

What "Live Unknown" means to me (Lathe Biosas)

Post by "Joshua" of February 10, 2021 at 6:52 PM

I somehow missed this thread in May, but I'm glad to have caught it now.

It's true that we don't have much context here *from an Epicurean point of view*, but in other respects the context is quite rich—it involves the whole history of Greek culture.

The belief among these ancients seems to have been that the underworld was not a place of torture, except in a few notable and extreme cases, but a place of forgottenness. Achilles, Pericles, Homer—a handful of the select and renowned have gone to the Happy Isles, and their names will echo until the world ends. But the common lot of humanity is to wander forever listlessly as shades ("pale in wondrous wise" to quote a translation of Lucretius in reference to Ennius); no name, no face, no memory. Utterly forgotten. The *Damnatio Memoriae* was not only a punishment for tyrants brought low. It was, to the Greeks, the sad fate of almost all of us.

How happy, then, to be an Epicurean! Death holds no terror; no, not even the subtle anguish of living on without really living; of *being*, yet without Being. Yes, most of us will be forgotten, and not so long after our deaths.

But we will not care, because we will not exist.