

# The Vessel Analogy At The Opening of Lucretius Book Six

Post by “Don” of September 13, 2023 at 9:44 PM

[Godfrey](#) 's reference cites Epicurus fragment 396:

[ U396 ]

Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, VI.9:

For when he saw that whatever men’s needs demanded,  
so far as may be, to keep their lives in safety,  
was there at hand already for their use,  
that men had all they could want in the way of wealth  
and honor and praise, and pride in successful children;  
Yet, at home each was perpetually disquieted  
and the mind was enslaved by all its bitter complaints;  
He understood that the trouble was in the container  
and because of some flaw in it, everything would go bad  
no matter how many excellent things were put into it:  
Partly because there were holes and things flowed through them  
and there was no possibility of filling it up,  
And partly because what did get in was spoiled,  
so to speak, by the nauseous taste there was inside.  
The truth was what he used to purify hearts with  
and he set a limit to fear as to desire;  
He explained what it is that all of us really want  
and showed us the way along a little path

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which makes it possible for us to go straight there.

Cf. Horace, Epistles, 1.2.54:

Jars left contaminated will carry their taint to any contents whatsoever.

Spurn all delights; any joy that is purchased with pain will be harmful.

Greed is forever unsatisfied – vow to keep definite limits.