

Benefits of Memorizing and Remembering Specific Epicurean Verse

Post by “Kalosyni” of April 4, 2024 at 11:57 AM

In last night's Zoom, [Joshua](#) mentioned that he had memorized the opening section of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura, on Venus, and recalled it to mind when at work to cheer himself up during dull moments (hopefully I am correctly recalling what you said Joshua). I am wondering which translation you use?

Thinking that we could use this thread for people to post about any specific verses that they like to use (recall) on a regular basis.

Post by “Joshua” of April 4, 2024 at 3:08 PM

I memorized it in Latin, and [Latin Per Diem](#) on YouTube is a great place to start. I do NOT read Latin. I can read this particular short section of this one text in Latin because I've worked on it, just like your average Catholic in the days before Vatican II could read the Nicene creed in Latin--engaged repetition and familiarity over time lends itself to understanding.

However, memorizing English texts is also helpful; in college I spent a good deal of time committing literature to memory, so that 15 years later I can still recall several pages of Tennyson, Keats, Frost, Burns and Shakespeare, among others. If you think about the hours and hours of song lyrics that most dedicated listeners can call upon, 75 lines of Lucretius is small potatoes, yet very rewarding.

My favorite verse translation is Rolfe Humphries. I'm less picky when it comes to prose.

Post by “Don” of April 4, 2024 at 3:15 PM

For me, it's the Tetrpharmakos in ancient Greek.

Post by “Joshua” of April 4, 2024 at 5:45 PM

I have used that in English as well. I once locked myself out of my apartment wearing shorts and flip flops in chilly weather, and had to walk fourteen blocks at night to my sister's place to get the spare key. I spent the time explaining the Tetrpharmakos to an imaginary audience in my head, and passed the time pleasantly enough.

Post by “Bryan” of April 4, 2024 at 6:26 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

I memorized it in Latin, and Latin Per Diem on YouTube is a great place to start.

I don't think I have seen this before, but I've watched few now and he does a great job.

[Quote from Joshua](#)

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I have always felt the same way.

Post by “Onenski” of April 6, 2024 at 3:01 PM

Dear, [Kalosyni](#), in my case, I've been memorizing it, naturally, in Spanish. I like these parts from the first verses of Book I:

Quote

te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli adventumque tuum (I, 5-6)

(Eng.) Before thee, Goddess, and thy coming on, Flee stormy wind and massy cloud away

(Span.) De ti diosa, huyen los vientos, tu ahuyentas los nubarrones

Quote

Nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace iuvare mortalis (I, 31-2)

(Eng.) For thou alone hast power with public peace To aid mortality.

(Span.) Pues sola eres tú la que puede de paz serena a los hombres alivio mandar

I like to repeat them, because I think Lucretius may be talking not only about Venus, but, in a free interpretation, about pleasure itself.

When pleasure is present, the stormy clouds of pain and suffering go away (like in verses 5-6). And when we are in trouble, the only thing that can help us is pleasure (only pleasure brings peace to us, mortals, like in verses 31-2).

Post by “Titus” of April 6, 2024 at 4:41 PM

I especially like the new find of Herculanean scripture: "They have nothing to say about pleasure." This is a simple but very powerful statement that unveils the emptiness of every argument that isn't rooted in our fundamental nature (the opponents would disagree, but it's still hard to disagree with something elemental like searching for positive emotions).

Post by “Cassius” of April 6, 2024 at 6:02 PM

[Quote from Titus](#)

"They have nothing to say about pleasure."

We might have to steal that line and feature it in our podcast tomorrow, which we are recording with [Don](#) ! thanks for the reminder!

Post by “Don” of April 6, 2024 at 9:37 PM

<https://www.npr.org/2024/02/10/1230604997/a-team-of-students-deciphered-a-2000-year-old-papyrus-scroll-with-some-help-from>

LUKE FARRITOR: (Reading) They have nothing to say about pleasure, either in general or in the particular, when it is a question of definition.

Post by “Titus” of April 9, 2024 at 4:17 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Titus](#)

"They have nothing to say about pleasure."

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Did you manage to discuss the line?

Post by “Cassius” of April 9, 2024 at 5:46 PM

No! We forgot! But I will put it in line for this next episode!