

Sunday, December 7 - Zoom Meeting - 12:30 PM - Topic: Session Two Lucretius Book Review - Lines 29- 102

Post by “Cassius” of December 5, 2025 at 1:19 PM

This week we will continue further into Lucretius starting at [line 29](#) and we'll go as far as line 102 if we get there:

1-29

Bring it to pass that meantime the wild works of warfare may be lulled to sleep over all seas and lands. For thou only canst bless mortal men with quiet peace, since 'tis Mavors, the lord of hosts, who guides the wild works of war, and he upon thy lap oft flings himself back, conquered by the eternal wound of love; and then pillowing his shapely neck upon thee and looking up he feeds with love his greedy eyes, gazing wistfully towards thee, while, as he lies back, his breath hangs upon thy lips. Do thou, goddess, as he leans resting on thy sacred limbs, bend to embrace him and pour forth sweet petition from thy lips, seeking, great lady, gentle peace for the Romans. For neither can we in our country's time of trouble set to our task with mind undistressed, nor amid such doings can Memmius's noble son fail the fortunes of the state. For it must needs be that all the nature of the gods enjoys life everlasting in perfect peace, sundered and separated far away from our world. For free from all grief, free from danger, mighty in its own resources, never lacking aught of us, it is not won by virtuous service nor touched by wrath.

1-50

For the rest, do thou (Memmius), lend empty ears and a keen mind, severed from cares, to true philosophy, lest, before they are understood, you should leave aside in disdain my gifts set forth for you with unflagging zeal. For of the most high law of the heaven and the gods I will set out to tell you, and I will reveal the first-beginnings of things, from which nature creates all things, and increases and fosters them, and into which nature too dissolves them again at their perishing: these in rendering our account it is our wont to call matter or the creative bodies of things, and to name them the seeds of things, and again to term them the first-bodies, since from them first all things have their being.

1-62

When the life of man lay foul to see and grovelling upon the earth, crushed by the weight of religion, which showed her face from the realms of heaven, lowering upon mortals with dreadful mien, 'twas a man of Greece who dared first to raise his mortal eyes to meet her, and first to stand forth to meet her: him neither the stories of the gods nor thunderbolts checked, nor the sky with its revengeful roar, but all the more spurred the eager daring of his mind to yearn to be the first to burst through the close-set bolts upon the doors of nature. And so it was that the lively force of his mind won its way, and he passed on far beyond the fiery walls of the world, and in mind and spirit traversed the boundless whole; whence in victory he brings us tidings what can come to be and what cannot, yea and in what way each thing has its power limited, and its deepset boundary-stone. And so religion in revenge is cast beneath men's feet and trampled, and victory raises us to heaven.

1-80

Herein I have one fear, lest perchance you think that you are starting on the principles of some unholy reasoning, and setting foot upon the path of sin. Nay, but on the other hand, again and again our foe, religion, has given birth to deeds sinful and unholy. Even as at Aulis the chosen chieftains of the Danai, the first of all the host, foully stained with the blood of Iphianassa the altar of the Virgin of the Cross-Roads. For as soon as the band braided about her virgin locks streamed from her either cheek in equal lengths, as soon as she saw her sorrowing sire stand at the altar's side, and near him the attendants hiding their knives, and her countrymen shedding tears at the sight of her, tongue-tied with terror, sinking on her knees she fell to earth. Nor could it avail the luckless maid at such a time that she first had given the name of father to the king. For seized by men's hands, all trembling was she led to the altars, not that, when the ancient rite of sacrifice was fulfilled, she might be escorted by the clear cry of 'Hymen', but in the very moment of marriage, a pure victim she might foully fall, sorrowing beneath a father's slaughtering stroke, that a happy and hallowed starting might be granted to the fleet. Such evil deeds could religion prompt.

Post by "Cassius" of December 7, 2025 at 1:41 PM

Here's a summary of the meeting. It's not edited so there could be mistakes!

The Western Hemisphere EpicureanFriends group held their meeting on December 7th, 2025, focusing on Lucretius's "De Rerum Natura," specifically the hymn to Venus and early sections of Book 1.

Main Discussion Topics:

Lucretius's Use of Religious Language

The group extensively debated why Lucretius invokes Venus and other gods while promoting Epicurean philosophy that views gods as uninvolved in human affairs. Key perspectives included:

- Raphael argued these were poetic personifications of natural forces that educated Romans would understand allegorically
- Dave expressed skepticism about this interpretation, viewing it as inconsistent with Epicurean thought
- Robert suggested the language was culturally absorbed and used figuratively, similar to modern references
- Patrikios noted the importance of patron relationships and cultural context
- Kalosyni emphasized how poets needed patrons and had to appeal to their audience

Philosophical Context

The discussion covered how Lucretius used flexible language strategies to make Epicurean ideas accessible to broader audiences, including references to his later statement allowing certain uses of god names while rejecting superstitious fear.

Epicurean Spirituality

Patrikios shared insights about Epicurean theology focusing on contemplation and divine assimilation through meditation rather than superstition. The group explored how this differed from Stoicism and traditional religion.

Famous Passage Analysis

They examined the revolutionary section where Lucretius presents Epicurus challenging religion and exploring nature through reason, noting the controversial line about trampling religion underfoot.

The meeting concluded with plans to continue their systematic reading of the text, emphasizing how these foundational questions about interpreting religious language are crucial for understanding Lucretius's naturalistic philosophy.