

# Horace - Ode III, 29 "This Aegean Storm"

Post by "Cassius" of June 12, 2015 at 8:08 AM

I've been looking for a more understandable version of Horace's Ode III,29, where he discusses "fortune" and how to deal with it in Epicurean terms. I now see Peter St. Andre has done a version. Here's a key part and the full translation is at the link:

Joyous and self-possessed is the life of he  
Who each day can say: "I have lived — tomorrow  
The Father may fill the sky with black storm-clouds  
Or purest sunshine,

Yet even so he can't upset what is past:  
He can't complete or alter or make undone  
Whatever the fleeting hour has once produced."  
For haughty Fortune,

Full poem: [https://stpeter.im/writings/fire/horace3\\_29.html](https://stpeter.im/writings/fire/horace3_29.html)

"This Aegean Storm"

(Horace, Odes III.29)

translated by Peter Saint-Andre

Maecenas, descended from Etruscan kings,  
Smooth wine not yet opened and blooming roses  
And fragrant hair oils have long been ready  
For you at my house.  
Break free from all hindrances: do not always  
Contemplate the humid Tibur, Aefula's  
Sloping fields, and the ridge of that parricide  
Old Telegonus;  
Forsaking loathsome wealth and sky-high power,  
Shaking your head at the smoke and wealth and noise  
Of decadent Rome, I urge you to leave: for  
Change is pleasant,  
And a simple dinner at a peasant's small  
Hut all lacking in fine purple tapestries  
Loosens the troubled brow of the richest man.  
For see already:  
Andromeda's shining father shows forth his

Secret fire; Procyon and the savage star  
Of Leo rage, and the sun brings back the days,  
Drought-filled, without rain;  
The shepherd with his sluggish flock seeks out shade  
And stream and the wild brambles of savage  
Silvanus, and the quiet banks lack even  
An unsteady breeze.  
Yet you worry about the health of the State;  
Troubled over the City, you're anxious about  
The Seres and Cyrus-ruled Bactra and the  
Fractious Scythians.  
Wisely the god suppresses the outcome of  
Future times in darkest night, and he laughs if  
Mortals are disturbed by that which is beyond  
Their proper orbit.  
Take care to deal clearly with what's before you —  
The rest is carried along like a river:  
Now gliding calmly within its channel down  
To the Tuscan sea,  
Now churning gnawed rocks and uprooted tree-trunks  
And cattle and homes until the surrounding  
Woods and hills resound with noise when the fierce flood  
Roils the placid stream.  
Joyous and self-possessed is the life of he  
Who each day can say: "I have lived — tomorrow  
The Father may fill the sky with black storm-clouds  
Or purest sunshine,  
Yet even so he can't upset what is past:  
He can't complete or alter or make undone  
Whatever the fleeting hour has once produced."  
For haughty Fortune,  
So pleased with her cruel affairs and stubbornly  
Playing her games, keeps shifting around all her  
Dubious honors, smiling now on me and  
Now on someone else.  
I praise her while she stays. Yet when she spreads her  
Her too-swift wings, I give back what she's granted  
And wrapped in my strength I seek out poverty,  
Honest and bereft.  
It's not my way, when the southern gales roar out  
Of Africa, to make abject prayers and  
Votive offerings to strike a bargain lest  
My exotic wares

Should add to the wealth of the rapacious sea;  
It's then that the gods and a favoring breeze  
Carry me and my two-oared skiff safely through  
This Aegean storm.

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