

Poem - Hermarchus

Post by "Joshua" of July 3, 2019 at 10:12 AM

Hermarchus

Seeing the bust of Epicurus

Ho! I--Master, I held from grief. We laid
Your body to its rest beneath the sky
And sun. What then to grieve? Thy atoms fly
Scattered, thy soul at more than peace which said
"Death is nothing"--but here! Thy sculptured head
Is wreathed with leaves of bay. Ah, how can I
Fall to grief? Your students with laughing cries
Honor you--your 'membrance blesses their bread.
Should scholarchs fail, and birds alone here warble--
Should vine and olive go to sage and sorrel--
Still aged men would carve your like in marble
And shining youth crown thy head with laurel.
-josh

Post by "Hiram" of July 3, 2019 at 11:09 AM

Love it!

Can I post this on the SoFE page?

Post by “Joshua” of July 3, 2019 at 12:24 PM

Absolutely! I find Hermarchus a fascinating character, and I wish we knew more about him. Wrote this one last night and didn't think much of it, but when I read it this morning I made a few line changes and decided I liked it after all.

Post by “Cassius” of July 3, 2019 at 1:48 PM

Excellent! Josh do you mean "fail to grief" or "fail to grieve" in line 7?

Post by “Joshua” of July 3, 2019 at 4:19 PM

I do mean "FALL to grief". Hermarchus, despite his protest in Line 1, has been grieving already internally. Maybe he feels the triple burden--the death of Epicurus, the responsibility for the school, the care of the children of Metrodorus--maybe he feels it's all too much. But when he sees that one of the young scholars has placed a wreath of laurel onto the cold marble bust, and that out of reverence and joy rather than grief, he is overcome by an emotion of relief and catharsis. Even should he fail in his task (as scholar), he now understands that the master's teachings will endure.

Post by “Hiram” of July 5, 2019 at 12:09 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

Absolutely! I find Hermarchus a fascinating character, and I wish we knew more about him. Wrote this one last night and didn't think much of it, but when I read it this morning I made a few line changes and decided I liked it after all.

He was the first convert to Epicureanism in Mytilene, and was there to wrap Epicurus' body in a blanket upon his death. Not much is known about him, but I did write [an essay on the ethics of](#)

[vegetarianism](#) based on him.

[http://http://societyofepicurus.com/hermarchus-on-...ent-of-animals/](http://societyofepicurus.com/hermarchus-on-...ent-of-animals/)

Post by “Joshua” of July 5, 2019 at 1:18 PM

Thanks, Hiram. That looks like a good read, I'll look at it more closely later today. I was myself a vegetarian for 14 months (basically up until I went over-the-road), and still have sympathies there. That's mostly an objection to how we *raise* them rather than how we *kill* them, pain being an evil and all. My parents have started raising animals again, on a small hobby farm; and I have always supported hunting and fishing. (I don't do either...purely out of laziness and to avoid the mess!)