

# **Sunday, January 4, 2026 - Zoom Meeting - 12:30 PM - Topic: Lucretius Book Review - Book One Starting Line 102**

## **Post by “Cassius” of January 3, 2026 at 2:14 PM**

This week we resume our focus on Lucretius starting at line [102 of Book One](#).

Quote from Lucretius Book One (Bailey)

You yourself sometime vanquished by the fearsome threats of the seer’s sayings, will seek to desert from us. Nay indeed, how many a dream may they even now conjure up before you, which might avail to overthrow your schemes of life, and confound in fear all your fortunes.

And justly so: for if men could see that there is a fixed limit to their sorrows, then with some reason they might have the strength to stand against the scruples of religion, and the threats of seers. As it is there is no means, no power to withstand, since everlasting is the punishment they must fear in death. For they know not what is the nature of the soul, whether it is born or else finds its way into them at their birth, and again whether it is torn apart by death and perishes with us, or goes to see the shades of Orcus and his waste pools, or by the gods’ will implants itself in other breasts, as our own Ennius sang, who first bore down from pleasant Helicon the wreath of deathless leaves, to win bright fame among the tribes of Italian peoples. And yet despite this, Ennius sets forth in the discourse of his immortal verse that there is besides a realm of Acheron, where neither our souls nor bodies endure, but as it were images pale in wondrous wise; and thence he tells that the form of Homer, ever green and fresh, rose to him, and began to shed salt tears, and in converse to reveal the nature of things.

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## **Post by “Bryan” of January 3, 2026 at 4:45 PM**

Although the section is now lost, Ennius seems to have begun the Annals with a recollection of one of his dreams:

“...So Ennius asserts at the beginning of his Annals, where he says that he had seen Homer in a dream saying that he had once been a peacock and from that his soul was transferred into him,

according to the dictates of the philosopher Pythagoras..."  
(Cornutus, Commentary on Persius, 6·10·2)

"...[Ennius] wrote at the beginning of his Annals that he was advised in a dream that, according to the doctrine of Pythagoras, Homer's soul had come into his body..."  
(Porphyry, Commentary on Horace, 2·1·51)

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## Post by "Bryan" of January 3, 2026 at 10:17 PM

### Quote

Lucretius 1.122:

"...in which neither our **souls** nor **bodies** endure -- but certain **images**, faded in strange ways."

For the general cultural idea of the existence of one's image (eidōlon) separate from the decayed body as well as the transferred soul, consider the Nekyia (*Νεκυία*, "rite of the dead," i.e., *Odyssey*, Book 11), where Odysseus – recounting his Underworld visit to Alcinous, king of the Phaeacians – sees Heracles' **image in Hades**, while "Heracles himself" is with the gods:

"...I became aware of the mighty Heracles - his phantom: for he himself among the immortal gods takes his joy in the feast, and has for a wife Hebe of the beautiful ankles, daughter of great Zeus and of Hera of the golden sandals – **about [his phantom] rose a clamor from the dead, as of birds flying everywhere in terror, and he like dark night, with his bow uncased and with arrow on the strong, glared about him terribly, like one about to shoot...**" (Homer, *Odyssey*, 11·601)

Consider Aristotle:

"...when something has caused motion in water or air, and such motion propagates itself to a certain point – even though the initial cause of movement is not present: in the same way, it may well be that a movement and a consequent sense-perception should reach sleeping souls from the objects from which Democritus represents as 'films/images' (εἶδωλα) and 'emanations' (ἀπορροαί). Such movements, in whatever way they arrive, should be more perceptible at night [than by day], because when proceeding in the daytime they are more liable to dissolution (since at night the air is less disturbed, because there is less wind at that time). These films would be perceived within the body while sleeping – since people are more sensitive even to slight sensory movements when asleep than when awake: it is these movements then that cause mental-impressions (φαντάσματα)."

(On Propheying by Dreams, 464a)

And also Epicurus:

"...[these thoughts] are said [to be] motion-inducing, nor would we assert these few [thoughts alone are motion-inducing]: if indeed <sup>[1]</sup> the greatest part [of our thoughts come in] by penetration [of films] from the surrounding [environment] - <sup>[2]</sup> the rest [of our thoughts] follow along with the whole appearance-based [way of thinking]..."

...ῥηθέναι κινητικά· οὐδ' ὀλίγα ταῦτα φήσομεν εἰ αἱ, τὰ πλεῖστα κατ' ἐπέσοδον ἐκ τοῦ περι[ι]έχον[το]ς, ἄλλα παντὶ τῶ[ι φα]νταστικῶι παρακ[ο]λουθοῦντα...

[Epicurus, On Nature, Book 34, P.Herc. 1431, column 19 (12)]

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## Post by “Cassius” of January 3, 2026 at 10:58 PM

Great catches Bryan. That's a clear explanation of what was going through the minds of a lot of people - and not just Epicurus. We don't tend to think that way today, but i can certainly see the logic of it. I would not want to bet my life that there is not an element of truth to the concept, even if we might today explain the affects of objects on each other in a different way.

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## Post by “Joshua” of January 4, 2026 at 1:09 PM

Epicurus on the nature of the soul in the [Letter to Herodotus](#);

Quote

[63] Next, referring always to the sensations and the feelings, for in this way you will obtain the most trustworthy ground of belief, you must consider that the soul is a body of fine particles distributed throughout the whole structure, and most resembling wind with a certain admixture of heat, and in some respects like to one of these and in some to the other. There is also the part which is many degrees more advanced even than these in fineness of composition, and for this reason is more capable of feeling in harmony with the rest of the structure as well. Now all this is made manifest by the activities of the soul and the feelings and the readiness of its movements and its processes of thought and by what we lose at the moment of death.

[64] Further, you must grasp that the soul possesses the chief cause of sensation: yet it could not have acquired sensation, unless it were in some way enclosed by the rest of the structure. And this in its turn having afforded the soul this cause of sensation acquires itself too a share in this contingent capacity from the soul. Yet it does not acquire all the capacities which the soul possesses: and therefore when the soul is released from the body, the body no longer has sensation. For it never possessed this power in itself, but used to afford opportunity for it to another existence, brought into being at the same time with itself: and this existence, owing to the power now consummated within itself as a result of motion, used spontaneously to produce for itself the capacity of sensation and then to communicate it to the body as well, in virtue of its contact and correspondence of movement, as I have already said.

[65] Therefore, so long as the soul remains in the body, even though some other part of the body be lost, it will never lose sensation; nay more, whatever portions of the soul may perish too, when that which enclosed it is removed either in whole or in part, if the soul continues to exist at all, it will retain sensation. On the other hand the rest of the structure, though it continues to exist either as a whole or in part, does not retain sensation, if it has once lost that sum of atoms, however small it be, which together goes to produce the nature of the soul. Moreover, if the whole structure is dissolved, the soul is dispersed and no longer has the same powers nor performs its movements, so that it does not possess sensation either.

[66] For it is impossible to imagine it with sensation, if it is not in this organism and cannot effect these movements, when what encloses and surrounds it is no longer the same as the surroundings in which it now exists and performs these movements.

[67] Furthermore, we must clearly comprehend as well, that the incorporeal in the general acceptance of the term is applied to that which could be thought of as such as an independent existence. Now it is impossible to conceive the incorporeal as a separate existence, except the void: and the void can neither act nor be acted upon, but only provides opportunity of motion through itself to bodies. So that those who say that the soul is incorporeal are talking idly. For it would not be able to act or be acted on in any respect, if it were of this nature. But as it is, both these occurrences are clearly distinguished in respect of the soul.

[68] Now if one refers all these reasonings about the soul to the standards of feeling and sensation and remembers what was said at the outset, he will see that they are sufficiently embraced in these general formulae to enable him to work out with certainty on this basis the details of the system as well.

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## Post by “Joshua” of January 4, 2026 at 1:27 PM

And on the the subject of the trickery employed by the priests of pagan antiquity, the following may be of interest:

### Quote

The illusion might begin even before worshippers entered the building, in the form of a machine [[Hero of Alexandria](#)] describes in [Pneumatica](#):

*Temple Doors opened by Fire on an Altar.*

The construction of a small temple such that, on lighting a fire, the doors shall open spontaneously, and shut again when the fire is extinguished. Let the proposed temple stand on a pedestal, ABCD.

-Hero of Alexandria, *Pneumatica*, machine 37

As the priest and congregation approached they would be faced with the huge, closed doors of the temple. Stepping forward, a priest would light a fire on an altar and, as though the god were pleased with the offering, the doors would swing open of their own accord, accompanied by a fanfare of trumpets. Behind the scenes, where only Hero and the priests ever went, a complex series of air- and water-filled tubes connected the altar to large bucket counterweights attached to the temple doors by pulleys. As the fire heated the air it expanded, forcing water in another tube into the buckets, which would then open the doors when there was enough water to weigh them down and set the pulley train in motion. When the fire was extinguished, the air in the pipes cooled and sucked the water back out of the buckets. As the weight in the buckets lessened, so the doors slowly closed under their own weight. It was all just advanced hydraulics, a subject first studied by another Alexandrian, [Ctesibius](#), whose works Hero must have pored over in the library.

*-The Rise and Fall of Alexandria; Birthplace of the Modern World*

by Justin Pollard and Howard Reid

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## Post by “Cassius” of January 9, 2026 at 5:51 PM

Notes from last week:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4888-sunday-january-4-2026-zoom-meeting-12-30-pm-topic-lucretius-book-review-book-one/>

# **Sunday January 4,2026 - Zoom Discussion 12:30 PM EST**

## **- Lucretius Discussion - Book 1:102**

1. Welcome and news / requests for new topics. We'll continue to deal with individual topics as they occur. Just message me and we will set up an agenda each week that allows for new topics.
2. Every session let's try to cover questions like:
  1. Why was this section included?
  2. Why was this section included at this point in the presentation?
  3. What are the major points Lucretius is making?
  4. What are the significant implications of these points?
3. This week we will continue further into Lucretius starting at line 102.
4. Raphael's post with video - consciousness
5. Epicurus differentiated himself from Democritus and said that reality exists on both atomic and emergent levels. Book 25 of On Nature.

### **1-102**

You yourself sometime vanquished by the fearsome threats of the seer's sayings, will seek to desert from us. Nay indeed, how many a dream may they even now conjure up before you, which might avail to overthrow your schemes of life, and confound in fear all your fortunes.

And justly so: for if men could see that there is a fixed limit to their sorrows, then with some reason they might have the strength to stand against the scruples of religion, and the threats of seers. As it is there is no means, no power to withstand, since everlasting is the punishment they must fear in death. For they know not what is the nature of the soul, whether it is born or else finds its way into them at their birth, and again whether it is torn apart by death and perishes with us, or goes to see the shades of Orcus and his waste pools, or by the gods' will implants itself in other breasts, as our own Ennius sang, who first bore down from pleasant Helicon the wreath of deathless leaves, to win bright fame among the tribes of Italian peoples. And yet despite this, Ennius sets forth in the discourse of his immortal verse that there is besides a realm of Acheron, where neither our souls nor bodies endure, but as it were images pale in wondrous wise; and thence he tells that the form of Homer, ever green and fresh, rose to him, and began to shed salt tears, and in converse to reveal the nature of things. Notes: