

Fear and/or grief concerning the death of others

Post by “Adrastus” of July 28, 2025 at 5:41 AM

In the *Moral Letters to Lucilius*, which is a Stoic writing, they quote our Metrodorus of Lampsacus directly:

"There is certain pleasure akin to sadness."

I'll try to give some commentary

Given the [rest of the context of the letter](#), he seems to be talking about the loss of a loved one to death; and the author appears very indignant with Metrodorus' claim about finding pleasure in sadness, especially of the death of a loved one.

I'm not sure we know Metrodorus' full context in uttering this, but I do not doubt that there can be a mixing of pleasure and sadness in other pains as well as in the death of a loved one, when one's view of death is not colored by a sense of injustice at the nature of death itself rather than the purview of other humans. Vatican Saying 31, for me at least, conjures up this image of life and death that is inherently precarious and that we can do what we can within reason, but we cannot stop death should it descend on us.

"It is possible to provide security against other afflictions, but as far as death is concerned, we men all live in a city without walls" - VC 31

The Stoic writer of this *Letter to Lucilius* conjures up the image of one's own child on the funeral pyre, which to me is a form of polemic and pressing Metrodorus's claim to a breaking point. He also mentions the notion that Epicureans (perhaps?) may forget their loved ones and go about their lives never thinking of the dead, which doesn't appear to be accurate from the quotes elsewhere in this thread. I don't think Metrodorus' observation breaks though. I have felt a mixing of pain and pleasure in deaths of loved ones when I allowed myself to feel anything I was going to feel about their death without listening to appeals from virtue from inner judgements or caring about outer judgements. I also firmly believe that in embodying the Epicurean mindset (or the closest we may yet get to it), the shared experience of living pleasant experiences; and the cultivating of deeply pleasant relationships with others; and the further contemplation of them in our memories; that in these and other ways pleasure itself is the teleological goal of life. This teleological guide and goal of Pleasure is indeed salvific in that it soothes the pains of life, not by avoiding the realities of death; but in the earnestness with which we live and die.