore qui sunt,
and-through of-the-passages all the-windings, in the-body which are,
- atque foramina? multimodis ut noscere possis
and the-pores? in-many-ways so-that to-know you-may-be-able
- dispertitam animae naturam exisse per artus
parted of-spirit the-nature to-have-gone-out through the-frame
- 590 et prius esse sibi distractam corpore in ipso,
and sooner to-have-been for-itself rent body in itself,
- quam prolapsa foras enaret in aëris auras.
than slipping outward it-swam into of-air the-breezes.

III.15 • FAINTING, AND THE SNAKE'S SKIN

Even in life the spirit is sometimes shaken loose: in a faint the features fail and the limbs fall slack, and everyone tries to catch back the last bond of life. So frail a thing cannot last outside the body. No dying man feels his spirit leave whole, like a snake shedding its skin; he feels it fail where it sat. And the mind is born only in its fixed seat, never in the head, feet, or hands.

Quin etiam finis dum vitae vertitur intra,
Nay even the-bound while of-life turns within,

saepe aliqua tamen e causa labefacta videtur
often some yet from cause shaken seems

ire anima ac toto solui de corpore tota
to-go the-spirit and the-whole to-be-loosed from body entire

et quasi supremo languescere tempore voltus

595

and as-it-were at-the-last to-faint hour the-features

molliaque exsanguī cadere omnia corpore membra.

and-soft on-the-bloodless to-fall all body the-limbs.

quod genus est, animo male factum cum perhibetur

which kind is, in-mind ill done when is-said

aut animam liquisse; ubi iam trepidatur et omnes

or the-spirit to-have-failed; when now there-is-panic and all

extremum cupiunt vitae reprehendere vinclum;

the-last desire of-life to-catch-back the-bond;

conquassatur enim tum mens animaeque potestas

600

is-shaken for then mind and-of-spirit the-power

omnis. et haec ipso cum corpore conlabefiunt,

all. and these the-very with body collapse,

ut gravior paulo possit dissolvere causa.

so-that a-heavier a-little could dissolve cause.

Quid dubitas tandem quin extra prodita corpus

Why do-you-doubt at-last but-that outside sent-forth the-body

inbecilla foras in aperto, tegmine dempto,

feeble abroad in the-open, the-covering taken-away,

non modo non omnem possit durare per aevom,

605

not only not the-whole it-could last through an-age,

sed minimum quodvis nequeat consistere tempus?

but the-least any it-cannot hold-out time?

nec sibi enim quisquam moriens sentire videtur

nor for-himself for anyone dying to-feel seems

ire foras animam incolumem de corpore toto,

to-go outward the-spirit unharmed from body the-whole,

nec prius ad iugulum et supera succedere fauces,

nor first to the-throat and above to-rise the-gullet,

- 610 verum deficere in certa regione locatam;
but to-fail in a-fixed region placed;
 ut sensus alios in parti quemque sua scit
as senses the-other in a-part each its-own he-knows
 dissolui. quod si immortalis nostra foret mens,
to-be-dissolved. but if immortal our were mind,
 non tam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur,
not so himself dying to-be-dissolved would-be-complain,
 sed magis ire foras vestemque relinquere, ut anguis.
but rather to-go outward and-a-garment to-leave, like a-snake.
- 615 Denique cur animi numquam mens consiliumque
Finally why of-mind never mind [intellect] and-counsel
 gignitur in capite aut pedibus manibusve, sed unis
is-begotten in the-head or the-feet or-hands, but in-single
 sedibus et certis regionibus omnibus haeret,
seats and fixed regions for-all it-clings,
 si non certa loca ad nascendum reddita cuique
if not fixed places for being-born assigned to-each
 sunt, et ubi quicquid possit durare creatum
are, and where whatever could last created
- 620 atque ita multimodis partitis artibus esse,
and so in-many-ways divided limbs to-be,
 membrorum ut numquam existat praeposterus ordo?
of-the-limbs that never arises a-reversed order?
 usque adeo sequitur res rem, neque flamma creari
right so-far follows thing thing, nor flame to-be-created
 fluminibus solitast neque in igni gignier algor.
in-rivers is-wont nor in fire to-be-begotten cold.

If the spirit were immortal and could feel apart from the body, it would need five senses of its own, as painters and earlier writers show the dead in Acheron. But a blow that cuts a man in two cuts the spirit too. Scythed chariots lop off limbs so fast that a man fights on without missing his arm, and a severed head keeps its eyes open. A snake chopped to pieces writhes in every piece: the spirit is divided, and so mortal.

Praeterea si immortalis natura animaist

Besides if immortal the-nature of-spirit-is

et sentire potest secreta a corpore nostro,

and to-feel it-can severed from body our,

quinque, ut opinor, eam faciundum est sensibus auctam.

with-five, as I-think, it to-be-made is senses furnished.

nec ratione alia nosmet proponere nobis

nor in-a-way other we-ourselves to-picture to-ourselves

possumus infernas animas Acherunte vagare.

can the-nether spirits in-Acheron to-wander.

pictores itaque et scriptorum saecula priora

painters and-so and of-writers the-generations earlier

sic animas intro duxerunt sensibus auctas.

so spirits in have-brought with-senses furnished.

at neque sorsum oculi neque nares nec manus ipsa

but neither apart eyes nor nostrils nor a-hand itself

esse potest animae neque sorsum lingua neque aures;

to-be can for-the-spirit nor apart a-tongue nor ears;

haud igitur per se possunt sentire neque esse.

not therefore by themselves they-can feel nor be.

Et quoniam toto sentimus corpore inesse

And since in-the-whole we-feel body to-be-within

625

630

- 635 **vitalem sensum et totum esse animale videmus,**
vital feeling and the-whole to-be alive we-see,
- si subito medium celeri praeciderit ictu**
if suddenly the-middle with-a-swift shall-have-cut stroke
- vis aliqua, ut sorsum partem secernat utramque,**
a-force some, so-that apart part it-severs each,
- dispertita procul dubio quoque vis animai**
parted far-from doubt also the-force of-the-spirit
- et discissa simul cum corpore dissicietur.**
and cleft together with the-body will-be-sundered.
- 640 **at quod scinditur et partis discedit in ulla,**
but what is-cleft and parts separates into any,
- scilicet aeternam sibi naturam abnuit esse.**
surely everlasting for-itself a-nature denies to-be.
- falciferos memorant currus abscidere membra**
scythe-bearing they-tell chariots to-cut-off limbs
- saepe ita de subito permixta caede calentis,**
often so on a-sudden in-mingled slaughter hot,
- ut tremere in terra videatur ab artubus id quod**
that to-quiver on the-ground is-seen from the-limbs that which
- 645 **decidit abscisum, cum mens tamen atque hominis vis**
has-dropped cut-off, although mind yet and of-the-man the-force
- mobilitate mali non quit sentire dolorem;**
by-the-swiftness of-the-harm not can feel pain;
- et simul in pugnae studio quod dedita mens est,**
and at-once in of-battle the-zeal because given-up the-mind is,
- corpore relicuo pugnam caedesque petessit,**
with-body remaining the-fight and-slaughter he-seeks,
- nec tenet amissam laevam cum tegmine saepe**
nor does-he-mark lost his-left-hand with the-shield often

inter equos abstraxe rotas falcesque rapaces, 650
among the-horses to-have-dragged-off the-wheels and-scythes ravening,
 nec cecidisce alius dextram, cum scandit et instat.
nor to-have-fallen another his-right-hand, when he-climbs and presses-on.
 inde alius conatur adempto surgere crure,
then another tries taken-away to-rise his-leg,
 cum digitos agitat propter moribundus humi pes.
when the-toes stirs near-by dying on-the-ground the-foot.
 et caput abscisum calido viventeque trunco
and a-head cut-off from-the-warm and-living trunk
 servat humi voltum vitalem oculosque patentis, 655
keeps on-the-ground the-look of-life and-the-eyes open,
 donec reliquias animai reddidit omnes.
until the-remnants of-the-spirit it-has-given-up all.
 quin etiam tibi si, lingua vibrante, minanti
nay even for-you if, tongue quivering, threatening
 serpentis cauda, procero corpore, utrumque
of-a-serpent the-tail, with-a-long body, either
 sit libitum in multas partis discidere ferro,
it-should-be pleasing into many parts to-cut with-steel,
 omnia iam sorsum cernes ancisa recenti 660
all now apart you-will-see backed with-a-fresh
 volnere tortari et terram conspargere tabo,
wound writhe and the-ground bespatter with-gore,
 ipsam seque retro partem petere ore priorem,
the-very and-itself backward part to-seek with-the-mouth the-fore-part,
 volneris ardenti ut morsu premat icta dolore.
of-the-wound with-burning that bite it-grips struck with-pain.
 omnibus esse igitur totas dicemus in illis
all to-be therefore whole shall-we-say in those

- 665 *particulis animas? at ea ratione sequetur*
pieces spirits? but by-that reasoning it-will-follow
unam animantem animas habuisse in corpore multas.
one living-thing spirits to-have-had in body many.
ergo divisast ea quae fuit una simul cum
therefore has-been-divided that which was one together with
corpore; quapropter mortale utrumque putandumst,
the-body; wherefore mortal each must-be-thought,
in multas quoniam partis disciditur aequae.
into many since parts it-is-cut alike.

III.17 · WHY WE REMEMBER NOTHING BEFORE BIRTH

If the spirit were immortal and slipped into the body at birth, why do we remember nothing of an earlier life? A power so changed as to have lost all memory is not far from death. Nor can spirits have been fastened in from outside: they are woven through veins, flesh, and bone so closely that even the teeth share in feeling. What soaks through a body is dissolved by the soaking, as food is.

- 670 *Praeterea si immortalis natura animai*
Besides if immortal the-nature of-the-spirit
constat et in corpus nascentibus insinuat,
stands and into the-body to-the-newborn slips-in,
cur super ante actam aetatem meminisse nequimus
why moreover before passed life to-remember we-cannot
nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?
nor traces of-done things any do-we-hold?
nam si tanto operest animi mutata potestas,
for if in-so-great a-measure-is of-mind changed the-power,
 675 *omnis ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum,*
all that of-done has-fallen-away the-memory things,

non, ut opinor, id ab leto iam longius errat;

not, as I-think, that from death now further strays;

qua propter fateare necessest quae fuit ante

for-which reason you-confess must-needs what was before

interiisse, et quae nunc est nunc esse creatam.

to-have-perished, and what now is now to-have-been created.

Praeterea si iam perfecto corpore nobis

Besides if now finished the-body for-us

inferri solitast animi vivata potestas

to-be-brought-in is-wont of-mind the-quickenened power

680

tum cum gignimur et vitae cum limen inimus,

then when we-are-begotten and of-life when the-threshold we-enter,

haud ita conveniebat uti cum corpore et una

not so it-would-be-fitting that with the-body and together

cum membris videatur in ipso sanguine cresse,

with the-limbs it-seems in the-very blood to-have-grown,

sed vel ut in cavea per se sibi vivere solam

but even as in a-cage by itself for-itself to-live alone

convenit, ut sensu corpus tamen affluat omne.

it-is-fitting, so-that with-feeling the-body yet overflows the-whole.

685

quare etiam atque etiam neque originis esse putandumst

wherefore again and again neither of-origin to-be must-it-be-thought

expertis animas nec leti lege solutas;

free spirits nor of-death from-the-law loosed;

nam neque tanto opere adnecti potuisse putandumst

for nor in-so-great a-measure to-be-bound to-have-been-able must-it-be-thought

corporibus nostris extrinsecus insinuat,

to-bodies our from-without slipped-in,

quod fieri totum contra manifesta docet res

because to-happen wholly the-contrary manifest teaches fact

690

namque ita conexa est per venas viscera nervos
for so interwoven it-is through veins flesh sinews

ossaque, uti dentes quoque sensu participantur;
and-bones, that the-teeth also in-feeling share;

morbus ut indicat et gelidai stringor aquai
disease as shows and of-icy the-bite water

et lapis oppressus subitis e frugibus asper
and a-stone crushed sudden from grains rough

695 nec, tam contextae cum sint, exire videntur
nor, so interwoven since they-are, to-go-out they-seem

incolumes posse et salvas exsolvere sese
unharméd can and safe to-loose themselves

omnibus e nervis atque ossibus articulisque,
all from sinews and bones and-joints,

quod si forte putas extrinsecus insinuatam
but if perchance you-think from-without slipped-in

permanare animam nobis per membra solere,
to-soak-through the-spirit in-us through the-limbs is-wont,

700 tanto quique magis cum corpore fusa peribit;
by-so-much and-whereby the-more with the-body spread it-will-perish;

quod permanat enim, dissolvitur, interit ergo;
what soaks-through for, is-dissolved, it-perishes therefore;

dispertitur enim per caulas corporis omnis.
it-is-parted for through the-pores of-the-body all.

ut cibus, in membra atque artus cum diditur omnis,
as food, into the-limbs and the-frame when is-spread all,

disperit atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se,
it-perishes and another nature supplies from itself,

705 sic anima atque animus quamvis integra recens in
so spirit and mind although whole fresh into

corpus eunt, tamen in manando dissoluuntur,
the-body they-go, yet in the-oozing they-are-dissolved,
 dum quasi per caulas omnis diduntur in artus
while as-it-were through the-pores all are-spread into the-frame
 particulae quibus haec animi natura creatur,
the-particles of-which this of-mind the-nature is-created,
 quae nunc in nostro dominatur corpore nata
which now in our rules body born
 ex illa quae tunc periit partita per artus.
from that which then perished parted through the-frame.

710

III.18 • WHERE THE WORMS COME FROM

The spirit has a birthday and a funeral. If its seeds are left behind in a dead body, it did not go out whole; if none are left, where do the worms in a corpse come from? Those who say that spirits enter worms from outside must explain why thousands gather where one departed — and whether spirits hunt out the seeds of worms and build themselves a place to be, or slip into bodies already made. No way to build one is seen, nor could they be finely woven into a finished body.

quapropter neque natali privata videtur
wherefore neither of-a-birth deprived seems
 esse die natura animae nec funeris expers.
to-be day the-nature of-spirit nor of-a-funeral free.
 Semina praeterea linquuntur necne animai
Seeds besides are-left or-not of-the-spirit
 corpore in exanimo? quod si lincuntur et insunt,
body in the-lifeless? but if they-are-left and are-within,
 haut erit ut merito immortalis possit haberi,
not it-will-be that rightly immortal it-could to-be-held,

715

partibus amissis quoniam libata recessit.

parts lost since diminished it-has-withdrawn.

sin ita sinceris membris ablata profugit,

but-if so from-unbroken limbs taken it-has-fled,

ut nullas partis in corpore liquerit ex se,

that no parts in the-body it-has-left of itself,

unde cadavera racenti iam viscere vermes

whence the-corpses from-the-reeking now flesh worms

720 expirant atque unde animantum copia tanta

breathe-out and whence of-living-things a-store so-great

exos et exanguis tumidos perfluctuat artus?

boneless and bloodless the-swollen surges-through limbs?

quod si forte animas extrinsecus insinuari

but if perchance spirits from-without to-slip-in

vermibus et privas in corpora posse venire

to-worms and separate into bodies can come

credis nec reputas cur milia multa animarum

you-believe and-not you-reckon why thousands many of-spirits

725 convenient unde una recesserit, hoc tamen est ut

gather whence one has-withdrawn, this yet is that

quaerendum videatur et in discrimen agendum,

to-be-asked seems and into the-test to-be-brought,

utrum tandem animae venentur semina quaeque

whether after-all the-spirits hunt the-seeds each

vermiculorum ipsaeque sibi fabricentur ubi sint,

of-little-worms and-themselves for-themselves build where they-are,

an quasi corporibus perfectis insinuentur.

or as-it-were into-bodies finished they-slip-in.

730 at neque cur faciant ipsae quareve laborent

but neither why they-do-it themselves or-why they-toil

dicere suppeditat. neque enim, sine corpore cum sunt,
to-say there-is-means. nor for, without body when they-are,

sollicitae volitant morbis alguque fameque;
troubled do-they-flit by-diseases and-cold and-hunger;

corpus enim magis his vitiis adfines laborat,
the-body for more to-these ills akin suffers,

et mala multa animus contage fungitur eius.
and evils many the-mind by-contact undergoes of-it.

sed tamen his esto quamvis facere utile corpus,
but yet for-them let-it-be however to-make useful a-body,

735

cum subeant; at qua possint via nulla videtur.
when they-enter; yet by-what they-can way none is-seen.

haut igitur faciunt animae sibi corpora et artus.
not therefore make the-spirits for-themselves bodies and frames.

nec tamen est ut qui perfectis insinuentur
nor yet is-it that somehow into-finished they-slip-in

corporibus; neque enim poterunt suptiliter esse
bodies; nor for will-they-be-able finely to-be

conexae neque consensu contagia fient.
interwoven nor by-fellow-feeling contacts will-come.

740

Lions are fierce, foxes cunning, and stags timid from their sires, which shows that the force of the mind grows with the body out of its own seed. If spirits changed bodies, creatures' characters would be jumbled, hounds would flee stags, and hawks flee doves. If the believers answer that the mind grows tender in a tender body, they have granted that it is mortal.

Denique cur acris violentia triste leonum

Finally why fierce the-violence the-grim of-lions

seminium sequitur, volpes dolus, et fuga cervos?

breed follows, foxes guile, and flight stags?

a patribus datur et patrius pavor incitat artus,

from their-sires is-given and a-father's the-fear spurs the-limbs,

et iam cetera de genere hoc cur omnia membris

and now the-rest of kind this why all in-the-limbs

745 ex ineunte aevo generascunt ingenioque,

from entering life are-bred and-in-character,

si non, certa suo quia semine seminioque

if not, fixed by-its-own because seed and-breed

vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore quoque?

the-force of-mind alike grows with the-body also?

quod si immortalis foret et mutare soleret

but if immortal it-were and to-change it-were-wont

corpora, permixtis animantes moribus essent,

bodies, with-mingled living-things ways would-be,

750 effugeret canis Hyrcano de semine saepe

would-flee a-hound Hyrcanian of stock often

cornigeri incursum cervi tremeretque per auras

of-the-borned the-charge stag and-would-tremble through the-breezes

aëris accipiter fugiens veniente columba,

of-air a-hawk fleeing at-the-coming of-a-dove,

desiperent homines, saperent fera saecula ferarum.

would-be-witless men, would-be-wise wild the-generations of-beasts.

illud enim falsa fertur ratione, quod aiunt

that for by-false is-said reasoning, what they-say

inmortalem animam mutato corpore flecti;

the-immortal spirit with-a-changed body to-be-bent;

quod mutatur enim, dissolvitur, interit ergo;

what is-changed for, is-dissolved, it-perishes therefore;

traiciuntur enim partes atque ordine migrant;

are-transposed for the-parts and from-their-order they-move;

quare dissolui quoque debent posse per artus,

wherefore to-be-dissolved also they-must can through the-frame,

denique ut intereant una cum corpore cunctae.

finally that they-perish together with the-body all.

sin animas hominum dicent in corpora semper

but-if spirits of-men they-shall-say into bodies always

ire humana, tamen quaeram cur e sapienti

to-go human, still I-shall-ask why from a-wise-one

stulta queat fieri, nec prudens sit puer ullus,

a-foolish can become, nor prudent is a-child any,

nec tam doctus equae pullus quam fortis equi vis.

nor so trained of-a-mare the-foal as of-a-strong horse the-force.

scilicet in tenero tenerascere corpore mentem

surely in a-tender to-grow-tender body the-mind

confugient. quod si iam fit, fateare necessest

they-will-take-refuge. but if now it-happens, you-confess must-needs

mortalem esse animam, quoniam mutata per artus

mortal to-be the-spirit, since changed through the-frame

755

760

765

tanto opere amittit vitam sensumque priorem.

in-so-great a-measure it-loses life and-feeling former.

quove modo poterit pariter cum corpore quoque

or-in-what way will-be-able alike with the-body also

770 confirmata cupitum aetatis tangere florem

strengthened the-longed-for of-age to-touch flower

vis animi, nisi erit consors in origine prima?

the-force of-mind, unless it-shall-be a-sharer in the-origin first?

quidve foras sibi vult membris exire senectis?

or-what outward for-itself does-it-wish from-the-limbs to-go aged?

an metuit conclusa manere in corpore putri

or does-it-fear shut-in to-stay in a-body rotting

et domus aetatis spatio ne fessa vetusto

and the-house of-age by-the-span lest wearied long

775 obruat? at non sunt immortalī ulla pericla.

crushes-it? but not there-are for-the-immortal any perils.

III.20 • IMMORTALS WAITING TO BE BORN

It is laughable to imagine immortal spirits standing by at every mating, countless and jostling to be first into a body. Nothing grows where it does not belong — no tree in the sky, no fish in a field — and the mind cannot arise or grow apart from blood and sinew. To join the mortal to the eternal and think they can act and suffer together is madness. What lasts forever must be solid enough to spurn every blow, or void, or have no room around it to fly apart into.

Denique conubia ad Veneris partusque ferarum

Finally the-unions at of-Venus and-the-births of-beasts

esse animas praesto deridiculum esse videtur,

to-be spirits at-hand ridiculous to-be it-seems,

expectare immortalis mortalia membra

to-wait-for immortal mortal limbs

innumero numero certareque praeproperanter

in-countless number and-to-vie in-headlong-haste

inter se quae prima potissimaque insinuetur;

among themselves which first and-foremost slips-in;

si non forte ita sunt animarum foedera pacta,

if not perchance so are of-spirits covenants agreed,

ut quae prima volans advenerit insinuetur

that which first flying has-come slips-in

prima neque inter se contendant viribus hilum.

first nor among themselves they-strive with-force a-jot.

Denique in aethere non arbor, non aequore in alto

Finally in the-aether not a-tree, not the-level in deep

nubes esse queunt nec pisces vivere in arvis

clouds to-be can nor fish to-live in the-fields

nec cruor in lignis neque saxis sucus inesse.

nor blood in logs nor in-stones sap to-be-within.

certum ac dispositumst ubi quicquid crescat et insit.

fixed and ordained-is where whatever grows and is-within.

sic animi natura nequit sine corpore oriri

so of-mind the-nature cannot without body arise

sola neque a nervis et sanguine longius esse.

alone nor from sinews and blood further be.

quod si posset enim, multo prius ipsa animi vis

but if it-could for, much sooner itself of-mind the-force

in capite aut umeris aut imis calcibus esse

in the-head or shoulders or in-the-lowest heels to-be

posset et innasci quavis in parte soleret,

could and to-be-born any in part it-would-be-wont,

780

785

790

tandem in eodem homine atque in eodem vase manere.

at-last in the-same man and in the-same vessel to-stay.

quod quoniam nostro quoque constat corpore certum

which since our also stands in-body fixed

795 dispositumque videtur ubi esse et crescere possit

and-ordained seems where to-be and to-grow it-can

sorsum anima atque animus, tanto magis infitiandum

apart spirit and mind, by-so-much the-more to-be-denied

totum posse extra corpus durare genique.

the-whole can outside the-body to-last and-be-born.

quare, corpus ubi interiit, periisse necessest

wherefore, the-body when has-perished, to-have-perished must-needs

confiteare animam distractam in corpore toto.

you-confess the-spirit rent in the-body whole.

800 quippe etenim mortale aeterno iungere et una

for indeed the-mortal to-the-eternal to-join and together

consentire putare et fungi mutua posse

to-feel-with to-think and to-be-affected mutually can

desiperest; quid enim diversius esse putandumst

is-witlessness; what for more-different to-be must-be-thought

aut magis inter se disiunctum discrepitanque,

or more among themselves disjoined and-discordant,

quam mortale quod est immortalis atque perenni

than mortal what is to-the-immortal and everlasting

805 iunctum in concilio saevas tolerare procellas?

joined in a-combination savage to-bear storms?

praeterea quaecumque manent aeterna necessest

besides whatsoever remain everlasting must-needs

aut quia sunt solido cum corpore respuere ictus

either because they-are a-solid with body to-spurn blows

nec penetrare pati sibi quicquam quod queat artas
nor to-pierce to-suffer into-themselves anything which could the-close

dissociare intus partis, ut materiai

to-part within parts, as of-matter

corpora sunt, quorum naturam ostendimus ante,

the-bodies are, whose nature we-have-shown before,

aut ideo durare aetatem posse per omnem,

or therefore to-last an-age can through all,

plagarum quia sunt expertia sicut inanest,

of-blows because they-are free as the-void-is,

quod manet intactum neque ab ictu fungitur hilum,

which remains untouched nor by a-blow is-affected a-jot,

aut etiam quia nulla loci sit copia circum,

or also because no of-space is store around,

quo quasi res possint discedere dissoluique,

whither as-it-were things can depart and-be-dissolved,

sicut summarum summast aeterna, neque extra

as of-sums the-sum-is everlasting, nor outside

quis locus est quo diffugiant neque corpora sunt quae

what place is whither they-scatter nor bodies are which

possint incidere et valida dissolvere plaga.

could fall-on and with-a-strong dissolve blow.

810

815

Nor is the mind immortal on the ground that nothing harmful reaches it. Besides sickening with the body's diseases, it is fretted by fear of things to come, gnawed by remorse for past misdeeds, driven mad, made forgetful, and plunged into the black waters of lethargy.

Quod si forte ideo magis immortalis habendast,

But if perchance therefore the-more immortal must-it-be-held,

820 quod vitalibus ab rebus munita tenetur,

because vital from things fenced it-is-held,

aut quia non veniunt omnino aliena salutis,

or because not come at-all hostile to-its-safety,

aut quia quae veniunt aliqua ratione recedunt

or because what come in-some way withdraw

pulsa prius quam quid noceant sentire queamus,

driven-off before than what they-harm to-feel we-can,

(lacuna)

praeter enim quam quod morbis cum corporis aegret,

besides for than that with-diseases when of-body it-is-sick,

825 advenit id quod eam de rebus saepe futuris

there-comes that which it about things often to-come

macerat inque metu male habet curisque fatigat,

frets and-in fear ill it-holds and-with-cares wearies,

praeteritisque male admissis peccata remordent.

and-for-past ill deeds the-sins gnaw-back.

adde furorem animi proprium atque oblivia rerum,

add the-madness of-mind peculiar and the-forgettings of-things,

adde quod in nigras lethargi mergitur undas.

add that into the-black of-lethargy it-is-plunged waves.

Since the mind is mortal, death is nothing to us. As we felt no hurt when the Carthaginians came to the clash and the world trembled for which side should rule, so when we are not, nothing can touch us. Even if time gathered our matter again after death, it would not concern us, since the thread of memory would be broken. No one can be made wretched who is not.

Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum,

830

Nothing therefore death is to us nor concerns a-jot,

quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur.

since-indeed the-nature of-mind mortal is-held.

et vel ut ante acto nihil tempore sensimus aegri,

and even as before passed nothing in-time we-felt of-ill,

ad conflagrandum venientibus undique Poenis,

to the-clash coming from-everywhere the-Carthaginians,

omnia cum belli trepido concussa tumultu

all-things when of-war with-the-trembling shaken tumult

horrida contremuere sub altis aetheris oris,

835

shuddering trembled beneath the-high of-aether shores,

in dubioque fuere utrorum ad regna cadendum

in and-doubt they-were of-which-of-the-two to the-rule to-fall

omnibus humanis esset terraque marique,

for-all human-beings it-would-be and-by-land and-by-sea,

sic, ubi non erimus, cum corporis atque animai

so, when not we-shall-be, when of-body and of-spirit

discidium fuerit, quibus e sumus uniter apti,

the-sundering shall-have-been, which of we-are as-one fitted,

scilicet haud nobis quicquam, qui non erimus tum,

840

surely not to-us anything, who not we-shall-be then,

accidere omnino poterit sensumque movere,

to-happen at-all will-be-able and-feeling to-stir,

non si terra mari miscebitur et mare caelo.

not if earth with-sea shall-be-mingled and sea with-heaven.

et si iam nostro sentit de corpore postquam

and if now our feels from body after

distractast animi natura animaeque potestas,

has-been-rent of-mind the-nature and-of-spirit the-power,

845 nil tamen est ad nos, qui comptu coniugioque

nothing yet is-it to us, who by-the-fitting and-the-wedding

corporis atque animae consistimus uniter apti.

of-body and of-spirit we-stand as-one fitted.

nec, si materiem nostram collegerit aetas

nor, if matter our shall-have-gathered time

post obitum rursumque redegerit ut sita nunc est,

after death and-again shall-have-restored as placed now it-is,

atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitae,

and again to-us shall-have-been given the-lights of-life,

850 pertineat quicquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum,

would-it-concern anything yet to us that also deed,

interrupta semel cum sit repententia nostri.

broken once when is the-remembrance of-ourselves.

et nunc nil ad nos de nobis attinet, ante

and now nothing to us about ourselves concerns, before

qui fuimus, neque iam de illis nos adficit angor.

who we-were, nor now about those us touches anguish.

nam cum respicias inmensi temporis omne

for when you-look-back-at of-measureless time all

855 praeteritum spatium, tum motus materialia

the-past space, then the-motions of-matter

multimodi quam sint, facile hoc adcredere possis,
manifold how are, easily this to-believe you-could,
 semina saepe in eodem, ut nunc sunt, ordine posta
seeds often in the-same, as now they-are, order set
 haec eadem, quibus e nunc nos sumus, ante fuisse.
these same, which of now we are, before to-have-been.
 nec memori tamen id quimus reprehendere mente;
nor with-a-remembering yet that we-can recall mind;
 inter enim iectast vitai pausa vageque
between for has-been-cast of-life a-bait and-stray
 deerrarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes.
have-wandered everywhere the-motions from the-senses all.
 debet enim, misere si forte aegreque futurumst;
must for, wretchedly if perchance and-painfully it-is-to-be;
 ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cui male possit
he-himself also to-be in that then time, to-whom ill could
 accidere. id quoniam mors eximit, esseque prohibet
happen. that since death takes-away, and-to-be forbids
 illum cui possint incommoda conciliari,
him to-whom could harms to-be-brought-together,
 scire licet nobis nihil esse in morte timendum
to-know one-may for-us nothing is in death to-be-feared
 nec miserum fieri qui non est posse, neque hilum
nor wretched to-become who not is can, nor a-jot
 differre an nullo fuerit iam tempore natus,
to-differ whether in-no he-was now time born,
 mortalem vitam mors cum immortalis ademit.
mortal life death when immortal has-taken-away.

860

865

When a man complains that his body will rot or burn, he is not speaking honestly: some blind sting is in him, for he has not truly taken himself out of the picture. Alive, he imagines himself lying there and taints the corpse with his own feeling. If it is an evil to be mauled by beasts, it is no better to be burned, smothered in honey, or crushed under a weight of earth.

- 870 Proinde ubi se videas hominem indignari ipsum,
Therefore when himself you-see a-man chafing himself,
 post mortem fore ut aut putescat corpore posto
after death it-will-be that either he-rots with-body laid
 aut flammis interfiat malisve ferarum,
or by-flames he-is-destroyed or-by-the-jaws of-beasts,
 scire licet non sincerum sonere atque subesse
to-know one-may not true rings and lies-beneath
 caecum aliquem cordi stimulum, quamvis neget ipse
a-blind some in-his-heart sting, however he-denies himself
- 875 credere se quemquam sibi sensum in morte futurum;
to-believe that-he any for-himself feeling in death will-be;
 non, ut opinor, enim dat quod promittit et unde
not, as I-think, for he-grants what he-promises and whence
 nec radicitus e vita se tollit et eicit,
nor root-and-branch from life himself he-takes and casts-out,
 sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse.
but he-makes to-be of-himself something over unknowing himself
 vivus enim sibi cum proponit quisque futurum,
alive for for-himself when he-pictures each to-come,
- 880 corpus uti volucres lacerent in morte feraeque,
the-body that birds tear in death and-beasts,

ipse sui miseret; neque enim se dividit illum
he of-himself pities; nor for himself does-he-part from-there

nec removet satis a proiecto corpore et illum
nor does-he-remove enough from the-cast-out body and that

se fingit sensuque suo contaminat astans.
himself be-imagines and-with-feeling his-own he-taints standing-by.

hinc indignatur se mortalem esse creatum
hence he-chafes that-he mortal to-be created

nec videt in vera nullum fore morte alium se,
nor does-he-see in true no there-will-be death another self;

885

qui possit vivus sibi se lugere peremptum
who could living for-himself himself mourn destroyed

stansque iacentem se lacerari urive dolere.
and-standing lying himself to-be-mangled or-be-burned grieve.

nam si in morte malumst malis morsuque ferarum
for if in death it-is-an-evil by-the-jaws and-the-bite of-beasts

tractari, non invenio qui non sit acerbum
to-be-mauled, not I-find how not it-is bitter

ignibus inpositum calidis torrescere flammis
on-fires laid hot to-be-scorched by-flames

890

aut in melle situm suffocari atque rigere
or in honey placed to-be-smothered and to-stiffen

frigore, cum summo gelidi cubat aequore saxi,
with-cold, when on-the-top of-a-chill he-lies surface stone,

urgerive superne obrutum pondere terrae.
or-to-be-pressed from-above buried by-the-weight of-earth.

Mourners say that no wife or children will meet the dead man again, and that one hostile day has taken so many prizes of life — but they do not add that no longing for those things remains either. Others say the dead sleep free of pain, and then weep forever. If death is only sleep and rest, why should anyone waste away with grief? Even the reveler's brief enjoyment assumes a thirst no dead man will feel.

'Iam iam non domus accipiet te laeta neque uxor

'Now now not a-home will-receive you glad nor a-wife

895 optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati

best, nor sweet will-run-to-meet kisses children

praeripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.

to-snatch-first and with-silent the-heart sweetness will-touch.

non poteris factis florentibus esse tuisque

not you-will-be-able deeds flourishing to-be and-to-your-own

praesidium. misero misere' aiunt 'omnia ademit

a-defense. wretched wretchedly' they-say 'all has-taken-away

una dies infesta tibi tot praemia vitae.'

one day hostile from-you so-many prizes of-life.'

900 illud in his rebus non addunt 'nec tibi earum

this in these matters not they-add 'nor for-you of-those

iam desiderium rerum super insidet una.'

now the-longing things over sits together.'

quod bene si videant animo dictisque sequantur,

which well if they-saw in-mind and-in-words followed,

dissoluant animi magno se angore metuque.

they-would-loose of-mind from-great themselves anguish and-fear.

'tu quidem ut es leto sopitus, sic eris aevi

'you indeed as you-are by-death lulled, so you-shall-be of-time

quod super est cunctis privatus doloribus aegris; 905
what over is from-all free pains sick;
 at nos horrifico cinefactum te prope busto
but we dreadful turned-to-ash you near pyre
 insatiabiliter deflevimus, aeternumque
insatiably have-weep-for, and-everlasting
 nulla dies nobis maerorem e pectore demet.
no day from-us the-grief from the-breast will-take.'
 illud ab hoc igitur quaerendum est, quid sit amari
this of this-man therefore to-be-asked is, what is of-bitter
 tanto opere, ad somnum si res redit atque quietem, 910
in-so-great a-measure, to sleep if the-matter comes-back and rest,
 cur quisquam aeterno possit tabescere luctu.
why anyone with-everlasting could waste grief.
 Hoc etiam faciunt ubi discubuerunt tenentque
This also they-do when they-have-reclined and-hold
 pocula saepe homines et inumbrant ora coronis,
cups often men and they-shade their-faces with-garlands,
 ex animo ut dicant: 'brevis hic est fructus hominibus;
from the-heart that they-say: 'brief this is enjoyment for-poor-men;
 iam fuerit neque post umquam revocare licebit.' 915
soon it-will-have-been nor after ever to-call-back will-it-be-allowed.'
 tam quam in morte mali cum primis hoc sit eorum,
so as in death of-evil among the-first this is of-them,
 quod sitis exurat miseros atque arida torrat,
that thirst burns-up the-wretched and parched scorches,
 aut aliae cuius desiderium insideat rei.
or for-another any a-longing sits-in thing.
 nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requiret,
nor for-himself for anyone then himself and-life will-seek,

- 920 cum pariter mens et corpus sopita quiescunt;
when alike mind and body lulled rest;
 nam licet aeternum per nos sic esse soporem,
for it-may-be everlasting through us so to-be the-slumber,
 nec desiderium nostri nos adficit ullum,
nor longing for-ourselves us touches any,
 et tamen haud quaquam nostros tunc illa per artus
and yet not at-all our then those through the-frame
 longe ab sensiferis primordia motibus errant,
far from sense-bearing first-beginnings motions stray,
- 925 cum correptus homo ex somno se colligit ipse.
when roused a-man from sleep himself gathers himself.
 multo igitur mortem minus ad nos esse putandumst,
by-much therefore death less to us to-be must-it-be-thought,
 si minus esse potest quam quod nihil esse videmus;
if less to-be can than what nothing to-be we-see;
 maior enim turbae disiectus materiai
a-greater for of-the-throng scattering of-matter
 consequitur leto nec quisquam expergitus extat,
follows on-death nor anyone awakened stands,
- 930 frigida quem semel est vitae pausa secuta.
the-chill whom once has of-life halt followed.

Suppose nature herself broke in and asked why a man weeps at death. If life has pleased him, why not leave like a guest who has had his fill? If it has been wasted, why ask for more? An old man she would chide more sharply: the old must give way, and life is given to none to own, but to all to use. The time before our birth is a mirror of the time after death, and it holds nothing dreadful.

Denique si vocem rerum natura repente

Finally if a-voice of-things the-nature suddenly

mittat et hoc alicui nostrum sic increpet ipsa:

should-send and this to-one of-us thus should-chide herself:

‘quid tibi tanto operest, mortalis, quod nimis aegris

‘what to-you in-so-great a-measure-is, mortal, that too-much to-sick

luctibus indulges? quid mortem congemis ac fles?

griefs you-give-way? why death do-you-bewail and weep?

nam si grata fuit tibi vita ante acta priorque

for if pleasing was to-you life before passed and-former

et non omnia pertusum congesta quasi in vas

and not all a-leaky heaped as-it-were into vessel

commoda perfluxere atque ingrata interiere;

blessings have-flowed-through and unthanked have-perished;

cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis

why not as full of-life a-guest do-you-withdraw

aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?

with-a-calm and-mind take untroubled, fool, rest?

sin ea quae fructus cumque es periere profusa

but-if those which having-enjoyed soever you-have have-perished spilled

vitaque in offensost, cur amplius addere quaeris,

and-life in offense-is, why more to-add do-you-seek,

935

940

rursum quod pereat male et ingratum occidat omne,
again what may-perish ill and unthanked may-fall all,

non potius vitae finem facis atque laboris?
not rather of-life an-end do-you-make and of-toil?

nam tibi praeterea quod machiner inveniamque,
for for-you besides what I-may-devise and-find,

945 quod placeat, nihil est; eadem sunt omnia semper.
that may-please, nothing there-is; the-same are all-things always.

si tibi non annis corpus iam marcet et artus
if for-you not with-years the-body now withers and the-limbs

confecti languent, eadem tamen omnia restant,
worn-out droop, the-same still all-things remain,

omnia si perges vivendo vincere saecula,
all if you-go-on by-living to-outlast generations,

atque etiam potius, si numquam sis moriturus',
and even rather, if never you-are to-die,'

950 quid respondemus, nisi iustam intendere litem
what do-we-answer, unless a-just to-bring suit

naturam et veram verbis exponere causam?
that-nature and a-true in-words to-set-forth case?

grandior hic vero si iam seniorque queratur
older here indeed if now and-more-aged should-complain

atque obitum lamentetur miser amplius aequo,
and his-death should-lament wretched more than-is-fair,

non merito inclamet magis et voce increpet acri:
not rightly would-she-cry-out the-more and with-a-voice chide sharp:

955 'aufer abhinc lacrimas, baratre, et compesce querellas.
'take-away hence the-tears, you-glutton, and check complaints.

omnia perfunctus vitae praemia marces;
all having-enjoyed of-life the-prizes you-wither;

sed quia semper aves quod abest, praesentia temnis,
but because always you-crave what is-away, the-present you-scorn,

inperfecta tibi elapsast ingrataque vita,
unfinished from-you has-slipped and-unthanked life,

et nec opinanti mors ad caput adstitit ante
and not expecting death at the-head has-stood before

quam satur ac plenus possis discedere rerum.
than sated and full you-could depart of-things.

960

nunc aliena tua tamen aetate omnia mitte
now unsuited to-your yet age all let-go

aequo animoque, age dum, magnis concede necessis?
with-a-calm and-mind, come now, to-great yield necessities?'

iure, ut opinor, agat, iure increpet inciletque;
rightly, as I-think, she-would-plead, rightly chide and-rebuke;

cedit enim rerum novitate extrusa vetustas
gives-way for of-things by-the-newness thrust-out the-old

semper, et ex aliis aliud reparare necessest.
always, and from others one-thing to-renew must-needs.

965

Nec quisquam in barathrum nec Tartara deditur atra;
Nor anyone into the-pit nor Tartarus is-given black;

materies opus est, ut crescant postera saecula;
matter need is, that may-grow later generations;

quae tamen omnia te vita perfuncta sequentur;
which yet all you life having-finished will-follow;

nec minus ergo ante haec quam tu cecidere cadentque.
and-not less therefore before these than you have-fallen and-will-fall.

sic alid ex alio numquam desistet oriri
so one-thing from another never will-cease to-arise

970

vitaque mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu.
and-life in-ownership to-none is-given, to-all in-use.

respite item quam nil ad nos ante acta vetustas

look-back likewise how nothing to us before passed the-age

temporis aeterni fuerit, quam nascimur ante.

of-time everlasting was, than we-are-born before.

hoc igitur speculum nobis natura futuri

this therefore a-mirror for-us nature of-coming

975 temporis exponit post mortem denique nostram.

time sets-forth after death finally our.

numquid ibi horribile apparet, num triste videtur

does-anything there dreadful appear, does sad seem

quicquam, non omni somno securius exstat?

anything, not than-every sleep more-untroubled does-it-stand?

III.26 • TANTALUS, TITYOS, AND SISYPHUS

The torments told of Acheron are all in this life. Tantalus is the empty dread of the gods; Tityos is the man lying in love whom birds tear and anxious anguish eats away; Sisyphus is the candidate who seeks office and always comes back beaten. The maidens' leaky jar is the mind that can never be filled. Cerberus and Tartarus are the punishments men fear for their crimes — and even where those are absent, the mind's own conscience scourges it and fears worse in death.

Atque ea ni mirum quae cumque Acherunte profundo

And those no wonder what soever in-Acheron deep

prodita sunt esse, in vita sunt omnia nobis.

reported are to-be, in life are all for-us.

980 nec miser inpendens magnum timet aëre saxum

nor wretched overhanging a-great fears in-air rock

Tantalus, ut famast, cassa formidine torpens;

Tantalus, as the-tale-is, with-empty dread numb;

sed magis in vita divom metus urget inanis

but rather in life of-the-gods fear presses empty

mortalis casumque timent quem cuique ferat fors.

mortals and-the-chance they-fear which to-each brings fortune.

nec Tityon volucres ineunt Acherunte iacentem

nor Tityos birds enter in-Acheron lying

nec quod sub magno scrutentur pectore quicquam

nor what beneath his-great they-could-search breast anything

perpetuam aetatem possunt reperire profecto.

for-endless time can-they find assuredly.

quam libet immani proiectu corporis exstet,

how you-please with-a-monstrous sprawl of-body he-lies,

qui non sola novem dispessis iugera membris

who not alone nine with-outspread acres limbs

optineat, sed qui terrai totius orbem,

covers, but who of-earth the-whole globe,

non tamen aeternum poterit perferre dolorem

not yet everlasting will-be-be-able to-endure pain

nec praeberere cibum proprio de corpore semper.

nor to-furnish food his-own from body forever.

sed Tityos nobis hic est, in amore iacentem

but Tityos for-us here is, in love lying

quem volucres lacerant atque exest anxius angor

whom birds tear and eats-out anxious anguish

aut alia quavis scindunt cuppedine curae.

or by-another any rend with-craving cares.

Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est,

Sisyphus in life also for-us before the-eyes is,

qui petere a populo fasces saevasque secures

who to-seek from the-people the-rods and-cruel axes

985

990

995

imbibit et semper victus tristisque recedit.

has-set-his-heart and always beaten and-gloomy withdraws.

nam petere imperium, quod inanest nec datur umquam,

for to-seek power, which is-empty nor is-given ever,

atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,

and in that always hard to-endure toil,

1000 hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte

this is up-the-facing straining to-thrust hill

saxum, quod tamen e summo iam vertice rusum

a-rock, which yet from the-topmost now peak back

volvitur et plani raptim petit aequora campi.

rolls and of-the-flat headlong seeks the-levels plain.

deinde animi ingratham naturam pascere semper

next of-mind the-thankless nature to-feed always

atque explere bonis rebus satiareque numquam,

and to-fill with-good things and-to-sate never,

1005 quod faciunt nobis annorum tempora, circum

what do for-us of-the-years the-seasons, around

cum redeunt fetusque ferunt variosque lepores,

when they-return and-fruits bring and-varied delights,

nec tamen explemur vitai fructibus umquam,

nor yet are-we-filled of-life with-the-fruits ever,

hoc, ut opinor, id est, aevo florente puellas

this, as I-think, that is, in-age blooming the-maidens

quod memorant laticem pertusum congerere in vas,

which they-tell water a-leaky to-beap into vessel,

1010 quod tamen expleri nulla ratione potestur.

which yet to-be-filled by-no means can-be.

Cerberus et Furiae iam vero et lucis egestas,

Cerberus and the-Furies now indeed and of-light the-lack,

Tartarus horriferos eructans faucibus aestus!

Tartarus dread-bringing belching from-his-jaws blasts!

qui neque sunt usquam nec possunt esse profecto;

which neither are anywhere nor can be assuredly;

sed metus in vita poenarum pro male factis

but fear in life of-penalties for ill deeds

est insignibus insignis scelerisque lueta,

there-is for-notorious notorious and-of-crime the-atonement,

carcer et horribilis de saxo iactus deorsum,

prison and the-dreadful from the-rock hurling down,

verbera carnifices robur pix lammina taedae;

lashes hangmen the-dungeon pitch the-hot-plate torches;

quae tamen etsi absunt, at mens sibi conscia factis

which yet although are-away, yet the-mind to-itself conscious of-deeds

praemetuens adhibet stimulos torretque flagellis,

fearing-beforehand applies goads and-scorches with-lashes,

nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum

nor does-it-see meanwhile what bound to-be of-ills

possit nec quae sit poenarum denique finis,

could nor what is of-penalties finally the-end,

atque eadem metuit magis haec ne in morte gravescant.

and the-same it-fears the-more these lest in death grow-heavier.

hic Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita.

this the-Acherusian becomes of-fools finally life.

1015

1020

Good Ancus closed his eyes, a better man than you; so did kings, and the man who bridged the sea with a road for his legions. Scipio gave his bones to the earth like the lowest slave. Homer sleeps; Democritus offered his head to death; Epicurus himself died, who outshone mankind as the sun the stars. And will you chafe at dying, whose life is almost death already, slept away or dreamed awake?

Hoc etiam tibi tute interdum dicere possis.

This also to-yourself you sometimes to-say you-could.

1025 'lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancus reliquit,

'the-lights if-you-please from-his-eyes even good Ancus has-left,

qui melior multis quam tu fuit, improbe, rebus.

who better in-many than you was, shameless-one, things.

inde alii multi reges rerumque potentes

then other many kings and-of-affairs masters

occiderunt, magnis qui gentibus imperitarunt.

have-fallen, over-great who nations have-ruled.

ille quoque ipse, viam qui quondam per mare magnum

he also himself, a-road who once over the-sea great

1030 stravit iterque dedit legionibus ire per altum

paved and-a-way gave to-legions to-go over the-deep

ac pedibus salsas docuit super ire lucunas

and on-foot the-salt taught over to-go pools

et contempsit equis insultans murmura ponti,

and scorned with-horses trampling the-roars of-the-sea,

lumine adempto animam moribundo corpore fudit.

the-light taken-away his-spirit from-a-dying body poured-out.

Scipiadās, belli fulmen, Carthaginis horror,

the-son-of-the-Scipios, of-war the-thunderbolt, of-Carthage the-terror,

ossa dedit terrae proinde ac famul infimus esset.

1035

his-bones gave to-earth just as a-servant lowest he-were.

adde repertores doctrinarum atque leporum,

add the-finders of-doctrines and of-graces,

adde Heliconiadum comites; quorum unus Homerus

add of-the-Heliconian-Muses the-companions; of-whom one Homer

sceptra potitus eadem aliis sopitus quietest.

the-scepter having-won the-same as-others lulled is-at-rest.

denique Democritum post quam matura vetustas

finally Democritus after that ripe old-age

admonuit memores motus languescere mentis,

1040

warned the-remembering motions are-failing of-mind,

sponte sua leto caput obviu optulit ipse.

of-accord his-own to-death his-head going-to-meet-it offered himself.

ipse Epicurus obit decurso lumine vitae,

himself Epicurus died run-out the-light of-life,

qui genus humanum ingenio superavit et omnis

who the-race human in-genius surpassed and all

restinxit stellas exortus ut aetherius sol.

quenched the-stars risen as the-ethereal sun.

tu vero dubitabis et indignabere obire?

1045

you indeed will-you-hesitate and will-you-chafe to-die?

mortua cui vita est prope iam vivo atque videnti,

dead to-whom life is almost now alive and seeing,

qui somno partem maiorem conteris aevi,

who in-sleep the-part greater you-wear-away of-life,

et vigilans stertis nec somnia cernere cessas

and waking you-snore nor dreams to-see do-you-cease

sollicitamque geris cassa formidine mentem

and-a-troubled you-carry with-empty dread mind

1050 nec reperire potes tibi quid sit saepe mali, cum
 nor to-find can-you for-yourself what is often of-ill, when
 ebrius urgeris multis miser undique curis
 drunk you-are-pressed by-many wretched everywhere cares
 atque animo incerto fluitans errore vagaris.'
 and with-a-mind unsure wavering in-error you-stray.'

III.28 • THE MAN WHO FLEES HIMSELF

If men could see the weight that lies on the mind and where it comes from, they would not live as they do, forever changing place as though they could put down a load. A man leaves his great house, tired of home, and comes straight back; he drives to his villa as if to a fire, yawns at the door, and hurries back to town. Each flees himself and cannot; if he saw why, he would drop all else to learn the nature of things.

Si possent homines, proinde ac sentire videntur
 If could men, just as to-feel they-seem
 pondus inesse animo, quod se gravitate fatiget,
 a-weight is-within in-the-mind, which them with-its-heaviness wearies,
 1055 e quibus id fiat causis quoque noscere et unde
 from what that comes causes also to-know and whence
 tanta mali tam quam moles in pectore constet,
 so-great of-ill so as a-mass in the-breast stands,
 haut ita vitam agerent, ut nunc plerumque videmus
 not so life would-they-lead, as now mostly we-see
 quid sibi quisque velit nescire et quaerere semper,
 what for-himself each wants not-to-know and to-seek always,
 commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit.
 to-change place, as-if the-burden to-lay-down he-could.

exit saepe foras magnis ex aedibus ille, 1060
goes-out often abroad his-great from house that-man,
 esse domi quem pertaesumst, subitoque revertit,
to-be at-home whom has-wearied, and-suddenly he-returns,
 quippe foris nihilo melius qui sentiat esse.
for abroad by-nothing better who feels to-be.
 currit agens mannos ad villam praecipitanter
he-runs driving his-ponies to his-country-house headlong
 auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans;
help to-roofs as-if to-bring burning pressing;
 oscitat extemplo, tetigit cum limina villae, 1065
he-yawns at-once, he-has-touched when the-threshold of-the-house,
 aut abit in somnum gravis atque oblivia quaerit,
or he-goes-off into sleep heavy and forgettings he-seeks,
 aut etiam properans urbem petit atque revisit.
or even hurrying the-city he-makes-for and revisits.
 hoc se quisque modo fugit, at quem scilicet, ut fit,
in-this himself each way flees, yet whom surely, as happens,
 effugere haut potis est: ingratus haeret et odit
to-escape not able is-he: more-unwillingly he-clings and hates
 propterea, morbi quia causam non tenet aeger; 1070
therefore, of-bis-sickness because the-cause not grasps the-sick-man;
 quam bene si videat, iam rebus quisque relictis
which well if he-saw, now things each left
 naturam primum studeat cognoscere rerum,
the-nature first would-strive to-learn of-things,
 temporis aeterni quoniam, non unius horae,
of-time everlasting since, not of-one hour,
 ambigitur status, in quo sit mortalibus omnis
is-in-question the-state, in which is for-mortals all

1075 aetas, post mortem quae restat cumque manendo.
the-age, after death which remains soever in-abiding.

III.29 · THE CRAVING FOR LIFE

Why tremble in doubtful perils? The end of life stands close for everyone. We turn always in the same place, and living forges no new pleasure: what we lack seems to surpass everything until we have it, and then we crave the next thing. No length of life takes anything off the time we are dead. Outlive as many generations as you please: death will be everlasting all the same.

Denique tanto opere in dubiis trepidare periclis
Finally in-so-great a-measure in doubtful to-tremble perils

quae mala nos subigit vitae tanta cupido?
what evil us drives of-life so-great a-craving?

certe equidem finis vitae mortalibus adstat
surely indeed an-end of-life for-mortals stands-at-hand

nec devitari letum pote, quin obeamus.
nor to-be-shunned death can, but-that we-meet-it.

1080 praeterea versamur ibidem atque insumus usque
besides we-turn in-the-same-place and we-are-in-it right-on

nec nova vivendo procuditur ulla voluptas;
nor new by-living is-forged any pleasure;

sed dum abest quod avemus, id exsuperare videtur
but while is-away what we-crave, that to-surpass seems

cetera; post aliud, cum contigit illud, avemus
the-rest; afterward another, when has-come that, we-crave

et sitis aequa tenet vitae semper hiantis.
and a-thirst equal holds of-life always gaping.

1085 posteraque in dubiis fortunam quam vehat aetas,
and-the-coming in doubt-is fortune what brings age,

quidve ferat nobis casus quive exitus instet.

or-what brings to-us chance or-what end is-at-hand.

nec prorsum vitam ducendo demimus hilum

nor at-all life by-prolonging do-we-take a-jot

tempore de mortis nec delibare valemus,

the-time from of-death nor to-nibble are-we-able,

quo minus esse diu possimus forte preempti.

whereby the-less to-be long we-could perchance destroyed.

proinde licet quod vis vivendo condere saecula,

therefore you-may what you-will by-living to-bury generations,

mors aeterna tamen nihilo minus illa manebit,

death everlasting yet by-nothing less that will-await,

nec minus ille diu iam non erit, ex hodierno

and-not less that-man long now not will-be, from today's

lumine qui finem vitae fecit, et ille,

light who an-end of-life has-made, and that-man,

mensibus atque annis qui multis occidit ante.

by-months and years who many fell before.

1090

