

Social Media - Facebook

Post by “Joshua” of September 29, 2022 at 11:35 AM

Stephen Greenblatt starts us off, and not too badly, in the Preface of *The Swerve*.

Quote

“The stuff of the universe, Lucretius proposed, is an infinite number of atoms moving randomly through space, like dust motes in a sunbeam, colliding, hooking together, forming complex structures, breaking apart again, in a ceaseless process of creation and destruction... There is no master plan, no divine architect, no intelligent design. All things, including the species to which you belong, have evolved over vast stretches of time... In a universe so constituted, Lucretius argued, there is no reason to think that the earth or its inhabitants occupy a central place, no reason to set humans apart from all other animals, no hope of bribing or appeasing the gods, no place for religious fanaticism, no call for ascetic self-denial, no justification for dreams of limitless power or perfect security, no rationale for wars of conquest or self-aggrandizement, no possibility of triumphing over nature, no escape from the constant making and unmaking of [physical] forms... What human beings can and should do, he wrote, is to conquer their fears, accept the fact that they themselves and all the things they encounter are transitory, and embrace the beauty and the pleasure of the world.”