

# Sunday February 22, 2026 - Zoom Meeting - Lucretius Book Review - Starting Book One Line 174

Post by “Joshua” of February 22, 2026 at 1:07 PM

## Quote

Trace the line of life backwards, and see it approaching more and more to what we call the purely physical condition. We come at length to those organisms which I have compared to drops of oil suspended in a mixture of alcohol and water. We reach the *protogenes* of [Haeckel](#), in which we have 'a type distinguishable from a fragment of albumen only by its finely granular character.' Can we pause here? We break a magnet and find two poles in each of its fragments. We continue the process of breaking, but, however small the parts, each carries with it, though enfeebled, the polarity of the whole. And when we can break no longer, we prolong the intellectual vision to the polar molecules. Are we not urged to do something similar in the case of life? **Is there not a temptation to close to some extent with Lucretius, when he affirms that 'nature is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods?'** or with [Bruno](#), when he declares that Matter is not 'that mere empty capacity which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb?' Believing as I do in the continuity of Nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intellectual necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial Life.

-John Tyndall, [Belfast Address](#), August 1874