

Piero de Cosimo's Lucretius - Inspired Paintings

Post by “Joshua” of July 27, 2023 at 1:50 PM

Good questions! I usually quote Johnston because it's easy to search for key-words and copy/paste. Perseus is a great resource but the chunks of text are often too small and it can be difficult to select text on mobile (although there are workarounds).

I also find Stallings to be a bit distracting, but some people are drawn to her style. My favorite verse translation is Rolfe Humphries, but he admits in his introduction that his focus was to capture the flavor of the poem rather than a literal rendition, which I think he succeeds at.

My best general advice for reading Lucretius is that contextualizing the poem can stave off boredom--we're so familiar with the idea that the earth is extremely old, that the universe is incomprehensibly large and ancient, that matter is made of little particles, that other worlds might potentially harbor life, and that nature is capable of sustaining a vacuum that reading about them in an old poem can seem rather dull. But if keep in mind how revolutionary these ideas really were, I think we can still capture a little bit of the magic.