

Episode One Hundred Thirty-Five - The Letter to Menoecus 02 - On The Nature of the Gods

Post by "Joshua" of August 14, 2022 at 12:14 AM

Quote

That laughter had a philosophical point: once you take seriously the claim that God's providence extends to the fall of a sparrow and the number of hairs on your head, there is virtually no limit, from the agitated dust motes in a beam of sunlight to the planetary conjunctions that are occurring in the heavens above. "O Mercury," Sofia says pityingly. "You have a lot to do."

Sofia grasps that it would take billions of tongues to describe all that must happen even in a single moment in a tiny village in the Campagna. At this rate, no one could envy poor Jove. But then Mercury admits that the whole thing does not work that way: there is no artificer god standing outside the universe, barking commands, meting out rewards and punishments, determining everything. The whole idea is absurd. There is an order in the universe, but it is one built into the nature of things, into the matter that composes everything, from stars to men to bedbugs. Nature is not an abstract capacity, but a generative mother, bringing forth everything that exists. We have, in other words, entered the Lucretian universe.

-Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve*