

How Would Epicurus Analyze The Faulkner Quotation: "Between Grief And Nothing, I'll Take Grief"

Post by "Don" of September 14, 2024 at 9:31 PM

...when she became not then half of memory became not and if I become not then all of remembering will cease to be.—Yes, he thought, between grief and nothing I will take grief.

Harry Wilbourne, in (Ch. 9) "Wild Palms"; p. 324 (Faulkner's italics)

The full context appears to be about forgetting someone you care about. The grief is better than the nothing, than the absence of the person's memory. I could easily think of contexts that Epicurus might lean toward that sentiment.

[U213]

Plutarch, That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible, 28, p. 1105D: If then, "the memory of a dead friend is pleasant on every count" as Epicurus said, we need no more to make us see the great delight that they renounce when, although they suppose that they can receive and capture the apparitions and likenesses of dead companions {in dreams?} - images that have neither mind nor feeling - they do not think they will ever again meet those friends themselves, or ever again see a dear father or dear mother or perhaps a gentle wife, and have not even the hope of such company.

Cf. Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 63.7: Thinking of departed friends is to me something sweet and mellow.