

Reverence and Awe In Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Don" of October 25, 2020 at 8:01 PM

I have additional thoughts but I wanted to share a time when I can say unequivocally that I experienced awe:

On a family trip to California, we had spent the early afternoon at the giant redwoods south of Yosemite Valley. We drove north and went through one of the tunnels and pulled off to take in the view. Little did I know this was the famous [Tunnel View](#). My first view of Yosemite Valley literally took my breath away! I literally - and I mean this - the view was so awesome (in its original sense) and expansive that I didn't feel I could get enough air into my lungs. There was just so much space to take in, I was so tiny in relation to this expanse. All I could do was stare, slack-jawed.

That remains an archetypal, visceral experience of awe for me. It was a precognitive experience. I had no words at the time describe. I remember saying at the time, "Now, I know what breathtaking actually means!"

[Edit: In rereading that, "pre-rational" might be better than precognitive. It was a direct sensory - proleptic? - experience that bypassed my ability at first to put it into words.]