LATIN SERIES · VOLUME 40

The Nature of Things

Lucretius

De Rerum Natura

The Nature of Things

Part Two: Books IV–VI

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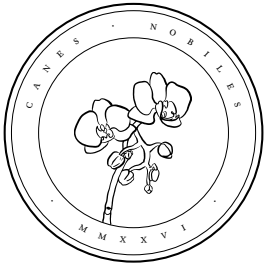
with a word-for-word interlinear English translation

preserving the original word order



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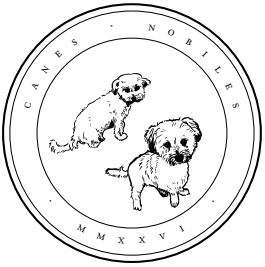

Volume 40 of the Canes Nobiles Latin interlinear texts

The Latin text follows Brieger's text of Lucretius, Leipzig, 1894

Translated and composed with AI, edited by Christopher Hench
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The verses stand in Brieger's order, each with its traditional number, so the numbers run out of sequence where he moves a passage. Verses he brackets as repeated from another place are not printed, and the numbering passes over them; ∗∗∗ marks a gap. The section divisions follow the paragraph marks of the Perseus edition used for Part One, and every English section title is this press's.

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BOOK IV

IV.1 · THE PATHLESS PLACES OF THE MUSES

Lucretius walks the untrodden haunts of the Pierides, glad to drink from fresh springs and to seek a new crown, because he teaches great things, frees minds from the tight knots of religion, and writes bright verse on a dark subject. As doctors smear a cup of wormwood with honey so a child drinks and is healed, he coats his teaching, which seems grim to the untried and repels the crowd, with the Muses' honey to hold Memmius' mind.

Avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante
Pathless of-the-Pierides I-range places by-none before
trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis
trodden sole. it-delights untouched to-approach springs
atque haurire, iuvatque novos decerpere flores
and to-drink, and-it-delights new to-pluck flowers
insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
and-distinguished for-my head to-seek thence crown,
unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae;
whence before for-none have-veiled the-temples the-muses;
primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis
first because great I-teach about matters and tight
religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo,
of-religions the-mind from-the-knots to-free I-press-on,
deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
next because dark about a-matter so luminous I-fashion
carmina, musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.
songs, with-Muses' touching all charm.
id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur:
that too for not from no reason seems:

nam veluti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
for even-as to-children wormwood foul healers
cum dare conantur, prius oras, pocula circum,
when to-give they-try, first the-rims, the-cups around,
contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
they-touch of-honey with-sweet and-yellow liquid,
ut puerorum aetas inprovida ludificetur
so-that of-children the-age unforeseeing may-be-beguiled
labrorum tenus, interea perpotet amarum
of-the-lips as-far-as, meanwhile may-drink-off bitter
absinthi laticem, deceptaque non capiatur,
of-wormwood the-draft, and-deceived not be-caught,
sed potius tali pacto recreata valescat,
but rather by-such a-means restored grow-strong,
sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
so I now, since this reasoning mostly seems
tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
too-gloomy to-be to-whom not it-is handled, and-back
volgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
the-crowd shrinks from it, I-have-wished to-you in-sweet-speaking
carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram
song Pierian the-reasoning to-set-forth our
et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle;
and as-it-were with-Muses' sweet to-touch honey;
si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
if for-you perchance the-mind by-such a-way to-hold
versibus in nostris possem, dum percipis omnem
verses in our I-could, while you-perceive the-whole
naturam rerum ac persentis utilitatem.
nature of-things and feel-through its-usefulness.

IV.2 · THE IMAGES OF THINGS

Having taught what the first-beginnings are and what the mind consists of, Lucretius now turns to the images of things: thin films, to be called a skin or bark, peeled from the outermost surface of bodies, that fly through the air. These terrify us waking and in sleep when we see strange shapes and the dead, so that we must not think souls escape from Acheron, shades flit among the living, or anything of us outlasts death.

Sed quoniam docui cunctarum exordia rerum
But since I-have-taught of-all the-beginnings of-things
qualia sint et quam variis distantia formis
of-what-kind they-are and how with-varied differing forms
sponte sua volitent aeterno percita motu
of-accord their-own they-fly by-everlasting driven motion
quoque modo possit res ex his quaeque creari,
and-in-what way can thing from these each to-be-created,
atque animi quoniam docui natura quid esset
and of-mind since I-have-taught the-nature what it-was
et quibus e rebus cum corpore compta vigeret
and what from things with the-body joined it-thrived
quove modo distracta rediret in ordia prima,
and-in-what way torn-apart it-returned into beginnings first,
nunc agere incipiam tibi, quod vementer ad has res
now to-treat I-shall-begin for-you, what strongly to these matters
attinet, esse ea quae rerum simulacra vocamus:
pertains, to-be those which of-things images we-call:
quae, quasi membranae summo de corpore rerum
which, as-it-were films the-surface from body of-things
dereptae, volitant ultroque citroque per auras,
torn-off, fly both-hither and-thither through the-air,

atque eadem nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
and the-same to-us waking meeting minds
terrificant atque in somnis, cum saepe figuras
terrify and in sleep, when often shapes
contuimur miras simulacraque luce carentum,
we-behold wondrous and-images of-light lacking,
quae nos horrifice languentis saepe sopore
which us dreadfully languishing often in-sleep
excierunt; ne forte animas Acherunte reamur
have-roused; lest perchance souls from-Acheron we-think
effugere aut umbras inter vivos volitare,
to-escape or shades among the-living to-flit,
neve aliquid nostri post mortem posse relinqui,
and-lest anything of-us after death to-be-able to-be-left,
cum corpus simul atque animi natura perempta
when the-body together and of-mind the-nature destroyed
in sua discessum dederint primordia quaeque.
into its-own dissolution have-given first-beginnings each.

* * *

(lacuna)

quin potius noscas rerum simulacra vagari
but rather you-may-know of-things images to-wander
multa modis multis nulla vi cassaque sensu.
many in-ways many with-no force and-empty of-sense.

Dico igitur rerum effigias tenuisque figuras
I-say therefore of-things likenesses and-thin shapes
mittier ab rebus, summo de corpore rerum;
to-be-sent from things, the-surface from body of-things;
quae quasi membranae vel cortex nominitandast;
which as-it-were a-film or bark must-be-named;

quod speciem ac formam similem gerit eius imago,
because the-appearance and form like bears its image,
cuiuscumque cluet de corpore fusa vagari.
of-whatever it-is-said from body poured-off to-wander.
id licet hinc quamvis hebeti cognoscere corde.
this it-is-allowed from-here however with-dull to-learn heart.

IV.3 · FILMS SENT OFF FROM SURFACES

Many things give off bodies we can see: wood gives off smoke and fire heat, cicadas leave their husks in summer, calves shed their cauls at birth, and the snake leaves its slough on the thorns. The awnings stretched over theaters, yellow, red, and dark, tint the whole crowd and the stage below them, so everything must throw thin likenesses off its surface, which fly everywhere though none can be seen singly.

principio quoniam mittunt in rebus apertis
first since send-off among things visible
corpora res multae, partim diffusa solute,
bodies things many, partly diffused loosely,
robora ceu fumum mittunt ignesque vaporem,
oaks as smoke send-off and-fires vapor,
et partim contexta magis condensaque, ut olim
and partly woven more and-condensed, as at-times
cum teretis ponunt tunicas aestate cicadae,
when the-smooth lay-aside tunics in-summer cicadas,
et vituli cum membranas de corpore summo
and calves when the-films from the-body surface
nascentes mittunt, et item cum lubrica serpens
being-born send-off, and likewise when the-slippery serpent
exuit in spinis vestem: nam saepe videmus
puts-off among thorns its-garment: for often we-see

illarum spoliis vepres volitantibus auctas:
with-their spoils the-brambles fluttering enlarged:
quae quoniam fiunt, tenuis quoque debet imago
which-things since they-happen, a-thin also must image
ab rebus mitti, summo de corpore rerum.
from things to-be-sent, the-surface from body of-things.
nam cur illa cadant magis ab rebusque recedant
for why those should-fall more from and-things withdraw
quam quae tenvia sunt, hiscendist nulla potestas:
than those-which thin are, of-speaking-against no power-is:
praesertim cum sint in summis corpora rebus
especially since there-are on the-surface bodies of-things
multa minuta, iaci quae possint ordine eodem
many minute, to-be-thrown which can in-order the-same
quo fuerint et formai servare figuram,
in-which they-were and of-the-form to-keep the-shape,
et multo citius, quanto minus indupediri
and much quicker, by-how-much less to-be-hindered
pauca queunt et quae sunt prima fronte locata.
few can and which are in-the-first front placed.
nam certe iacere ac largiri multa videmus,
for surely to-throw and to-lavish many-things we-see,
non solum ex alto penitusque, ut diximus ante,
not only from the-deep and-deeply, as we-have-said before,
verum de summis ipsum quoque saepe colorem.
but from the-surface the-very also often color.
et volgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela
and commonly do this yellow and-red awnings
et ferrugina, cum magnis intenta theatris
and dark-purple, when over-great stretched theaters

per malos volgata trabesque trementia flutant:
on masts spread-out and-beams quivering they-flap:
namque ibi consessum caveai supter et omnem
for there the-gathering of-the-seats beneath and all
scaenai speciem Parium marmorque deorum
of-the-stage the-show the-Parian and-marble of-the-gods
inficiunt coguntque suo fluitare colore:
they-stain and-force with-their-own to-waver color:
et quanto circum mage sunt inclusa theatri
and by-how-much around more are shut-in of-the-theater
moenia, tam magis hoc intus perfusa lepore
the-walls, so more with-this within suffused charm
omnia conrident correpta luce diei.
all-things laugh with-curtailed the-light of-day.
ergo lintea de summo cum corpore fucum
therefore the-linens from the-surface when body dye
mittunt, effigias quoque debent mittere tenvis
send-off, likenesses also must to-send-off thin
res quaeque, ex summo quoniam iaculantur utraque.
things each, from the-surface since they-throw both.
sunt igitur iam formarum vestigia certa,
there-are therefore already of-forms traces fixed,
quae volgo volitant subtili praedita filo
which everywhere fly with-fine endowed thread
nec singillatim possunt secreta videri.
and-not singly can separate to-be-seen.

Every smell, smoke, vapor, and the like pours out from things scattered, because these rise from deep within and are torn on their winding way out, since the passages they must take are not straight. The thin film of color on the surface, by contrast, lies ready at the very front, so when it is thrown off nothing can tear it apart.

praeterea omnis odor fumus vapor atque aliae res
besides every smell smoke vapor and other things
consimiles ideo diffusae e rebus abundant,
like-these therefore diffused from things abound,
ex alto quia dum veniunt intrinsecus ortae,
from the-deep because while they-come within arisen,
scinduntur per iter flexum, nec recta viarum
they-are-split along the-way winding, nor straight of-the-paths
ostia sunt, qua contendant exire coortae.
the-mouths are, by-which they-may-strive to-go-out risen.
at contra tenuis summi membrana coloris
but on-the-other-hand a-thin of-surface film color
cum iacitur, nil est quod eam discerpere possit,
when it-is-thrown, nothing is which it to-tear-apart can,
in promptu quoniamst in prima fronte locata.
in readiness since-it-is in the-first front placed.

A square shape felt in the dark is the same we see in the light, so sight must be moved by images as touch is moved by the thing. Mirrors, water, and every shining surface show likenesses that must be thrown off from things. Some images even form of themselves in the air, as clouds gather and change into giants' faces, mountains, and monsters, or fill the sky with sudden darkness.

praeterea quoniam manibus tractata figura
besides since by-the-hands handled a-shape
in tenebris quaedam cognoscitur esse eadem quae
in the-darkness some is-recognized to-be the-same which
cernitur in luce et claro candore, necessest
is-seen in light and bright whiteness, must-needs
consimili causa tactum visumque moveri.
by-like cause touch and-sight to-be-moved.
nunc igitur si quadratum temptamus et id nos
now therefore if a-square-thing we-test and it us
commovet in tenebris, in luci quae poterit res
moves in the-darkness, in light what will-be-able thing
accidere ad speciem quadrata, nisi eius imago?
to-come to sight square, unless its image?
esse in imaginibus quapropter causa videtur
to-be in images wherefore the-cause seems
cernundi neque posse sine his res ulla videri.
of-seeing nor to-be-able without these thing any to-be-seen.
postremo speculis in aqua splendoreque in omni
lastly in-mirrors in water and-brightness in all
quaecumque apparent nobis simulacra, necessest,
whatsoever appear to-us images, must-needs,

quandoquidem simili specie sunt praedita rerum,
since-indeed with-like appearance they-are endowed of-things,
ex ea imaginibus missis consistere rerum:
from it with-images sent to-consist of-things:
sunt igitur tenues formae rerum similesque
there-are therefore thin forms of-things and-like
effigiae, singillatim quas cernere nemo
likenesses, singly which to-see no-one
cum possit, tamen adsiduo crebroque repulsu
though can, yet by-constant and-frequent repulse
reiectae reddunt speculorum ex aequore visum,
thrown-back they-return of-the-mirrors from the-surface sight,
nec ratione alia servari posse videntur,
nor by-means other to-be-kept to-be-able they-seem,
tanto opere ut similes reddantur cuique figurae.
in-so-great measure that like are-returned to-each shapes.
Sed ne forte putes ea demum sola vagari,
But lest perchance you-think them only alone to-wander,
quaecumque ab rebus rerum simulacra recedunt,
whatsoever from things of-things images withdraw,
sunt etiam quae sponte sua gignuntur et ipsa
there-are also which of-accord their-own are-begotten and themselves
constituuntur in hoc caelo, qui dicitur aër.
are-formed in this heaven, which is-called air.
quae multis formata modis sublime feruntur
which in-many formed ways aloft are-borne
nec speciem mutare suam liquentia cessant
nor appearance to-change their-own flowing cease
et cuiusque modi formarum vertere in oras;
and of-every kind of-forms to-turn into outlines;

ut nubes facile interdum concrescere in alto
as clouds easily sometimes to-condense on high
cernimus et mundi speciem violare serenam,
we-see and of-the-world the-appearance to-violate serene,
aëra mulcentes motu: nam saepe Gigantum
the-air caressing with-motion: for often of-Giants
ora volare videntur et umbram ducere late,
faces to-fly seem and shadow to-draw widely,
interdum magni montes avolsaque saxa
sometimes great mountains and-torn rocks
montibus anteire et solem succedere praeter,
from-the-mountains to-go-before and the-sun to-pass past,
inde alios trahere atque inducere belua nimbos.
then others to-drag and to-bring-on a-beast rain-clouds.
Praeterea modo cum fuerit liquidissima caeli
Besides just-now when has-been most-clear of-heaven
tempestas, perquam subito fit turbida foede,
the-weather, very suddenly it-becomes turbid foully,
undique uti tenebras omnis Acherunta rearis
everywhere so-that the-darkness all Acheron you-would-think
liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cavernas.
to-have-left and the-great of-heaven to-have-filled caverns.
usque adeo taetra nimborum nocte coorta
right so-far with-foul of-rain-clouds night risen
inpendent atrae formidinis ora superne.
hang of-black dread faces above.

* * *

(lacuna)

Lucretius asks Memmius to grasp how thin an image is. Some animals are so tiny that a third part of them cannot be seen; what then of their hearts and eyes, and of the first-beginnings that make up their minds and souls? He turns to the herbs that breathe out a sharp smell, all-heal, wormwood, southernwood, and centaury, and after a gap in the text he says no one could tell in words how tiny a part of the things it comes from an image is.

Nunc age, quam tenui natura constet imago
Now come, how thin in-nature consists an-image
percipe. et in primis, quoniam primordia tantum
learn. and in the-first-place, since the-first-beginnings so-far
sunt infra nostros sensus tantoque minora
are below our senses and-so-much smaller
quam quae primum oculi coeptant non posse tueri —
than-the-things which first the-eyes begin not to-be-able to-behold
nunc tamen id quoque uti confirmem, exordia rerum
now yet this too that I-may-confirm, the-beginnings of-things
cunctarum quam sint subtilia percipe paucis.
of-all how they-are fine learn in-few-words.
primum animalia sunt iam partim tantula, quorum
first animals are now in-part so-tiny, of-which
tertia pars nulla possit ratione videri.
a-third part by-no could means to-be-seen.
horum intestinum quodvis quale esse putandumst!
of-these an-entrail any of-what-kind to-be must-be-thought!
quid cordis globus aut oculi? quid membra? quid artus?
what of-the-heart the-ball or of-the-eye? what the-members? what the-frame?
quantula sunt! quid praeterea primordia quaeque,
how-tiny are-they! what besides the-first-beginnings each,

unde anima atque animi constet natura necessumst?
whence the-spirit and of-mind consists the-nature must-needs?
nonne vides quam sint subtilia quamque minuta?
do-you-not see how they-are fine and-how minute?
praeterea quaecumque suo de corpore odorem
besides whatsoever their-own from body a-smell
expirant acrem, panaces absinthia taetra
breathe-out sharp, all-heal wormwoods foul
habrotonique graves et tristia centaurea,
and-southernwoods heavy and bitter centauries,
quorum unum quidvis leviter si forte duobus
of-which one any lightly if perchance between-two
* * *
(lacuna)
quorum quantula pars sit imago dicere nemost
of-which how-tiny a-part is an-image to-say no-one-is
qui possit, neque eam rationem reddere dictis.
who could, nor that account to-render in-words.

IV.7 · HOW QUICKLY IMAGES ARE MADE

Images are begotten easily and flow from things without end. When the outer layer strikes cloth it passes through, when it strikes rough rock or wood it is torn and returns no image, but a dense and shining mirror neither lets it through nor tears it, and so returns it to us. Since an image appears in a mirror the instant anything is set before it, things must give off images continually, as the sun pours out light.

Nunc ea quam facili et celeri ratione genantur
Now these how by-easy and swift means are-begotten
perpetuoque fluant ab rebus lapsaque cedant
and-perpetually flow from things and-slipped-off withdraw

semper enim summum quicquid de rebus abundat,
always for the-outermost whatever from things overflows,
quod iaculentur. et hoc certas cum pervenit in res,
which they-may-throw-off. and this certain when it-has-come into things,
transit, ut in primis vestem: sed ubi aspera saxa
it-passes-through, as in the-first-place cloth: but when rough rocks
aut in materiam ligni pervenit, ibi iam
or into the-matter of-wood it-has-come, there at-once
scinditur, ut nullum simulacrum reddere possit.
it-is-torn, so-that no image to-return it-can.
at cum splendida quae constant opposta fuerunt
but when shining things-which consist set-against have-been
densaque, ut in primis speculumst, nil accidit horum.
and-dense, as in the-first-place the-mirror-is, nothing befalls of-these.
nam neque, uti vestem, possunt transire, neque autem
for neither, as cloth, can-they to-pass-through, nor again
scindi; quam meminit levor praestare salutem.
to-be-torn; which takes-care the-smoothness to-ensure safety.
quapropter fit ut hinc nobis simulacra redundent.
wherefore it-comes-about that hence to-us images stream-back.
et quamvis subito, quovis in tempore, quamque
and however suddenly, any at time, each
rem contra speculum ponas, apparet imago;
thing against a-mirror you-set, appears an-image;
perpetuo fluere ut noscas e corpore summo
perpetually to-flow that you-may-know from body the-outermost
texturas rerum tenuis tenuisque figuras.
the-textures of-things thin and-thin shapes.
ergo multa brevi spatio simulacra genuntur,
therefore many in-brief space images are-begotten,

ut merito celer his rebus dicatur origo.
so-that rightly swift for-these things is-called the-origin.

et quasi multa brevi spatio summittere debet
and as-it-were many in-brief space to-send-up must

lumina sol, ut perpetuo sint omnia plena,
lights the-sun, that perpetually be all full,

sic ab rebus item simili ratione necessest
so from things likewise in-like fashion must-needs

temporis in puncto rerum simulacra ferantur
of-time in a-point of-things images be-borne

multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis;
many in-ways many into all everywhere parts;

quandoquidem speculum quocumque obvertimus oris,
since-indeed the-mirror wherever we-turn of-its-face,

res ibi respondent simili forma atque colore.
things there answer with-like shape and color.

IV.8 · HOW SWIFTLY IMAGES TRAVEL

Lucretius promises to tell in sweet rather than many verses how fast images move, as the swan's short song is better than the cranes' clamor. Light things made of tiny bodies, like sunlight and heat, pass through the air at once, driven by each following blow. Images, driven by a small impulse from behind, borne with winged lightness, and so loosely woven that they seep through anything, must cross untold distances in a moment.

Nunc age, quam celeri motu simulacra ferantur,
Now come, how with-swift motion images are-borne,

et quae mobilitas ollis tranantibus auras
and what mobility to-them swimming-through the-air

reddita sit, longo spatio ut brevis hora teratur,
given has-been, on-a-long journey that a-brief hour is-spent,
in quem quaeque locum diverso momine tendunt,
into which each place with-diverse impulse they-strive,
suavidicis potius quam multis versibus edam;
in-sweet-spoken rather than many verses I-shall-set-forth;
parvus ut est cycni melior canor, ille gruum quam
small as is of-the-swan better the-song, that of-cranes than
clamor in aetheriis dispersus nubibus austri.
clamor in airy scattered clouds of-the-south-wind.
principio persaepe levis res atque minutis
first very-often light things and of-minute
corporibus factas celeris licet esse videre.
bodies made swift one-may to-be to-see.
in quo iam generest solis lux et vapor eius
in which now kind-is of-the-sun light and vapor its
propterea quia sunt e primis facta minutis,
therefore because they-are of first-bodies made minute,
quae quasi cuduntur perque aëris intervallum
which as-it-were are-struck and-through of-air the-space
non dubitant transire sequenti concita plaga.
not hesitate to-pass by-the-following driven blow.
suppeditatur enim confestim lumine lumen,
is-supplied for at-once by-light light,
et quasi protelo stimulatur fulgere fulgur.
and as-it-were in-a-team is-spurred by-flash flash.
quapropter simulacra pari ratione necessest
wherefore images in-equal measure must-needs
inmemorabile per spatium transcurrere posse
an-untold through space to-run-across to-be-able

temporis in puncto, primum quod † parvola causa
of-time in a-point, first because (corrupt) a-small cause
est procul a tergo quae provehat atque propellat,
is far at the-back which may-carry-forward and drive-on,
quod superest, ubi tam volucri levitate ferantur,
what remains, when so with-winged lightness they-are-borne,
deinde quod usque adeo textura praedita rara
next because right so-far with-texture endowed loose
mittuntur, facile ut quavis penetrare queant se
they-are-sent, easily so-that through-any to-penetrate they-can themselves
et quasi permanare per aëris intervallum.
and as-it-were to-seep through of-air the-space.

IV.9 · THE PROOF OF THE STARRY POOL

If sunlight from within things fills the whole sky in a moment, images already standing on the surface must travel faster still. As soon as a pool of water is set under the open sky, the stars of heaven answer at once in it. The images that reach us also bring the measure of distance, driving the air before them, and we see things by their images though we never see a single image alone.

praeterea si quae penitus corpuscula rerum
besides if which deeply little-bodies of-things
ex altoque foras mittuntur, solis uti lux
from and-the-depth outward are-sent, of-the-sun as the-light
ac vapor, haec puncto cernuntur lapsa diei
and vapor, these in-a-point are-seen slipped of-day
per totum caeli spatium diffundere sese
through the-whole of-heaven space to-spread themselves
perque volare mare ac terras caelumque rigare:
and-through to-fly sea and lands and-the-sky to-flood:

quid quae sunt igitur iam prima fronte parata?
what of-those-which are then now on-the-first front ready?
cum iaciuntur et emissum res nulla moratur,
when they-are-thrown and the-thing-sent thing none delays,
nonne vides citius debere et longius ire
do-you-not see more-swiftly they-must and farther to-go
multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
and-manifold of-place a-space to-run-across in-the-same
tempore quo solis pervolgant lumina caelum?
time in-which of-the-sun spread-through the-lights heaven?
hoc etiam in primis specimen verum esse videtur,
this also in the-first-place a-proof true to-be seems,
quam celeri motu rerum simulacra ferantur,
how with-swift motion of-things the-images are-borne,
quod simul ac primum sub diu splendor aquai
that as-soon as first beneath the-open-sky a-brightness of-water
ponitur, extemplo caelo stellante serena
is-placed, forthwith with-the-sky starry serene
sidera respondent in aqua radiantia mundi.
the-stars answer in the-water radiant of-the-world.
iamne vides igitur quam puncto tempore imago
now do-you-see therefore how in-a-point of-time an-image
aetheris ex oris in terrarum accidat oras?
of-the-ether from shores into of-the-lands falls the-shores?
quare etiam atque etiam mira fateare necessest
wherefore again and again marvels you-confess must-needs

* * *

(lacuna)

nunc ea quae dico rerum simulacra feruntur
now those which I-mean of-things the-images are-borne

undique et in cunctas iaciuntur didita partis;
everywhere and into all are-thrown spread parts;
propterea fit uti, speciem quo vertimus, omnes
therefore it-comes-about that, the-sight whither we-turn, all
res ibi eam contra feriant forma atque colore.
things there it opposite strike with-shape and color.
verum nos oculis quia solis cernere quimus
but we with-the-eyes since alone to-see can
et quantum quaeque ab nobis res absit, imago
and how-far each from us thing is-distant, the-image
efficit ut videamus et internoscere curat:
brings-about that we-see and to-distinguish takes-care:
nam cum mittitur, extemplo protrudit agitque
for when it-is-sent, forthwith it-thrusts-out and-drives
aëra qui inter se cumquest oculosque locatus,
the-air which between itself soever-is and-the-eyes placed,
isque ita per nostras acies perlabitur omnis
and-it so through our sight glides all
et quasi perterget pupillas atque ita transit.
and as-it-were sweeps-through the-pupils and so passes-through.
propterea fit uti videamus quam procul absit
therefore it-comes-about that we-see how far is-distant
res quaeque. et quanto plus aëris ante agitatur
thing each. and by-how-much more of-air before is-driven
et nostros oculos perterget longior aura,
and our eyes sweeps-through a-longer breeze,
tam procul esse magis res quaeque remota videtur.
so far to-be the-more thing each removed seems.
scilicet, haec summe celeri ratione geruntur,
surely, these supremely swift means are-done,

quale sit ut videamus, et una quam procul absit.
what-sort it-is that we-see, and at-once how far it-is-distant.
illud in his rebus minime mirabile habendumst,
that in these things least to-be-wondered-at must-be-held,
cur, ea quae feriant oculos simulacra videri
why, those which strike the-eyes images to-be-seen
singula cum nequeant, res ipsae perspiciantur.
singly though they-cannot, the-things themselves are-perceived.
ventus enim quoque paulatim cum verberat et cum
the-wind for also little-by-little when beats and when
acre fluit frigus, non privam quamque solemus
sharp flows the-cold, not single each we-are-wont
particulam venti sentire et frigoris eius,
particle of-the-wind to-feel and of-the-cold its,
sed magis unorsum, fierique perinde videmus
but rather as-a-whole, and-to-happen just-so we-see
corpore tum plagas in nostro tamquam aliquae res
body then blows in our as-it-were some thing
verberet atque sui det sensum corporis extra.
were-beating and of-itself were-giving the-sense of-body outside.
praeterea lapidem digito cum tundimus, ipsum
besides a-stone with-the-finger when we-strike, the-very
tangimus extremum saxi summumque colorem,
we-touch outermost of-the-rock and-topmost color,
nec sentimus eum tactu, verum magis ipsam
nor do-we-feel it by-touch, but rather the-very
duritiem penitus saxi sentimus in alto.
hardness deeply of-the-rock we-feel in the-depth.

An image seems to stand behind the mirror because two airs are seen, as through an open door: first the air on this side, then the doorposts, then the outer light and the further air. The mirror's own image drives the air between it and our eyes, so we feel that air first; our image then reaches the glass and returns driving a second air, and so seems as far behind it. Left and right swap because the image is dashed straight back, like a wet clay mask on a pillar.

Nunc age, cur ultra speculum videatur imago
Now come, why beyond the-mirror is-seen the-image
percipe: nam certe penitus semota videtur.
learn: for certainly deeply removed it-seems.
quod genus illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur,
which kind those outside which truly are-seen-through,
ianua cum per se transpectum praebet apertum,
a-door when through itself a-view affords open,
multa facitque foris ex aedibus ut videantur:
many-things and-makes outside from the-house that they-are-seen:
is quoque enim duplici geminoque fit aëre visus.
that also for by-double and-twin is-made air sight.
primus enim citra postes tum cernitur aër,
first for this-side-of the-posts then is-discerned air,
inde fores ipsae dextra laevaque secuntur,
then the-doors themselves on-the-right and-left follow,
post extraria lux oculos perterget et aër
after the-outside light the-eyes sweeps-through and air
alter, et illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur.
other, and those outside which truly are-seen-through.
sic ubi se primum speculi proiecit imago,
so when itself first of-the-mirror has-flung-forth the-image,

dum venit ad nostras acies, protrudit agitque
while it-comes to our sight, it-thrusts-out and-drives
aëra qui inter se cumquest oculosque locatus,
the-air which between itself soever-is and-the-eyes placed,
et facit ut prius hunc omnem sentire queamus
and makes that before this all to-perceive we-can
quam speculum: sed ubi speculum quoque sensimus ipsum,
than the-mirror: but when the-mirror too we-have-perceived itself,
continuo a nobis in idem quae fertur imago
straightway from us into the-same which is-borne the-image
pervenit, et nostros oculos reiecta revisit,
arrives, and our eyes thrown-back revisits,
atque alium prae se propellens aëra volvit,
and other before itself driving-on air rolls,
et facit ut prius hunc quam se videamus, eoque
and makes that before this than itself we-see, and-therefore
distare ab speculo tantum semota videtur.
to-stand-off from the-mirror so-much removed it-seems.
quare etiam atque etiam minime mirarier est par
wherefore again and again least to-wonder it-is fitting
* * *
(lacuna)
illis quae reddunt speculorum ex aequore visum,
at-those which return of-mirrors from the-surface the-sight,
aëribus binis quoniam res confit utraque.
by-airs two since the-thing is-done each.
nunc ea quae nobis membrorum dextera pars est,
now that which to-us of-the-limbs the-right part is,
in speculis fit ut in laeva videatur eo quod
in mirrors it-comes-about that on the-left it-is-seen for-this that

planitiem ad speculi veniens cum offendit imago,
the-flat-surface to of-the-mirror coming when strikes the-image,
non convertitur incolumis, sed recta retrorsum
not it-is-turned-about unharmed, but straight backward
sic eliditur, ut siquis, prius arida quam sit
so is-dashed-out, as if-one, before dry than it-be
cretea persona, adlidat pilaeve trabive,
a-clay mask, should-dash-it or-on-a-pillar or-a-beam,
atque ea continuo rectam si forte figuram
and it straightway straight if perchance its-shape
servet et elisam retro sese exprimat ipsa.
should-keep and dashed backward itself should-press-out itself.
fiet ita, ante oculus fuerit qui dexter, ut idem
it-will-happen so, before the-eye was which right, that the-same
nunc sit laevus, et e laevo sit mutua dexter.
now is left, and from left is in-turn right.

IV.11 · MIRROR TO MIRROR, AND THINGS THAT DAZZLE

An image can pass from mirror to mirror five or six times, so that things hidden deep in a house are brought out to view, and each reflection reverses again. Curved mirrors return right for right, and images seem to walk and gesture with us because they are returned at equal angles. The eyes shun bright things: the sun blinds because its images fall heavily from on high, a sharp brightness scorches because it holds many seeds of fire, and to the jaundiced everything looks sallow.

fit quoque de speculo in speculum ut tradatur imago,
it-comes-about also from mirror into mirror that is-passed-on the-image,
quinque etiam sexve ut fieri simulacra suërint.
five even or-six that to-be-made images have-been-wont.

nam quaecumque retro parte interiore latebunt,
for whatsoever backward in-part inner will-lie-hid,
inde tamen, quamvis torte penitusque remota,
thence yet, however crookedly and-deeply removed,
omnia per flexos aditus educta licebit
all-things through winding approaches drawn-out it-will-be-possible
pluribus haec speculis videantur in aedibus esse.
by-several these mirrors to-be-seen in the-house to-be.
usque adeo e speculo in speculum translucet imago,
right so-far from mirror into mirror shines-across the-image,
et cum laeva datast, fit rursum ut dextera fiat,
and when the-left has-been-given, it-comes-about again that the-right it-becomes,
inde retro rursum redit et convertit eodem.
thence backward again it-returns and turns to-the-same.
quin etiam quaecumque latuscula sunt speculorum
nay even whatsoever little-sides are of-mirrors
adsimili lateris flexura praedita nostri,
with-a-like of-the-side curve endowed of-ours,
dextera eapropter nobis simulacra remittunt,
right for-that-reason to-us images send-back,
aut quia de speculo in speculum transfertur imago,
either because from mirror into mirror is-carried-across the-image,
inde ad nos elisa bis advolat, aut etiam quod
thence to us dashed-out twice it-flies, or also because
circum agitur, cum venit, imago propterea quod
around it-is-turned, when it-comes, the-image for-this that
flexa figura docet speculi convertier ad nos.
the-curved shape teaches of-the-mirror to-be-turned toward us.
indugredi porro pariter simulacra pedemque
to-step-forth further alike the-images and-the-foot

ponere nobiscum credas gestumque imitari
to-set with-us you-would-believe and-the-gesture to-imitate
propterea quia, de speculi qua parte recedas,
therefore because, from of-the-mirror whatever part you-withdraw,
continuo nequeunt illinc simulacra reverti;
straightway cannot thence the-images to-return;
omnia quandoquidem cogit natura referri
all-things since-indeed compels nature to-be-carried-back
ac resilire ab rebus ad aequos reddita flexus.
and to-spring-back from things at equal given-back angles.
Splendida porro oculi fugitant vitantque tueri:
Shining-things further the-eyes shun and-avoid to-behold:
sol etiam caecat, contra si tendere pergas,
the-sun even blinds, against if to-strain you-go-on,
propterea quia vis magnast ipsius, et alte
therefore because the-force great-is of-itself, and from-on-high
aëra per purum graviter simulacra feruntur
the-air through clear heavily the-images are-borne
et feriunt oculos, turbantia composituras.
and strike the-eyes, disturbing their-structure.
praeterea splendor quicumquest acer adurit
besides a-brightness whatever-is sharp scorches
saepe oculos ideo quod semina possidet ignis
often the-eyes therefore that seeds it-possesses of-fire
multa, dolorem oculis quae gignunt insinuando.
many, pain for-the-eyes which beget by-winding-in.
lurida praeterea fiunt quaecumque tuentur
sallow besides become whatsoever behold
arquati, quia luroris de corpore eorum
the-jaundiced, because of-sallowness from body their

semina multa fluunt simulacris obvia rerum,
seeds many flow to-the-images meeting of-things,
multaque sunt oculis in eorum denique mixta,
and-many are the-eyes in of-them finally mixed,
quae contage sua palloribus omnia pingunt.
which by-contagion their-own with-pallors all-things paint.

IV.12 · DARKNESS, DISTANT TOWERS, AND SHADOWS

From darkness we see things in the light because the bright air that follows cleans the black air from the eyes, but the reverse cannot happen. Square towers seen from afar look round because their corners are blunted by the long journey through air. A shadow seems to walk and gesture with us only because the earth is robbed of sunlight where we go and filled again where we have passed.

e tenebris autem quae sunt in luce tuemur
out-of the-darkness but things-which are in light we-behold
propterea quia, cum propior caliginis aër
therefore because, when the-nearer of-murk air
ater init oculos prior et possedit apertos,
black enters the-eyes first and has-seized-them open,
insequitur candens confestim lucidus aër,
follows shining at-once bright air,
qui quasi purgat eos ac nigras discutit umbras
which as-it-were cleanses them and black scatters the-shadows
aëris illius: nam multis partibus hic est
of-air that: for by-many degrees this is
mobilior multisque minutior et mage pollens.
more-mobile and-by-many more-minute and more powerful.
qui simul atque vias oculorum luce replevit
which as-soon as the-ways of-the-eyes with-light it-has-filled

atque patefecit, quas ante obsederat aër
and has-opened, which before had-beset air
ater, continuo rerum simulacra secuntur,
black, straightway of-things the-images follow,
quae sita sunt in luce, lacessuntque ut videamus.
which placed are in light, and-provoke-them that we-see.
quod contra facere in tenebris e luce nequimus
which conversely to-do in the-darkness out-of light we-cannot
propterea quia posterior caliginis aër
therefore because the-following of-murk air
crassior insequitur, qui cuncta foramina complet
thicker follows, which all the-openings fills
obsiditque vias oculorum, ne simulacra
and-besets the-ways of-the-eyes, lest the-images
possint ullarum rerum coniecta movere.
can of-any things thrown-in to-move-them.
quadratasque procul turris cum cernimus urbis,
and-square far-off towers when we-discern of-a-city,
propterea fit uti videantur saepe rutundae,
therefore it-comes-about that they-seem often round,
angulus optusus quia longe cernitur omnis,
an-angle obtuse because from-afar is-discerned every,
sive etiam potius non cernitur ac perit eius
or even rather not is-discerned and perishes its
plaga nec ad nostras acies perlabitur ictus,
blow nor to our sight glides-through the-stroke,
aëra per multum quia dum simulacra feruntur,
the-air through much because while the-images are-borne,
cogit hebescere eum crebris offensibus aër.
compels to-grow-blunt it with-frequent collisions air.

hoc ubi suffugit sensum simul angulus omnis,
this when has-escaped the-sense at-once angle every,
fit quasi ut ad tornum saxorum structa tuamur:
it-comes-about as-it-were that on the-lathe of-stones things-built we-behold:
non tamen ut coram quae sunt vereque rutunda,
not yet as near-at-hand which are and-truly round,
sed quasi adumbratim paulum simulata videntur.
but as-it-were in-shadow a-little feigned they-seem.
umbra videtur item nobis in sole moveri
a-shadow seems likewise to-us in the-sun to-move
et vestigia nostra sequi gestumque imitari;
and footsteps our to-follow and-the-gesture to-imitate;
aëra si credis privatum lumine posse
the-air if you-believe deprived of-light to-be-able
indugredi, motus hominum gestumque sequentem:
to-step-forth, the-motions of-men and-the-gesture following:
nam nil esse potest aliud nisi lumine cassus
for nothing to-be can other than of-light bereft
aër id quod nos umbram perhibere suëmus.
air that which we a-shadow to-call are-wont.
nimirum, quia terra locis ex ordine certis
doubtless, because the-earth in-places in order fixed
lumine privatur solis quacumque meantes
of-light is-deprived of-the-sun wherever going
officimus, repletur item quod liquimus eius,
we-obstruct-it, is-refilled likewise what we-have-left of-it,
propterea fit uti videatur, quae fuit umbra
therefore it-comes-about that it-seems, what was the-shadow
corporis, e regione eadem nos usque secuta.
of-the-body, from the-direction same us constantly to-have-followed.

semper enim nova se radiorum lumina fundunt
always for new themselves of-rays the-lights pour
primaque dispereunt, quasi in ignem lana trahatur.
and-the-first perish, as-it-were into fire wool were-drawn.
propterea facile et spoliatur lumine terra,
therefore easily both is-despoiled of-light the-earth,
et repletur item nigrasque sibi abluit umbras.
and is-refilled likewise and-black from-itself washes the-shadows.

IV.13 · THE MIND, NOT THE EYES, IS DECEIVED

The eyes report only light and shade; whether a shadow moves is for the mind to judge, and its fault must not be blamed on them. The moving ship seems still and the hills run astern; the stars seem fixed though always moving; mountains far apart at sea look like one island; the halls spin for children who have stopped turning; and the rising sun seems near the hills though seas and lands lie between.

Nec tamen hic oculos falli concedimus hilum.
Nor yet here the-eyes to-be-deceived do-we-grant a-whit.
nam quocumque loco sit lux atque umbra tueri
for in-whatever place be light and shadow to-behold
illorumst: eadem vero sint lumina necne,
is-theirs: the-same but whether-be the-lights or-not,
umbraque quae fuit hic eadem nunc transeat illuc
and-the-shadow which was here the-same now passes thither
an potius fiat paulo quod diximus ante,
or rather happens a-little what we-said before,
hoc animi demum ratio discernere debet,
this of-mind at-last the-reasoning to-discern must,
nec possunt oculi naturam noscere rerum.
nor can the-eyes the-nature to-know of-things.

proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli.
therefore of-mind the-fault this on-the-eyes fasten do-not.
qua vehimur navi, fertur, cum stare videtur:
on-which we-are-carried the-ship, is-borne, when to-stand it-seems:
quae manet in statione, ea praeter creditur ire.
which remains at its-moorings, that past is-believed to-go.
et fugere ad puppim colles campique videntur,
and to-flee to the-stern the-hills and-plains seem,
quos agimus praeter navem velisque volamus.
which we-drive past the-ship and-with-sails fly.
sidera cessare aetheriis adfixa cavernis
the-stars to-be-at-rest to-the-ethereal fixed caverns
cuncta videntur, et adsiduo sunt omnia motu,
all seem, and in-ceaseless are all motion,
quandoquidem longos obitus exorta revisunt,
since-indeed long settings having-risen they-revisit,
cum permensa suo sunt caelum corpore claro.
when traversed with-their they-have heaven body bright.
solque pari ratione manere et luna videntur
and-the-sun in-equal measure to-remain and the-moon seem
in statione, ea quae ferri res indicat ipsa.
at station, they which to-be-borne the-thing shows itself.
exstantisque procul medio de gurgite montis
and-standing-out far-off mid from the-flood mountains
classibus inter quos liber patet exitus ingens,
for-fleets between which free lies-open a-passage huge,
insula coniunctis tamen ex his una videtur.
an-island joined yet from these one seems.
atria versari et circumcursare columnae
the-halls to-turn and to-run-round the-columns

usque adeo fit uti pueris videantur, ubi ipsi
right so-far it-comes-about that to-boys they-seem, when themselves
desierunt verti, vix ut iam credere possint
they-have-ceased to-be-turned, scarcely that now to-believe they-can
non supra sese ruere omnia tecta minari.
not above themselves to-fall all the-roofs to-threaten.
iamque rubrum tremulis iubar ignibus erigere alte
and-now red with-trembling the-radiance fires to-raise on-high
cum coeptat natura supraque extollere montes,
when begins nature and-above to-lift the-mountains,
quos tibi tum supra sol montis esse videtur
which to-you then above the-sun the-mountains to-be seems
comminus ipse suo contingens fervidus igni,
close-at-hand itself with-its touching glowing fire,
vix absunt nobis missus bis mille sagittae,
scarcely are-distant from-us the-casts twice a-thousand of-an-arrow,
vix etiam cursus quingentos saepe veruti:
scarcely even the-courses five-hundred often of-a-javelin:
inter eos solemque iacent immania ponti
between them and-the-sun lie the-huge of-the-sea
aequora substrata aetheriis ingentibus oris,
plains spread-beneath to-the-ethereal vast shores,
interiectaque sunt terrarum milia multa,
and-set-between are of-lands thousands many,
quae variae retinent gentes et saecla ferarum.
which various hold nations and the-generations of-beasts.

A puddle between the paving stones gives a view as deep beneath the earth as the sky is high above it. A horse stuck midstream seems carried upstream; a long colonnade narrows into a cone; the sun seems to rise from the waves and set in them; oars and rudders look broken in the harbor water; and the stars seem to glide against the clouds the winds carry.

at conlectus aquae digitum non altior unum,
but a-pool of-water a-finger not deeper one,
qui lapides inter sistit per strata viarum,
which the-stones between stands through the-pavings of-the-roads,
despectum praebet sub terras inpete tanto,
a-view-down affords beneath the-earth with-reach so-great,
a terris quantum caeli patet altus hiatus;
from the-earth as-much-as of-heaven lies-open the-deep gape;
nubila despicere et solem ut videare videre
the-clouds to-look-down-on and the-sun that you-seem to-see
* * *
(lacuna)
corpora † mirande sub terras abdita caeli.
bodies (corrupt) marvelously beneath the-earth hidden of-heaven.
denique ubi in medio nobis equus acer obhaesit
finally when in the-middle for-us a-horse spirited has-stuck
flumine et in rapidas amnis despeximus undas,
of-the-stream and into the-rapid of-the-river we-have-looked-down waves,
stantis equi corpus transversum ferre videtur
of-the-standing horse the-body sideways to-bear seems
vis et in adversum flumen contrudere raptim,
a-force and into contrary the-stream to-thrust swiftly,

et quocumque oculos traiecimus omnia ferri
and wherever the-eyes we-have-cast all-things to-be-borne
et fluere adsimili nobis ratione videntur.
and to-flow in-like to-us manner seem.
porticus aequali quamvis est denique ductu
a-colonnade of-equal though it-is finally line
stansque in perpetuum paribus suffulta columnis,
and-standing for ever on-equal propped columns,
longa tamen parte ab summa cum tota videtur,
long yet end from the-farthest when whole it-is-seen,
paulatim trahit angusti fastigia coni
little-by-little it-draws of-a-narrow the-point cone
tecta solo iungens atque omnia dextera laevis
the-roof to-the-ground joining and all-things the-right to-the-left
donec in obscurum coni conduxit acumen.
until into the-dim of-the-cone it-has-drawn the-point.
in pelago nautis ex undis ortus in undis
on the-sea to-sailors out-of the-waves risen into the-waves
sol fit uti videatur obire et condere lumen;
the-sun it-comes-about that it-seems to-set and to-hide its-light;
quippe ubi nil aliud nisi aquam caelumque tuentur;
for since nothing other than water and-sky they-behold;
ne leviter credas labefactari undique sensus.
lest lightly you-believe to-be-shaken everywhere the-senses.
at maris ignaris in portu clauda videntur
but to-those-of-the-sea unknowing in harbor crippled seem
navigia aplustris fractis obnitier undae.
the-ships with-sterns broken to-strain-against the-wave.
nam quaecumque supra rorem salis edita pars est
for whatever above the-spray of-the-brine raised part is

remorum, rectast, et recta superne guberna:
of-the-oars, straight-is, and straight above the-rudders:
quae demersa liquorem obeunt, refracta videntur
those-which plunged the-water enter, broken seem
omnia converti sursumque supina reverti
all to-be-turned and-upward on-their-backs to-return
et reflexa prope in summo fluitare liquore.
and bent-back nearly on the-top to-float of-the-water.
raraque per caelum cum venti nubila portant
and-sparse through heaven when the-winds clouds carry
tempore nocturno, tum splendida signa videntur
at-time night, then the-shining constellations seem
labier adversum nimbos atque ire superne
to-glide against the-storm-clouds and to-go above
longe aliam in partem ac vera ratione feruntur.
far other into part than by-true reckoning they-are-borne.

IV.15 · DOUBLE SIGHT AND DREAMS

Press one eye from beneath and everything seen is doubled, the lamps, the furniture, and men's faces. In sleep we seem to wake, walk, see the sun at night, cross seas and mountains, hear sounds in the silent night, and speak while we are silent. These marvels seem to break faith with the senses, but most of them come from the mind's opinions added to what was seen, since nothing is harder than to part plain things from doubtful ones.

at si forte oculo manus uni subdita supter
but if perchance to-eye a-hand one set-beneath underneath
pressit eum, quodam sensu fit uti videantur
has-pressed it, by-a-certain sense it-comes-about that they-seem

omnia quae tuimur fieri tum bina tuendo,
all-things which we-behold to-become then double in-beholding,
bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis,
double of-the-lamps flowering the-lights with-flames,
binaque per totas aedis geminare supellex,
and-double through all the-house to-be-twinned the-furniture,
et duplicis hominum facies et corpora bina.
and double of-men the-faces and bodies double.
denique cum suavi devinxit membra sopore
finally when with-sweet has-bound the-limbs slumber
somnus et in summa corpus iacet omne quiete,
sleep and in the-deepest the-body lies whole rest,
tum vigilare tamen nobis et membra movere
then to-wake yet to-ourselves and the-limbs to-move
nostra videmur, et in noctis caligine caeca
our seem, and in of-night the-murk blind
cernere censemus solem lumenque diurnum,
to-see we-think the-sun and-the-light of-day,
conclusoque loco caelum mare flumina montis
and-in-a-shut-in place heaven sea rivers mountains
mutare et campos pedibus transire videmur,
to-change and plains on-foot to-cross we-seem,
et sonitus audire, severa silentia noctis
and sounds to-hear, the-stern silences of-night
undique cum constent, et reddere dicta tacentes.
everywhere when hold, and to-return words while-silent.
cetera de genere hoc miracula multa videmus,
the-rest of kind this marvels many we-see,
quae violare fidem quasi sensibus omnia quaerunt,
which to-violate the-trust as-it-were of-the-senses all seek,

nequiquam, quoniam pars horum maxima fallit
in-vain, since the-part of-these greatest deceives
propter opinatus animi, quos addimus ipsi,
because-of the-opinions of-mind, which we-add ourselves,
pro visis ut sint quae non sunt sensibu' visa:
for seen that be-held what not have-been by-the-senses seen:
nam nil aegrius est quam res secernere apertas
for nothing harder is than things to-sever plain
ab dubiis, animus quas ab se protinus addit.
from doubtful, the-mind which from itself forthwith adds.

IV.16 · AGAINST THOSE WHO SAY NOTHING CAN BE KNOWN

Whoever holds that nothing can be known cannot know even that, and Lucretius will not argue with one who stands on his own head. The notion of true and false comes first from the senses, which cannot be refuted, since nothing deserves more trust, and reason, sprung wholly from them, cannot speak against them. No sense can convict another, for each has its own province, and none can refute itself, so whatever the senses report at any time is true.

Denique nil sciri siquis putat, id quoque nescit
Finally nothing to-be-known if-anyone thinks, that too he-knows-not
an sciri possit, quoniam nil scire fatetur.
whether to-be-known it-can, since nothing to-know he-confesses.
hunc igitur contra mittam contendere causam,
him therefore against I-will-forbear to-argue the-case,
qui capite ipse sua in statuit vestigia sese.
who on-head himself his-own in has-planted the-footprints himself.
et tamen hoc quoque uti concedam scire, at id ipsum
and yet this also that I-should-grant he-knows, yet that very-thing

quaeram, cum in rebus veri nil viderit ante,
I-will-ask, since in things of-the-true nothing he-has-seen before,
unde sciat quid sit scire et nescire vicissim,
whence he-knows what is to-know and to-not-know in-turn,
notitiam veri quae res falsique crearit,
the-notion of-the-true what thing and-of-the-false has-created,
et dubium certo quae res differre probarit.
and the-doubtful from-the-certain what thing to-differ has-proved.
invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
you-will-find the-first from senses to-have-been created
notitiem veri, neque sensus posse refelli.
the-notion of-the-true, nor the-senses to-be-able to-be-refuted.
nam maiore fide debet reperirier illud,
for with-greater trust must to-be-found that,
sponte sua veris quod possit vincere falsa:
of-accord its-own with-true-things which can to-conquer false:
quid maiore fide porro quam sensus haberi
what with-greater trust further than the-senses to-be-held
debet? an ab sensu falso ratio orta valebit
must? or from sense false reasoning sprung will-avail
dicere eos contra, quae tota ab sensibus aptast?
to-speak them against, which wholly from the-senses is-fitted?
qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa fit omnis.
which unless are true, reasoning also false becomes all.
an poterunt oculos aures reprehendere, an aures
or will-be-able the-eyes the-ears to-refute, or the-ears
tactus? an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris,
touch? or this further touch the-taste will-convict of-the-mouth,
an confutabunt nares oculive revincent?
or will-confute the-nostrils or-the-eyes will-refute?

non, ut opinor, itast. nam seorsum cuique potestas
not, as I-think, so-it-is. for apart to-each the-power
divisast, sua vis cuiquest, ideoque necessest
is-divided, its-own force to-each-is, and-therefore must-needs
et quod molle sit et gelidum fervensve seorsum
both what soft is and cold or-hot apart
et seorsum varios rerum sentire colores,
and apart the-various of-things to-perceive colors,
et quaecumque coloribu' sint coniuncta videre:
and whatsoever with-colors be joined to-see:
seorsus item sapor oris habet vim, seorsus odores
apart likewise the-taste of-the-mouth has force, apart smells
nascuntur, sorsum sonitus. ideoque necessest
arise, apart sounds. and-therefore must-needs
non possint alios alii convincere sensus.
not can others others to-convict senses.
nec porro poterunt ipsi reprehendere sese,
nor further will-they-be-able themselves to-refute themselves,
aequa fides quoniam debebit semper haberi.
equal trust since must always to-be-held.
proinde quod in quoquest his visum tempore, verumst.
therefore what at each-is to-these seemed time, true-is.

Even if reason cannot explain why things square at hand look round from afar, it is better to give a wrong reason than to let go of what is plain and tear up the foundations on which life and safety rest, for without trust in the senses life itself would collapse. If the first rule of a building is crooked, the square false, and the level askew, the whole house leans and falls; so reasoning built on false senses must be crooked and false.

et si non poterit ratio dissolvere causam,
and if not shall-be-able reason to-unravel the-cause,
cur ea quae fuerint iuxtim quadrata, procul sint
why those-things which were close-at-hand square, far-off be
visa rutunda, tamen praestat rationis egentem
seen round, yet it-is-better of-reason lacking
reddere mendose causas utriusque figurae,
to-render falsely the-causes of-each shape,
quam manibus manifesta suis emittere quoquam
than with-hands plain-things your-own to-let-go anywhere
et violare fidem primam et convellere tota
and to-violate the-trust first and to-wrench-up all
fundamenta quibus nixatur vita salusque.
the-foundations on-which rests life and-safety.
non modo enim ratio ruat omnis, vita quoque ipsa
not only for reason would-fall all, life too itself
concidat extemplo, nisi credere sensibus ausis,
would-collapse forthwith, unless to-trust the-senses you-dare,
* * *
(lacuna)
praecipitisque locos vitare et cetera quae sint
and-steep places to-shun and the-rest which are

in genere hoc fugienda, sequi contraria quae sint.
in kind this to-be-fled, to-follow the-contrary which are.
illa tibist igitur verborum copia cassa
that for-you-is therefore of-words store empty
omnis, quae contra sensus instructa paratast.
all, which against the-senses drawn-up is-prepared.
denique ut in fabrica, si pravast regula prima,
finally as in a-building, if crooked-is the-rule first,
normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,
and-the-square if deceptive from-straight lines departs,
et libella aliqua si ex parti claudicat hilum,
and the-level any if on part limps a-whit,
omnia mendose fieri atque obstipa necessest
all-things faultily to-be-made and askew must-needs
prava cubantia prona supina atque absona tecta,
crooked leaning forward backward and out-of-tune the-roofs,
iam ruere ut quaedam videantur velle, ruantque
now to-fall that some seem to-wish, and-fall
prodita iudiciis fallacibus omnia primis —
betrayed by-the-judgments deceitful all first
sic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necessest
so therefore reasoning for-you of-things crooked must-needs
falsaque sit, falsis quaecumque ab sensibus ortast.
and-false be, false whatsoever from senses has-risen.

Lucretius turns to the other senses. Sound and voice are heard when they enter the ear and strike it, and so they must be bodily. A shout scrapes the throat, long speech from dawn to night wears down a man's strength, and roughness of voice comes from rough first-beginnings, as when the trumpet booms, while smoothness comes from smooth ones, as in the swans' clear lament on Helicon.

Nunc alii sensus quo pacto quisque suam rem
Now the-other senses in-what way each its-own thing
sentiat, haud quaquam ratio scruposa relictast.
perceives, by-no means a-path rough is-left.
Principio auditur sonus et vox omnis, in auris
First is-heard sound and voice all, into the-ears
insinuata suo pepulere ubi corpore sensum.
having-wound-in with-their have-struck when body the-sense.
corpoream vocem quoque enim constare fatendumst
bodily the-voice also for to-consist must-be-confessed
et sonitum, quoniam possunt inpellere sensus.
and sound, since they-can to-strike the-senses.
praeterea radit vox fauces saepe, facitque
besides scrapes the-voice the-throat often, and-makes
asperiora foras gradiens arteria clamor,
rougher outward going the-windpipe a-shout,
quippe, per angustum turba maiore coorta
for, through the-narrow by-a-crowd greater risen
ire foras ubi coeperunt primordia vocum.
to-go outward when have-begun the-first-beginnings of-voices.
scilicet, expletis quoque ianua raditur oris,
surely, filled also the-door is-scraped of-the-mouth,

* * *

(lacuna)

haud igitur dubiumst quin voces verbaque constent
not therefore doubtful-is that voices and-words consist
corporeis e principiis, ut laedere possint.
bodily from first-elements, so-that to-hurt they-can.
nec te fallit item quid corporis auferat et quid
nor you escapes likewise how-much of-body takes-away and what
detrahat ex hominum nervis ac viribus ipsis
draws-off from of-men the-sinews and strength itself
perpetuus sermo nigrai noctis ad umbram
continuous speech of-black night to the-shadow
aurorae perductus ab exoriente nitore,
of-dawn drawn-out from the-rising brightness,
praesertim si cum summost clamore profusus.
especially if with the-highest-it-is shouting poured-forth.
ergo corpoream vocem constare necessest,
therefore bodily the-voice to-consist must-needs,
multa loquens quoniam amittit de corpore partem.
much speaking since one-loses from body a-part.
asperitas autem vocis fit ab asperitate
the-roughness but of-the-voice comes from the-roughness
principiorum, et item levor levore creatur:
of-the-first-elements, and likewise smoothness by-smoothness is-created:
nec simili penetrant auris primordia forma,
nor with-like pierce the-ears the-first-beginnings shape,
cum tuba depresso graviter sub murmure mugit
when the-trumpet low heavily beneath murmur bellows
et reboant raucum retro loca barbara bombum,
and re-echo hoarse backward places barbarous a-boom,

et gelidis cycni nocte oris ex Heliconis
and chill the-swans at-night the-coasts out-of of-Helicon
cum liquidam tollunt lugubri voce querellam.
when clear they-raise with-mournful voice a-lament.

IV.19 · HOW WORDS ARE FORMED AND SCATTERED

The tongue shapes words and the lips form them; over a short distance each word arrives distinct, but over a long one it is jumbled in the air and we hear sound without meaning. One crier's word reaches a whole crowd because a voice divides into many, stamped with its form; what misses the ears is lost, or strikes solid places and returns, sometimes deceiving us with the image of a word.

Hasce igitur penitus voces cum corpore nostro
These therefore deeply voices when from-body our
exprimimus rectoque foras emittimus ore,
we-press-out and-straight outward send-forth by-mouth,
mobilis articulat verborum daedala lingua,
nimble articulates of-words the-cunning tongue,
formaturaque labrorum pro parte figurat.
and-the-shaping of-the-lips in part forms-them.
hoc ubi non longum spatiumst unde una profecta
this when not long the-space-is whence one set-out
perveniat vox quaeque, necessest verba quoque ipsa
arrives voice each, must-needs the-words also themselves
plane exaudiri discernique articulatim:
plainly to-be-heard and-to-be-distinguished syllable-by-syllable:
servat enim formaturam servatque figuram.
it-keeps for its-shaping and-keeps its-form.
at si interpositum spatium sit longius aequo,
but if the-intervening space be longer than-fair,

aëra per multum confundi verba necessest
the-air through much to-be-confused the-words must-needs
et conturbari vocem, dum transvolat auras.
and to-be-jumbled the-voice, while it-flies-across the-breezes.
ergo fit, sonitum ut possis sentire, neque illam
therefore it-comes-about, the-sound that you-can to-perceive, nor it
internoscere, verborum sententia quae sit:
to-distinguish, of-the-words the-meaning what it-is:
usque adeo confusa venit vox inque pedita.
right so-far confused comes the-voice and-in hampered.
praeterea verbum saepe unum perciet auris
besides a-word often one rouses the-ears
omnibus in populo, missum praeconis ab ore.
of-all in the-people, sent of-the-crier from the-mouth.
in multas igitur voces vox una repente
into many therefore voices voice one suddenly
diffugit, in privas quoniam se dividit auris,
scatters, into single since itself it-divides ears,
obsignans formam verbi clarumque sonorem.
stamping the-form of-the-word and-the-clear sound.
at quae pars vocum non auris incidit ipsas,
but which part of-voices not the-ears falls-on themselves,
praeterlata perit frustra diffusa per auras:
carried-past perishes in-vain spread through the-breezes:
pars solidis adlisa locis reiecta sonorem
part on-solid dashed places thrown-back the-sound
reddit et interdum frustratur imagine verbi.
returns and sometimes cheats with-the-image of-a-word.

Lonely rocks return our words in order when we call our scattered comrades, and Lucretius has seen six or seven places give back a single shout, hill passing it to hill. The country people imagine that goat-footed satyrs, nymphs, and fauns live in such places, breaking the night's silence with their play and music, while Pan runs his lip over the reeds. They tell these marvels lest their places be thought deserted by the gods, or for some other reason, since all mankind is too greedy for listeners.

quae bene cum videas, rationem reddere possis
which well when you-see, account to-render you-could
tute tibi atque aliis, quo pacto per loca sola
yourself to-yourself and to-others, in-what way through places lonely
saxa paris formas verborum ex ordine reddant,
rocks equal shapes of-words in order return,
palantis comites cum montis inter opacos
wandering comrades when the-mountains among dark
quaerimus et magna dispersos voce ciemus.
we-seek and with-great scattered voice call.
sex etiam aut septem loca vidi reddere vocis,
six even or seven places I-have-seen to-return voices,
unam cum iaceres: ita colles collibus ipsi
one when you-threw: so hills to-hills themselves
verba repulsantes iterabant docta referri.
words beating-back repeated taught to-be-carried-back.
haec loca capripedes satyros nymphasque tenere
these places goat-footed satyrs and-nymphs to-hold
finitimi fingunt, et faunos esse locuntur,
the-neighbors imagine, and fauns to-be they-say,
quorum noctivago strepitu ludoque iocanti
whose by-night-wandering din and-play jesting

adfirmant volgo taciturna silentia rumpi,
they-affirm commonly the-silent stillnesses to-be-broken,
chordarumque sonos fieri, dulcisque querellas,
and-of-strings the-sounds to-arise, and-sweet laments,
tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,
the-pipe which pours by-the-fingers struck of-players,
et genus agricolum late sentiscere, quom Pan
and the-race of-countrymen far-and-wide to-perceive, when Pan
pinea semiferi capitis velamina quassans
the-pine of-his-half-beast head coverings shaking
unco saepe labro calamos percurrit hiantis,
with-curved often lip the-reeds runs-over gaping,
fistula silvestrem ne cesset fundere musam.
the-pipe woodland lest cease to-pour-forth music.
cetera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta loquuntur,
the-rest of kind this monsters and portents they-tell,
ne loca deserta ab divis quoque forte putentur
lest the-places lonely by the-gods too perchance be-thought
sola tenere. ideo iactant miracula dictis,
alone to-hold. therefore they-boast marvels in-words,
aut aliqua ratione alia ducuntur, ut omne
or by-some reason other are-led, as all
humanum genus est avidum nimis † auricularum.
human kind is greedy too-much (corrupt) of-ears.

A voice can be heard through closed doors where sight cannot pass, because a voice goes unharmed through winding passages while an image is torn unless the passages are straight, as in glass. A voice also divides into many, as a spark scatters into fires, and fills the hidden places around, but images travel only in straight lines; even so a voice is blunted in passing walls and reaches us confused.

Quod superest, non est mirandum qua ratione,
What remains, not it-is to-be-wondered-at by-what means,
per loca quae nequeunt oculi res cernere apertas,
through places where cannot the-eyes things to-see plain,
haec loca per voces veniant aurisque lacessant,
these places through voices come and-the-ears provoke,
conloquium ut clausis foribus quoque saepe videmus;
a-conversation as with-shut doors also often we-see;
nimirum, quia vox per flexa foramina rerum
doubtless, because the-voice through winding passages of-things
incolumis transire potest, simulacra renutant:
unharmed to-pass can, the-images refuse:
perscinduntur enim, nisi recta foramina tranant,
they-are-torn-apart for, unless straight passages they-swim-through,
qualia sunt vitri, species qua travolat omnis.
such-as are of-glass, the-sight through-which flies-through every.
praeterea partis in cunctas dividitur vox,
besides parts into all is-divided the-voice,
ex aliis aliae quoniam gignuntur, ubi una
from others others since are-begotten, when one
dissiluit semel in multas exorta, quasi ignis
has-leapt-apart once into many sprung-forth, as-it-were fire

saepe solet scintilla suos se spargere in ignis.
often is-wont a-spark its-own itself to-scatter into fires.
ergo replentur loca vocibus abdita retro
therefore are-filled places with-voices hidden backward
omniaque his circum fervunt sonituque cientur.
and-all-things with-these around seethe and-with-sound are-stirred.
at simulacra viis derectis omnia tendunt,
but the-images in-ways direct all strive,
ut sunt missa semel; quapropter cernere nemo
as they-are sent once; wherefore to-see no-one
saepta intra potis est, at voces accipere extra.
walls within able is, but voices to-receive outside.
et tamen ipsa quoque haec, dum transit clausa domorum,
and yet itself too this, while it-passes the-closed-parts of-houses,
vox optunditur atque auris confusa penetrat,
the-voice is-blunted and the-ears confused pierces,
et sonitum potius quam verba audire videmur.
and a-sound rather than words to-hear we-seem.

IV.22 · TASTE, AND WHY ONE MAN'S FOOD IS ANOTHER'S POISON

Flavor is felt when food is pressed out by chewing into the pores of the tongue and palate, pleasant when its bodies are smooth and harsh when rough, and the pleasure ends at the throat. What is food to one creature is poison to another, as hellebore fattens goats and quails, because the pores and the seeds of things differ in shape; and a fever, shaking the body's order, makes sweet things taste bitter.

Nec, quis sentimus sucum, lingua atque palatum
Nor, with-which we-perceive flavor, tongue and palate
plusculum habent in se rationis plus operaeve.
a-little-more have in themselves of-reasoning more or-of-pains.

principio sucum sentimus in ore, cibum cum
first flavor we-perceive in the-mouth, the-food when
mandendo exprimimus, ceu plenam spongiam aquai
by-chewing we-press-out, as a-full sponge of-water
siquis forte manu premere ac siccare coëpit.
if-anyone perchance with-the-hand to-press and to-dry began.
inde quod exprimimus per caulas omne palati
thence what we-press-out through the-pores all of-the-palate
diditur et rarae per flexa foramina linguae.
is-spread and of-the-loose through winding passages tongue.
hoc ubi levia sunt manantis corpora suci,
this when smooth are of-the-oozing the-bodies flavor,
suaviter attingunt et suaviter omnia tractant
pleasantly they-touch and pleasantly all-things handle
umida linguai circum sudantia templa:
moist of-the-tongue around sweating precincts:
at contra pungunt sensum lacerantque coorta,
but conversely they-prick the-sense and-tear having-risen,
quanto quaeque magis sunt asperitate repleta.
by-how-much each the-more are with-roughness filled.
deinde voluptas est e suco fine palati:
next the-pleasure is from flavor within-the-bounds of-the-palate:
cum vero deorsum per fauces praecipitavit,
when but down through the-throat it-has-plunged,
nulla voluptas est, dum omnis in diditur artus;
no pleasure is, while all into is-spread the-frame;
nec refert quicquam quo victu corpus alatur,
nor does-it-matter at-all on-what fare the-body is-nourished,
dummodo quod capias concoctum didere possis
provided-that what you-take digested to-distribute you-can

artubus et stomachi umectum servare tenorem.
to-the-limbs and of-the-stomach the-moist to-keep tenor.

Nunc aliis alius qui sit cibus ut videamus
Now for-others other what is food that we-may-see

expediam, quareve, aliis quod triste et amarumst,
I-will-explain, or-why, to-others what harsh and bitter-is,

635 hoc tamen esse aliis possit perdulce videri,
this yet to-be to-others can very-sweet to-seem,

tantaque in his rebus distantia differitasque,
and-so-great in these things the-distance and-difference,

ut quod ali cibus est aliis fuat acre venenum;
that what for-one food is for-others be sharp poison;

est ut quae serpens, hominis quae tacta salivis
there-is so-that a-certain serpent, of-man which touched by-the-spittle

disperit ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa.
perishes and itself by-gnawing destroys itself.

640 praeterea nobis veratrumst acre venenum,
besides for-us hellebore-is sharp poison,

at capris adipes et coturnicibus auget.
but for-goats fat and for-quails it-increases.

ut quibus id fiat rebus cognoscere possis,
that by-what this is-done things to-learn you-may,

principio meminisse decet quae diximus ante,
first to-remember it-befits what we-said before,

semina multimodis in rebus mixta teneri.
seeds in-many-ways in things mixed to-be-held.

645 porro omnes quaecumque cibum capiunt animantes,
further all whatsoever food take living-creatures,

ut sunt dissimiles extrinsecus et generatim
as they-are unlike outwardly and by-kind

extima membrorum circum caesura coërcet,
the-outermost of-the-limbs around outline confines,
proinde ex seminibus constant variante figura.
so from seeds they-consist of-varying shape.
semina cum porro distent, differre necessest
the-seeds since further differ, to-differ must-needs
intervalla viasque, foramina quae perhibemus,
the-intervals and-paths, the-passages which we-call,
omnibus in membris et in ore ipsoque palato:
all in the-limbs and in the-mouth and-the-very palate:
esse minora igitur quaedam maioraque debent,
to-be smaller therefore some and-larger ought,
esse triquetra aliis, aliis quadrata necessest,
to-be three-cornered for-some, for-some square must-needs,
multa rutunda, modis multis multangula quaedam.
many round, in-ways many many-angled some.
namque figurarum ratio ut motusque reposcunt,
for of-the-shapes the-law as and-the-motions demand,
proinde foraminibus debent differre figurae,
so in-the-passages ought to-differ the-shapes,
et variare viae proinde ac textura coërcet.
and to-vary the-paths just as the-texture confines.
hoc ubi quod suavest aliis aliis fit amarum,
this when what sweet-is to-some to-some becomes bitter,
illi, cui suavest, levissima corpora debent
for-him, to-whom it-is-sweet, the-smoothest bodies must
contractabiliter caulas intrare palati,
caressingly the-pores to-enter of-the-palate,
at contra quibus est eadem res intus acerba,
but conversely to-whom is the-same thing within bitter,

aspera, nimirum, penetrant hamataque fauces.
rough-ones, doubtless, pierce and-hooked the-throat.
nunc facilest ex his rebus cognoscere quaeque:
now easy-it-is from these things to-learn each-thing:
quippe, ubi cui febris bili superante coortast
for, when for-anyone a-fever with-bile prevailing has-risen
aut alia ratione aliquast vis excita morbi,
or by-other means some-is force roused of-disease,
perturbatur ibi iam totum corpus, et omnes
is-thrown-into-confusion there now the-whole body, and all
commutantur ibi positurae principiorum;
are-changed there the-positions of-the-first-elements;
ut prius ad sensum quae corpora conveniebant
so-that before to the-sense which bodies suited
nunc non conveniant, et cetera sint magis apta,
now not suit, and the-rest be more fit,
quae penetrata queunt sensum progignere acerbum.
which having-pierced can a-sense to-beget sour.
utraque enim sunt in mellis commixta sapore.
both for are in of-honey mingled the-flavor.

Smells flow from many things, but some suit some creatures better, so bees follow honey, vultures carrion, dogs the track of beasts, and the goose that saved the Romans' citadel scents men. Smell travels slowly and dies on the way, which is why dogs lose the trail. So too some sights are harsher to some eyes: lions cannot face the cock, whose seeds stab their pupils yet do our eyes no harm.

Nunc age, quo pacto naris adiectus odoris
Now come, in-what way the-nostrils the-approach of-smell
tangat agam. primum res multas esse necessest
touches I-will-treat. first things many to-be must-needs
unde fluens volvat varius se fluctus odorum;
whence flowing rolls varied itself a-tide of-smells;
et fluere et mitti volgo spargique putandumst:
both to-flow and to-be-sent commonly and-to-be-scattered must-be-thought:
verum aliis alius magis est animantibus aptus,
but for-others other more is living-creatures fit,
dissimilis propter formas. ideoque per auras
unlike because-of shapes. and-therefore through the-breezes
mellis apes quamvis longe ducuntur odore,
of-honey bees however far are-led by-the-smell,
volturiique cadaveribus: tum fissa ferarum
and-vultures by-corpses: then the-cloven of-beasts
ungula quo tulerit gressum permissa canum vis
the-hoof where has-carried its-step let-loose of-dogs the-force
ducit, et humanum longe praesentit odorem
leads, and human from-afar scents the-smell
Romulidarum arcis servator, candidus anser.
of-the-Romulids of-the-citadel the-preserver, the-white goose.

sic aliis alius nidor datus ad sua quemque
so to-others other a-scent given to its-own each
pabula ducit et a tetro resilire veneno
fodder leads and from foul to-spring-back poison
cogit, eoque modo servantur saecla ferarum.
compels, and-in-that way are-preserved the-generations of-beasts.
Hic odor ipse igitur, naris quicumque lacessit,
This smell itself therefore, the-nostrils whatever provokes,
est alio ut possit permitti longius alter:
is than-another that it-can to-be-sent farther another:
sed tamen haud quisquam tam longe fertur eorum
but yet not any so far is-borne of-them
quam sonitus, quam vox, mitto iam dicere quam res
as sound, as voice, I-pass-over now to-speak-of as the-things
quae feriunt oculorum acies visumque lacessunt.
which strike of-the-eyes the-sight and-the-vision provoke.
errabundus enim tarde venit, ac perit ante
wandering for slowly it-comes, and perishes before
paulatim facilis distractus in aëris auras,
little-by-little easily scattered into of-air the-breezes,
ex alto primum quia vix emittitur ex re:
from the-deep first because scarcely it-is-sent-out from the-thing:
nam penitus fluere atque recedere rebus odores
for deeply to-flow and to-withdraw from-things smells
significat quod fracta magis redolere videntur
shows that broken more to-smell seem
omnia, quod contrita, quod igni conlabefacta:
all-things, that crushed, that by-fire made-to-collapse:
deinde videre licet maioribus esse creatum
next to-see one-may of-larger to-be created

principiis quam vox, quoniam per saxea saepta
first-elements than the-voice, since through stony walls
non penetrat, qua vox volgo sonitusque feruntur.
not it-pierces, where the-voice commonly and-sound are-borne.
quare etiam quod olet non tam facile esse videbis
wherefore again what smells not so easy to-be you-will-see
investigare in qua sit regione locatum:
to-track-down in which it-is region placed:
refrigescit enim cunctando plaga per auras,
grows-cold for by-lingering the-blow through the-breezes,
nec calida ad sensum decurrunt nuntia rerum.
nor hot to the-sense run-down the-messages of-things.
errant saepe canes itaque et vestigia quaerunt.
stray often dogs therefore and the-tracks seek.
Nec tamen hoc solis in odoribus atque saporum
Nor yet this alone in smells and of-flavors
in generest, sed item species rerum atque colores
in kind-is, but likewise the-appearances of-things and colors
non ita conveniunt ad sensus omnibus omnes,
not so suit to the-senses for-all all,
ut non sint aliis quaedam magis acria visu.
that not be for-some some more sharp to-the-sight.
quin etiam gallum, noctem explaudentibus alis
nay even the-cock, the-night with-clapping-away wings
auroram clara consuetum voce vocare,
the-dawn with-clear wont voice to-call,
noenu queunt rabidi contra constare leones
by-no-means can raging opposite to-stand lions
inque tueri: ita continuo meminere fugai,
and-in to-look: so straightway they-remember of-flight,

nimirum, quia sunt gallorum in corpore quaedam
doubtless, because there-are of-cocks in the-body some
semina, quae cum sunt oculis inmissa leonum,
seeds, which when are into-the-eyes sent of-lions,
pupillas interfodiunt acremque dolorem
the-pupils they-dig-through and-sharp pain
praebent, ut nequeant contra durare feroces;
afford, so-that they-cannot opposite to-hold-out fierce;
cum tamen haec nostras acies nil laedere possint,
although yet these our sight not-at-all to-hurt can,
aut quia non penetrant, aut quod penetrantibus illis
either because not they-pierce, or because with-piercing them
exitus ex oculis liber datur, in remorando
an-exit from the-eyes free is-given, in lingering
laedere ne possint ex ulla lumina parte.
to-hurt lest they-can from any the-eyes part.

IV.24 · WHAT MOVES THE MIND

Thin images wander everywhere and join easily in the air, finer even than those that move the eyes, and they strike the mind directly. So we see centaurs, an image of horse and man stuck together, and Scyllas, and the dead in sleep, when the senses rest and memory sleeps and cannot refute the false. Images seem to move in dreams because one perishes and the next is born in a new posture.

Nunc age, quae moveant animum res accipe, et unde
Now come, what move the-mind things hear, and whence
quae veniunt veniant in mentem percipe paucis.
what-things come come into the-mind learn in-few-words.
principio hoc dico, rerum simulacra vagari
first this I-say, of-things images to-wander

multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis
many in-ways many into all everywhere parts
tenvia, quae facile inter se iunguntur in auris,
thin, which easily among themselves are-joined in the-breezes,
obvia cum veniunt, ut aranea bratteaque auri.
meeting when they-come, like a-cobweb and-leaf of-gold.
quippe etenim multo magis haec sunt tenvia textu
for indeed by-much more these are thin in-texture
quam quae percipiunt oculos visumque lacessunt,
than those-which take-hold-of the-eyes and-the-vision provoke,
corporis haec quoniam penetrant per rara cientque
of-the-body these since pierce through the-loose-parts and-stir
tenvem animi naturam intus sensumque lacessunt.
the-thin of-mind nature within and-the-sense provoke.
Centauros itaque et Scyllarum membra videmus
Centaurs therefore and of-Scyllas the-limbs we-see
Cerbereasque canum facies simulacraque eorum
and-Cerberus-like of-dogs faces and-images of-those
quorum morte obita tellus amplectitur ossa;
whose with-death met the-earth embraces the-bones;
omne genus quoniam passim simulacra feruntur,
of-every kind since everywhere images are-borne,
partim sponte sua quae fiunt aëre in ipso,
partly of-accord their-own which arise air in itself,
partim quae variis ab rebus cumque recedunt,
partly which various from things soever withdraw,
et quae confiunt ex horum facta figuris.
and which are-made from of-these made the-shapes.
nam certe ex vivo Centauri non fit imago,
for certainly from a-living Centaur not is-made an-image,

nulla fuit quoniam talis natura animalis:
none was since such the-nature of-a-living-creature:
verum ubi equi atque hominis casu convenit imago,
but when of-a-horse and of-a-man by-chance has-met the-image,
haerescit facile extemplo, quod diximus ante,
it-sticks easily forthwith, as we-said before,
propter subtilem naturam et tenvia texta.
because-of the-fine nature and thin texture.
cetera de genere hoc eadem ratione creantur.
the-rest of kind this by-the-same means are-created.
quae cum mobiliter summa levitate feruntur,
which when nimbly with-the-highest lightness are-borne,
ut prius ostendi, facile uno commovet ictu
as before I-showed, easily with-one moves blow
quaelibet una animum nobis subtilis imago:
any one the-mind for-us fine image:
tenvis enim mens est et mire mobilis ipsa.
thin for the-mind is and wondrously nimble itself.
Haec fieri ut memoro, facile hinc cognoscere possis:
These to-happen as I-relate, easily hence to-learn you-could:
quatenus hoc similest illi, quod mente videmus
in-so-far this like-is to-that, what with-the-mind we-see
atque oculis, simili fieri ratione necessest.
and with-the-eyes, in-like to-happen fashion must-needs.
nunc igitur quoniam docui me forte leonem
now therefore since I-have-shown me perchance a-lion
cernere per simulacra, oculos quaecumque lacessunt,
to-see through images, the-eyes whatsoever provoke,
scire licet mentem simili ratione moveri,
to-know one-may the-mind in-like fashion to-be-moved,

per simulacra leonem et cetera quae videt aeque
through images a-lion and the-rest which it-sees equally
nec minus atque oculi, nisi quod mage tenvia cernit.
and-not less than the-eyes, except that more thin-things it-discerns.
nec ratione alia, cum somnus membra profudit,
nor by-means other, when sleep the-limbs has-spread-out,
mens animi vigilat, nisi quod simulacra lacessunt
mind [intellect] of-mind wakes, except that the-images provoke
haec eadem nostros animos quae cum vigilamus,
these same our minds which when we-wake,
usque adeo, certe ut videamur cernere eum quem
right so-far, certainly that we-seem to-see him whom
rellicta vita iam mors et terra potitast.
with-left life now death and earth has-possessed.
hoc ideo fieri cogit natura, quod omnes
this therefore to-happen compels nature, because all
corporis offecti sensus per membra quiescunt
of-the-body hindered the-senses through the-limbs rest
nec possunt falsum veris convincere rebus.
nor can the-false by-true to-refute things.
praeterea meminisse iacet languetque sopore,
besides memory lies and-languishes in-slumber,
nec dissentit eum mortis letique potitum
nor dissents him of-death and-of-destruction possessed
iam pridem, quem mens vivom se cernere credit.
now long-since, whom the-mind alive itself to-see believes.
quod superest, non est mirum simulacra moveri
what remains, not it-is wonderful the-images to-move
bracchiaque in numerum iactare et cetera membra.
and-the-arms in time to-toss and the-rest limbs.

nam fit ut in somnis facere hoc videatur imago:
for it-comes-about that in sleep to-do this seems the-image:
quippe, ubi prima perit alioquest altera nata
for, when the-first perishes and-in-another-is a-second born
inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse videtur.
thence posture, the-former here its-gesture to-have-changed seems.
scilicet, id fieri celeri ratione putandumst:
surely, this to-happen by-swift means must-be-thought:
tantast mobilitas et rerum copia tanta,
so-great-is the-nimbleness and of-things the-store so-great,
tantaque sensibili quovis est tempore in uno
and-so-great perceptible any is time in one
copia particularum, ut possit suppeditare.
the-store of-particles, that it-can to-supply.

IV.25 · HOW THE MIND CALLS UP WHAT IT WANTS

Why does the mind see at once whatever it wishes? In any moment of perception countless moments lie hidden, so every kind of image is always at hand everywhere, but because the images are thin, the mind sees only those it strains toward and prepares for, as the eyes must strain to see small things. From small signs we leap to great conclusions and deceive ourselves, and in sleep a woman may become a man without our wondering.

Multaque in his rebus quaeruntur, multaque nobis
And-many in these things are-asked, and-many by-us
clarandumst, plane si res exponere avemus.
must-be-made-clear, plainly if things to-set-forth we-long.
quaeritur in primis quare, quod cuique libido
it-is-asked in the-first-place why, what to-each the-desire

venerit, extemplo mens cogitet eius id ipsum.
has-come, forthwith the-mind thinks of-it that very-thing.
anne voluntatem nostram simulacra tuentur,
whether will our the-images watch,
et simul ac volumus nobis occurrit imago,
and as-soon as we-wish to-us runs-to-meet the-image,
si mare, si terram cordist, si denique caelum?
if the-sea, if the-earth at-heart-is, if finally heaven?
conventus hominum, pompam, convivia, pugnas,
gatherings of-men, a-procession, feasts, battles,
omnia sub verbone creat natura paratque?
all-things beneath a-word-then creates nature and-prepares?
cum praesertim aliis eadem in regione locoque
when especially to-others the-same in region and-place
longe dissimilis animus res cogitet omnis.
far unlike the-mind things thinks all.
quid porro, in numerum procedere cum simulacra
what further, in time to-advance when the-images
cernimus in somnis et mollia membra movere,
we-discern in sleep and supple limbs to-move,
mollia, mobiliter cum alternis bracchia mittunt
supple, nimbly when by-turns the-arms they-fling
et repetunt ollis gestum pede convenienti?
and repeat to-them the-gesture with-foot fitting?
scilicet, arte madent simulacra et docta vagantur,
surely, with-art are-steeped the-images and taught they-wander,
nocturno facere ut possint in tempore ludos.
nightly to-perform that they-can in time plays.
an magis illud erit verum? quia tempore in uno,
or rather that will-be true? because time in one,

cum sentimus, id est cum vox emittitur una,
when we-perceive, that is when a-voice is-sent-out one,
tempora multa latent, ratio quae comperit esse,
times many lie-hidden, reasoning which finds to-be,
propterea fit uti quovis in tempore quaeque
therefore it-comes-about that any in time each
praesto sint simulacra locis in quisque parata.
at-hand be images places in each ready.
tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta.
so-great is the-nimbleness and of-things the-store so-great.
* * *
(lacuna)
hoc ubi prima perit alioquest altera nata
this when the-first perishes and-in-another-is a-second born
inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse videtur.
thence posture, the-former here its-gesture to-have-changed seems.
et quia tenvia sunt, nisi quae contendit, acute
and because thin they-are, except those-which it-strains, keenly
cernere non potis est animus: proinde omnia quae sunt
to-see not able is the-mind: therefore all which are
praeterea pereunt, nisi si ad quae se ipse paravit.
besides perish, except if to which itself itself has-prepared.
ipse parat sese porro speratque futurum
itself prepares itself further and-hopes it-will-come-about
ut videat quod consequitur rem quamque: fit ergo.
that it-sees what follows thing each: it-comes-about therefore.
nonne vides oculos etiam, cum tenvia quae sunt
do-you-not see the-eyes too, when thin-things which are
cernere coeperunt, contendere se atque parare,
to-see they-have-begun, to-strain themselves and to-prepare,

nec sine eo fieri posse ut cernamus acute?
nor without this to-happen to-be-able that we-discern keenly?
et tamen in rebus quoque apertis noscere possis,
and yet in things also plain to-know you-could,
si non advertas animum, proinde esse quasi omni
if not you-turn the-mind, just to-be as-it-were at-all
tempore semotum fuerit longeque remotum.
time set-apart it-had-been and-far removed.
cur igitur mirumst, animus si cetera perdit
why therefore wonderful-is-it, the-mind if the-rest loses
praeter quam quibus est in rebus deditus ipse?
except those which it-is in things given-over itself?
deinde adopinamur de signis maxima parvis
next we-conjecture from signs the-greatest small
ac nos in fraudem induimus frustraminis ipsi.
and ourselves into deceit we-put of-delusion ourselves.
Fit quoque ut interdum non suppeditetur imago
It-comes-about also that sometimes not is-supplied an-image
eiusdem generis, sed femina quae fuit ante,
of-the-same kind, but a-woman which was before,
in manibus vir uti factus videatur adesse,
in the-hands a-man as made seems to-be-present,
aut alia ex alia facies aetasque sequatur.
or other from other the-face and-age follows.
quod ne miremur sopor atque oblivia curant.
which lest we-wonder-at slumber and forgetfulness take-care.

Lucretius warns against thinking that the eyes were made so that we could see, the legs so that we could walk, or the hands so that we could work. Every limb was born first and its use came after: seeing did not exist before eyes, nor speech before tongues, and men fought with their hands before weapons and slept before beds. Only the things we invent were made for use.

Illud in his rebus vitium vementer avessis
That in these things fault vehemently you-should-desire
effugere, errorem vitareque praemetuenter,
to-escape, the-error and-to-shun with-forethought,
lumina ne facias oculorum clara creata,
the-lights lest you-think of-the-eyes bright created,
prospicere ut possemus, et ut proferre queamus
to-look-forward that we-might, and that to-advance we-may
proceros passus, ideo fastigia posse
long strides, therefore the-tops to-be-able
surarum ac feminum pedibus fundata plicari,
of-the-calves and of-the-thighs on-the-feet based to-bend,
brachia tum porro validis ex apta lacertis
the-arms then further strong from fitted upper-arms
esse manusque datas utraque ex parte ministras,
to-be and-hands given either from side as-servants,
ut facere ad vitam possemus quae foret usus.
that to-do for life we-might what-things would-be of-use.
cetera de genere hoc inter quaecumque pretantur,
the-rest of kind this inter- whatsoever -they-interpret,
omnia perversa praepostera sunt ratione,
all with-perverse preposterous are reasoning,

nil ideo quoniam natumst in corpore ut uti
nothing therefore since is-born in the-body that to-use
possemus, sed quod natumst id procreat usum.
we-might, but what is-born that begets the-use.
nec fuit ante videre oculorum lumina nata,
nor was before seeing of-the-eyes the-lights born,
nec dictis orare prius quam lingua creatast,
nor with-words to-plead before than the-tongue was-created,
sed potius longe linguae praecessit origo
but rather far of-the-tongue preceded the-origin
sermonem, multoque creatae sunt prius aures
speech, and-by-much created were before the-ears
quam sonus est auditus, et omnia denique membra
than sound was heard, and all finally the-limbs
ante fuere, ut opinor, eorum quam foret usus:
before were, as I-think, of-them than there-was the-use:
haud igitur potuere utendi crescere causa.
not therefore they-could of-using to-grow for-the-sake.
at contra conferre manu certamina pugnae
but conversely to-join by-hand the-contests of-battle
et lacerare artus foedareque membra cruore
and to-tear the-frame and-to-befoul the-members with-gore
ante fuit multo quam lucida tela volarent,
before was by-much than shining weapons flew,
et volnus vitare prius natura coëgit
and a-wound to-shun before nature compelled
quam daret obiectum parmai laeva per artem.
than gave set-against of-the-shield the-left through art.
scilicet, et fessum corpus mandare quieti
surely, both the-weary body to-commit to-rest

multo antiquius est quam lecti mollia strata,
by-much older is than of-the-bed the-soft coverlets,
et sedare sitim prius est quam pocula natum.
and to-allay thirst earlier is than cups born.
haec igitur possunt utendi cognita causa
these therefore can of-using known for-the-sake
credier, ex usu quae sunt vitaque reperta.
to-be-believed, from use which are and-life discovered.
illa quidem seorsum sunt omnia, quae prius ipsa
those indeed apart are all, which first themselves
nata dedere suae post notitiam utilitatis.
born gave of-their afterward the-notion usefulness.
quo genere in primis sensus et membra videmus;
in-which kind in the-first-place the-senses and limbs we-see;
quare etiam atque etiam procul est ut credere possis
wherefore again and again far it-is that to-believe you-can
utilitatis ob officium potuisse creari.
of-usefulness for the-service them-to-have-been-able to-be-created.

IV.27 · HOW WE WALK

Images of walking strike the mind, the will arises, the mind strikes the spirit spread through the body, and the spirit strikes the body, so the whole mass is pushed forward, helped by air pouring in through its pores, as a ship is driven by sails and wind. Nor is it wonderful that small bodies move a great one, since the wind drives a great ship, one hand steers it, and machines lift great weights with light effort.

Nunc qui fiat uti passus proferre queamus,
Now how it-comes-about that steps to-advance we-can,
cum volumus, varieque datum sit membra movere,
when we-wish, and-variously given it-is the-limbs to-move,

et quae res tantum hoc oneris protrudere nostri
and what thing so-great this of-burden to-thrust-forward of-our
corporis insuerit, dicam: tu percipe dicta.
body is-wont, I-will-tell: you take-in my-words.
dico animo nostro primum simulacra meandi
I-say to-mind our first images of-walking
accidere atque animum pulsare, ut diximus ante.
to-befall and the-mind to-strike, as we-said before.
inde voluntas fit: neque enim facere incipit ullam
thence will arises: nor for to-do begins any
rem quisquam, quam mens providit quid velit ante.
thing anyone, than the-mind has-foreseen what it-wills before.
id quod providet, illius rei constat imago.
that which it-foresees, of-that thing consists the-image.
ergo animus cum sese ita commovet ut velit ire
therefore the-mind when itself so stirs that it-wills to-go
inque gredi, ferit extemplo quae in corpore toto,
and-in to-step, it-strikes forthwith what in the-body whole,
per membra atque artus, animai dissita vis est:
through limbs and the-frame, of-the-spirit scattered force is:
et facilest factu, quoniam coniuncta tenetur.
and easy-it-is to-do, since joined it-is-held.
inde ea proporro corpus ferit, atque ita tota
thence that further the-body strikes, and so the-whole
paulatim moles protruditur atque movetur.
little-by-little mass is-thrust-forward and is-moved.
praeterea tum rarescit quoque corpus, et aër,
besides then grows-loose also the-body, and air,
scilicet, ut debet qui semper mobilis extat,
surely, as must which always nimble stands,

per patefacta venit penetratque foramina largus,
through opened-up comes and-pierces the-passages abundant,
et dispargitur ad partis ita quasque minutas
and is-scattered to parts so each minute
corporis. his igitur rebus fit utrimque duabus,
of-the-body. by-these therefore things it-comes-about on-both-sides two,
aeque id ut ac navis velis ventoque feratur.
equally it that as a-ship by-sails and-wind is-borne.
nec tamen illud in his rebus mirabile constat,
nor yet that in these things wonderful stands,
tantula quod tantum corpus corpuscula possunt
so-tiny that so-great a-body little-bodies can
contorquere et onus totum convertere nostrum:
to-wheel and the-burden whole to-turn our:
quippe etenim ventus subtili corpore tenvis
for indeed the-wind with-fine body thin
trudit agens magnam magno molimine navem,
thrusts driving a-great with-great effort ship,
et manus una regit quantovis impete euntem
and a-hand one rules at-however-great speed going
atque gubernaclum contorquet quolibet unum,
and the-rudder wheels anywhere one,
multaque, per trocleas et tympana, pondere magno
and-many-things, through pulleys and treadwheels, of-weight great
commovet atque levi sustollit machina nisu.
moves and with-light lifts-up a-machine effort.

Living creatures lose many bodies through the mouth when they pant and through sweat, so the body grows loose and pain follows; food is taken to prop up the limbs and restore strength, and to stop the gaping desire for eating. Liquid flows wherever moisture is needed and quenches the many bodies of heat that kindle the stomach, as water quenches fire, and so thirst and hunger are satisfied.

Illud item non est mirandum, corporis ipsa
That likewise not is to-be-wondered-at, of-the-body itself
quod natura cibum quaerit cuiusque animantis.
that the-nature food seeks of-each living-creature.
quippe etenim fluere atque recedere corpora rebus
for indeed to-flow and to-withdraw bodies from-things
multa modis multis docui, sed plurima debent
many in-ways many I-have-taught, but most must
ex animalibu'; quae quia sunt exercita motu,
from living-creatures; which because they-are worked by-motion,
multa per os exhalantur, cum languida anhelant,
many through the-mouth are-breathed-out, when weary they-pant,
multaque per sudorem ex alto pressa feruntur.
and-many through sweat from the-depth squeezed are-borne.
his igitur rebus rarescit corpus et omnis
by-these therefore things grows-loose the-body and all
subruitur natura; dolor quam consequitur rem.
is-undermined the-nature; pain which follows thing.
propterea capitur cibus, ut suffulciat artus
therefore is-taken food, that it-may-prop-up the-frame
et recreet vires interdatus, atque patentem
and restore the-strength given-between, and gaping

per membra ac venas ut amorem opturet edendi.
through limbs and veins that the-love it-may-stop of-eating.
umor item discedit in omnia quae loca cumque
moisture likewise goes-apart into all which places soever
poscunt umorem; glomerataque multa vaporis
demand moisture; and-massed many of-vapor
corpora, quae stomacho praebent incendia nostro,
bodies, which to-the-stomach afford burnings our,
dissupat adveniens liquor ac restinguit ut ignem,
scatters arriving the-liquid and quenches as fire,
urere ne possit calor amplius aridus artus.
to-burn lest can the-heat further dry the-frame.
sic igitur tibi anhela sitis de corpore nostro
so therefore for-you panting thirst from body our
abluitur, sic expletur ieiuna cupido.
is-washed-away, so is-filled fasting desire.

IV.29 · WHAT SLEEP IS

Lucretius asks for attentive ears before explaining sleep. Sleep comes when the force of the spirit is scattered through the frame, part of it thrown out and part driven deeper inside, and the limbs then loosen and flow. If no part remained hidden in the limbs, as fire lies hid under ash, sense could not be rekindled, and the body would lie steeped in the everlasting cold of death.

Nunc quibus ille modis somnus per membra quietem
Now in-what that ways sleep through the-limbs rest
inriget atque animi curas e pectore solvat,
waters and of-mind the-cares from the-breast looses,
suavidicis potius quam multis versibus edam;
in-sweet-spoken rather than many verses I-shall-set-forth;

parvus ut est cycni melior canor, ille gruum quam
small as is of-the-swan better the-song, that of-cranes than
clamor in aetheriis dispersus nubibus austri.
clamor in airy scattered clouds of-the-south-wind.
tu mihi da tenuis aures animumque sagacem,
you to-me give fine ears and-a-mind keen,
ne fieri negites quae dicam posse, retroque
lest to-happen you-deny which I-shall-say to-be-able, and-back
vera repulsanti discedas pectore dicta,
true with-repelling you-go-away breast words,
tutemet in culpa cum sis neque cernere possis.
you-yourself in fault when you-are nor to-see can.
principio somnus fit ubist distracta per artus
first sleep arises when-is scattered through the-frame
vis animae partimque foras eiecta recessit
the-force of-spirit and-partly outward thrown has-withdrawn
et partim contrusa magis concessit in altum:
and partly thrust-together more has-retired into the-depth:
dissoluuntur enim tum demum membra fluuntque.
are-loosened for then at-last the-limbs and-flow.
nam dubium non est, animai quin opera sit
for doubtful not it-is, of-the-spirit but-that by-the-work is
sensus hic in nobis, quem cum sopor inpedit esse,
sense this in us, which when slumber hinders to-be,
tum nobis animam perturbatam esse putandumst
then for-us the-spirit disturbed to-be must-be-thought
eiectamque foras; non omnem: namque iaceret
and-thrown outward; not all: for would-lie
aeterno corpus perfusum frigore leti.
with-everlasting the-body drenched cold of-death.

quippe, ubi nulla latens animai pars remaneret
for, when no lurking of-the-spirit part should-remain
in membris, cinere ut multa latet obrutus ignis,
in the-limbs, in-ash as much lies-hid covered fire,
unde reconflari sensus per membra repente
whence to-be-rekindled sense through the-limbs suddenly
posset, ut ex igni caeco consurgere flamma?
could, as from fire hidden to-rise-up a-flame?

IV.30 · WHY THE SPIRIT IS DISTURBED IN SLEEP

The body is beaten from outside by the air and from inside by the breath, so that the blows reach its first parts and elements and cause a kind of collapse. Part of the spirit is thrown out, part is driven inward, and part, scattered through the frame, cannot keep its motions together, so sense departs and the limbs give way. Food does the same, and the deepest sleep comes on the full or the weary.

Sed quibus haec rebus novitas confiat, et unde
But by-what this things the-novelty is-brought-about, and whence
perturbari anima et corpus languescere possit,
to-be-disturbed the-spirit and the-body to-grow-faint can,
expediam: tu fac ne ventis verba profundam.
I-will-explain: you make-sure lest to-the-winds words I-pour-out.
principio externa corpus de parte necessumst,
first outer the-body from part must-needs,
aëriis quoniam vicinum tangitur auris,
by-airy since neighboring it-is-touched breezes,
tundier atque eius crebro pulsarier ictu,
to-be-beaten and of-it with-frequent to-be-struck blow,
proptereaque fere res omnes aut corio sunt
and-therefore nearly things all either with-hide are

aut etiam conchis aut callo aut cortice tectae.
or also with-shells or with-callus or with-bark covered.
interiorem etiam partem spirantibus aër
the-inner also part in-those-breathing air
verberat hic idem, cum ducitur atque reflatur.
lashes this same, when it-is-drawn-in and breathed-out.
quare utrimque secus cum corpus vapulet, et cum
wherefore on-both sides when the-body is-beaten, and when
perveniant plagae per parva foramina nobis
make-their-way the-blows through small passages to-us
corporis ad primas partis elementaque prima,
of-the-body to the-first parts and-elements first,
fit quasi paulatim nobis per membra ruina.
there-comes as-it-were little-by-little to-us through the-limbs a-collapse.
conturbantur enim positurae principiorum
are-thrown-into-confusion for the-positions of-the-first-elements
corporis atque animi. fit uti pars inde animai
of-body and of-mind. it-comes-about that a-part thence of-the-spirit
eiciatur, et introrsum pars abdita cedat,
is-thrown-out, and inward a-part hidden withdraws,
pars etiam distracta per artus non queat esse
a-part also scattered through the-frame not can to-be
coniuncta inter se neque motu mutua fungi:
joined among themselves nor with-motion mutual to-act:
inter enim saepit coetus natura viasque:
in-between for hedges the-gatherings nature and-the-ways:
ergo sensus abit mutatis motibus alte,
therefore sense departs with-changed the-motions deep,
et quoniam non est quasi quod suffulciat artus,
and since not there-is as-it-were what may-prop-up the-frame,

debile fit corpus, languescuntque omnia membra,
weak becomes the-body, and-languish all the-limbs,
bracchia palpebraeque cadunt, poplitesque † cubanti
the-arms and-eyelids fall, and-the-hams (corrupt) in-one-lying
saepe tamen summittuntur virisque resolvunt.
often yet give-way and-the-strength release.
deinde cibum sequitur somnus, quia, quae facit aër,
next food follows sleep, because, what does air,
haec eadem cibus, in venas dum diditur omnis,
these same-things food, into the-veins while it-is-spread all,
efficit. et multo sopor ille gravissimus exstat,
brings-about. and by-much slumber that heaviest stands,
quem satur aut lassus capias, quia plurima tum se
which full or weary you-take, because the-most then themselves
corpora conturbant magno contusa labore.
bodies disturb by-great bruised labor.
fit ratione eadem coniectus partim animai
there-comes by-means the-same the-thrusting partly of-the-spirit
altior, atque foras eiectus largior eius,
deeper, and outward the-throwing larger of-it,
et divisior inter se ac distractior intus
and more-divided among itself and more-scattered within
* * *
(lacuna)

We dream of what we have been busy with: pleaders plead, generals fight, sailors battle the winds, and Lucretius seeks the nature of things and sets it out in his native tongue. Those who have watched the games for days still see dancers and hear the lyre. Horses race in their sleep and hunting dogs sniff after game; men storm kings, are captured, or cry out as if their throats were cut; the thirsty sit by rivers, a boy dreams he relieves himself, and a youth dreams of a beautiful face, for different things rouse different creatures, and only a human being rouses human seed.

Et quo quisque fere studio devinctus adhaeret,
And to-what each nearly pursuit bound clings,
aut quibus in rebus multum sumus ante morati
or what in things much we-have before lingered
atque in ea ratione fuit contenta magis mens,
and in that reasoning has-been strained more the-mind,
in somnis eadem plerumque videmur obire:
in sleep the-same mostly we-seem to-go-through:
causidici causas agere et componere leges,
pleaders cases to-plead and to-draw-up laws,
induperatores pugnare ac proelia obire,
generals to-fight and battles to-go-through,
nautae contractum cum ventis degere duellum,
sailors joined with the-winds to-wage war,
nos agere hoc autem et naturam quaerere rerum
we to-pursue this but and the-nature to-seek of-things
semper et inventam patriis exponere chartis.
always and found in-our-fathers' to-set-forth pages.
cetera sic studia atque artes plerumque videntur
the-rest so pursuits and arts mostly seem

in somnis animos hominum frustrata tenere.
in sleep the-minds of-men deceiving to-hold.
et quicumque dies multos ex ordine ludis
and whosoever days many in order to-the-games
adsiduas dederunt operas, plerumque videmus,
unflagging have-given attention, mostly we-see,
cum iam destiterunt ea sensibus usurpare,
when now they-have-ceased them with-the-senses to-use,
relicuas tamen esse vias in mente patentis,
remaining yet to-be ways in the-mind open,
qua possint eadem rerum simulacra venire:
whereby can the-same of-things images to-come:
per multos itaque illa dies eadem obversantur
through many therefore those days the-same hover
ante oculos, etiam vigilantes ut videantur
before the-eyes, even waking that they-seem
cernere saltantis et mollia membra moventis,
to-see dancing and supple limbs moving,
et citharae liquidum carmen chordasque loquentis
and of-the-lyre the-clear song and-strings speaking
auribus accipere, et consessum cernere eundem
with-the-ears to-receive, and the-assembly to-see the-same
scenaique simul varios splendere decores.
and-of-the-stage at-once the-various to-shine ornaments.
usque adeo magni refert studium atque voluptas,
right so-far of-great-importance is pursuit and pleasure,
et quibus in rebus consuerint esse operati
and what in things they-are-wont to-be engaged
non homines solum sed vero animalia cuncta.
not men only but indeed creatures all.

quippe videbis equos fortis, cum membra iacebunt,
for you-will-see horses strong, when their-limbs shall-lie,
in somnis sudare tamen spirareque semper
in sleep to-sweat yet and-to-pant always
et quasi de palma summas contendere viris
and as-it-were for the-palm the-utmost to-strain strength
aut quasi carceribus patefactis ...
or as-it-were the-barriers opened (lacuna)
venantumque canes in molli saepe quiete
and-of-hunters the-dogs in soft often rest
iactant crura tamen subito vocisque repente
toss their-legs yet suddenly and-voices suddenly
mittunt et crebro redducunt naribus auras,
send-out and frequently draw-back with-nostrils the-breezes,
ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum,
as the-tracks if they-were-holding found of-beasts,
expergefactique secuntur inania saepe
and-awakened follow empty often
cervorum simulacra, fugae quasi dedita cernant,
of-stags images, to-flight as-it-were given they-discern,
donec discussis redeunt erroribus ad se.
until with-shaken-off they-return the-errors to themselves.
at consueta domi catulorum blanda propago
but accustomed at-home of-puppies the-fawning offspring
discutere et corpus de terra corripere instant,
to-shake and the-body from the-ground to-snatch-up press-on,
proinde quasi ignotas facies atque ora tuantur.
just as-it-were unknown faces and mouths they-beheld.
et quo quaeque magis sunt aspera seminiorum,
and by-how-much each more are rough of-the-breeds,

tam magis in somnis eadem saevire necessust:
so the-more in sleep the-same to-rage must-needs:
at variae fugiunt volucres pinnisque repente
but various flee birds and-with-wings suddenly
sollicitant divom nocturno tempore lucos,
trouble of-the-gods at-night time the-groves,
accipitres somno in leni si proelia pugnas
hawks sleep in gentle if battles fights
edere sunt persectantes visaeque volantes.
to-show are pursuing and-seen flying.
porro hominum mentes, magnis qui motibus edunt
further of-men the-minds, with-great which motions bring-forth
magna, itidem saepe in somnis faciuntque geruntque,
great-deeds, likewise often in sleep both-do and-perform,
reges expugnant, capiuntur, proelia miscent,
kings they-storm, are-captured, battles join,
tollunt clamorem, quasi si iugulentur, ibidem.
raise a-shout, as-it-were if they-were-having-their-throats-cut, on-the-spot.
multi depugnant gemitusque doloribus edunt
many fight-it-out and-groans with-pains utter
et, quasi pantherae morsu saevive leonis
and, as-it-were of-a-panther by-the-bite or-of-a-savage lion
mandantur, magnis clamoribus omnia complent.
they-are-chewed, with-great shouts all-things fill.
multi de magnis per somnum rebu' loquuntur,
many about great in sleep things speak,
indicioque sui facti persaepe fuere.
and-an-evidence of-their-own deed very-often have-been.
multi mortem obeunt. multi, de montibus altis
many death meet. many, from mountains high

ut qui praecipitent ad terram, corpore toto
as-if who were-plunging to the-earth, with-body whole
externantur, et ex somno quasi mentibu' capti
are-frightened-out, and from sleep as-it-were in-mind seized
vix ad se redeunt, permoti corporis aestu.
scarcely to themselves return, shaken of-the-body by-the-turmoil.
flumen item sitiens aut fontem propter amoenum
a-river likewise thirsting or a-fountain beside pleasant
adsidet et totum prope faucibus occupat amnem.
he-sits and the-whole nearly with-his-throat takes-up stream.
pusi saepe lacum propter si ac dolia curta
little-boys often a-pool beside if and jars cut-down
somno devincti credunt se extollere vestem,
by-sleep bound believe themselves to-lift-up their-clothing,
totius umorem saccatum corpori' fundunt,
of-the-whole the-moisture strained of-the-body pour,
cum Babylonica magnifico splendore rigantur.
when Babylonian-coverlets with-magnificent splendor are-drenched.
tum quibus aetatis freta primitus insinuatur
then into-whom of-age the-straits first is-instilled
semen, ubi ipsa dies membris matura creavit,
the-seed, when itself the-day in-the-limbs ripe has-created,
conveniunt simulacra foris e corpore quoque,
meet images from-outside from body whatever,
nuntia praeclari voltus pulchrique coloris,
messengers of-a-glorious face and-of-beautiful complexion,
qui ciet inritans loca turgida semine multo,
which rouses provoking the-places swollen with-seed much,
ut quasi transactis saepe omnibu' rebu' profundant
so-that as-it-were accomplished often all things they-pour-forth

fluminis ingentis fluctus vestemque cruentent.
of-a-stream huge waves and-their-clothing stain.
namque alias aliud res commovet atque lacessit:
for other a-different-thing things stirs and provokes:
ex homine humanum semen ciet una hominis vis.
from a-man human seed rouses alone of-a-man the-force.

IV.32 · THE ORIGIN OF DESIRE

Seed is roused in us when ripe age first strengthens the limbs. Gathered from all the body into fixed places, it swells the genital parts, and the will arises to cast it toward the body by which the mind is wounded with love. As the wounded fall toward the wound and their blood spurts toward the one who struck them, so whoever is struck by Venus' darts, from a boy or a woman, strives toward the one who struck him and longs to unite.

Sollicitatur id in nobis, quod diximus ante,
Is-stirred that in us, which we-said before,
semen, adulta aetas cum primum roborat artus.
the-seed, grown age when first strengthens the-frame.
quod simul atque suis eiectum sedibus exit,
which as-soon as from-its thrown-out seats it-goes-out,
per membra atque artus decedit corpore toto,
through limbs and the-frame it-withdraws from-body whole,
in loca conveniens nervorum certa, cietque
into places meeting of-the-sinews fixed, and-rouses
continuo partis genitalis corporis ipsas.
straightway the-parts genital of-the-body themselves.
inritata tument loca semine, fitque voluntas
provoked swell the-places with-seed, and-arises the-will

eicere id quo se contendit dira lubido,
to-cast-out it toward-which itself strains dire lust,
idque petit corpus, mens undest saucia amore:
and-it seeks the-body, the-mind whence-is wounded by-love:
namque omnes plerumque cadunt in vulnus, et illam
for all mostly fall toward the-wound, and that
emicat in partem sanguis, unde icimur ictu,
spurts into direction the-blood, whence we-are-struck by-the-blow,
et si comminus est, hostem ruber occupat umor.
and if close-at-hand it-is, the-foe red seizes the-moisture.
sic igitur Veneris qui telis accipit ictus,
so therefore of-Venus who from-the-weapons receives the-blows,
sive puer membris muliebribus hunc iaculatur
whether a-boy with-limbs womanly him shoots
seu mulier toto iactans e corpore amorem,
or a-woman whole darting from body love,
unde feritur, eo tendit, gestitque coire
whence he-is-struck, thither he-strives, and-longs to-unite
et iacere umorem in corpus de corpore ductum:
and to-cast the-moisture into body from body drawn:
namque voluptatem praesagit muta cupido.
for the-pleasure foretells dumb desire.

This is Venus for us, and from here comes the impulse of love; from here the first drop of sweetness falls into the heart, followed by chill care. If the beloved is absent, her images remain and her name hovers at the ears. Lucretius advises fleeing those images, turning the mind elsewhere, and spending desire on any body rather than keeping it for one, since the sore festers and the madness grows with feeding.

Haec Venus est nobis: hinc autemst momen amoris,
This Venus is to-us: hence but-is the-impulse of-love,
hinc illaec. primum Veneris dulcedinis in cor
hence that. first of-Venus of-sweetness into the-heart
stillavit gutta, et successit frigida cura:
has-dripped a-drop, and has-followed chill care:
nam si abest quod aves, praesto simulacra tamen sunt
for if is-absent what you-long-for, at-hand the-images yet are
illius et nomen dulce obversatur ad auris.
of-it and the-name sweet hovers at the-ears.
sed fugitare decet simulacra et pabula amoris
but to-flee it-befits the-images and the-food of-love
absterrere sibi atque alio convertere mentem
to-scare-off from-oneself and elsewhere to-turn the-mind
et iacere umorem conlectum in corpora quaeque,
and to-cast the-moisture gathered into bodies any,
nec retinere, semel conversum unius amore,
nor to-keep-it, once turned of-one by-the-love,
et servare sibi curam certumque dolorem:
and to-store-up for-oneself care and-sure pain:
ulcus enim vivescit et inveterascit alendo,
the-sore for quickens and grows-chronic by-feeding,

inque dies gliscit furor atque aerumna gravescit,
and-from-day-to day grows the-madness and the-woe grows-heavy,
si non prima novis conturbes volnera plagis
if not the-first with-new you-confound wounds blows
volgivagaque vagus Venere ante recentia cures
and-with-roaming roving Venus before fresh you-cure-them
aut alio possis animi traducere motus.
or elsewhere you-can of-mind to-turn the-motions.

IV.34 · THE TORMENT OF THE LOVER

Whoever shuns love does not lack the fruit of Venus, for pleasure is purer for the sound than for the wretched. Lovers waver even in possession, and bite and bruise what they hold, goaded to hurt it. They hope the body that kindled the flame can quench it, but from a beautiful face nothing passes into the body except thin images, and like a thirsty dreamer they are never sated: even in embrace they can take nothing from the body, and after a brief pause the same frenzy returns, and they waste from a hidden wound.

Nec Veneris fructu caret is qui vitat amorem,
Nor of-Venus of-the-fruit lacks he who shuns love,
sed potius quae sunt sine poena commoda sumit:
but rather the-things-which are without penalty advantages takes:
nam certe purast sanis magis inde voluptas
for certainly purer-is for-the-sound more thence the-pleasure
quam miseris. etenim potiundi tempore in ipso
than for-the-wretched. for of-possessing at-the-time in very
fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum,
tosses with-uncertain wanderings the-ardor of-lovers,
nec constat quid primum oculis manibusque fruantur.
nor is-it-settled what first with-eyes and-hands they-should-enjoy.

quod petiere, premunt arte, faciuntque dolorem
what they-have-sought, they-press tightly, and-cause pain
corporis, et dentes inlidunt saepe labellis
of-the-body, and teeth they-dash often on-the-lips
osculaque adfligunt, quia non est pura voluptas
and-kisses they-bruise, because not is pure the-pleasure
et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant laedere id ipsum,
and goads lie-beneath, which urge to-hurt that very-thing,
quodcumquest, rabies unde illaec germina surgunt.
whatever-it-is, the-frenzy whence those sprouts rise.
sed leviter poenas frangit Venus inter amorem,
but lightly the-pains breaks Venus amid love,
blandaque refrenat morsus admixta voluptas.
and-coaxing reins-in the-bites mingled pleasure.
namque in eo spes est, undest ardoris origo,
for in this the-hope is, whence-is of-ardor the-origin,
restingui quoque posse ab eodem corpore flammam.
to-be-quenched also to-be-able by the-same body the-flame.
quod fieri contra totum natura repugnat,
which to-happen contrary wholly nature resists,
unaque res haec est, cuius proquam plurima habemus,
and-one thing this is, of-which in-proportion-as the-most we-have,
tam magis ardescit dira cuppedine pectus.
so-much more burns with-dire craving the-breast.
nam cibus atque umor membris adsumitur intus;
for food and moisture by-the-limbs is-taken-in within;
quae quoniam certas possunt obsidere partis,
which since fixed can to-occupy parts,
hoc facile expletur laticum frugumque cupido:
thereby easily is-filled of-liquids and-of-grain the-desire:

ex hominis vero facie pulchroque colore
from of-a-man but the-face and-beautiful complexion
nil datur in corpus praeter simulacra fruendum
nothing is-given into the-body except images to-enjoy
tenvia; quae vanos spes raptat saepe misella.
thin; which empty hope snatches often wretched.
ut bibere in somnis sitiens quom quaerit, et umor
as to-drink in sleep a-thirsty-man when seeks, and moisture
non datur, ardorem qui membris stinguere possit,
not is-given, the-burning which in-the-limbs to-quench could,
sed laticum simulacra petit frustraque laborat
but of-liquids the-images he-seeks and-in-vain toils
in medioque siti torretur flumine potans,
in and-the-middle with-thirst is-parched of-a-river drinking,
sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis.
so in love Venus with-images mocks lovers.
nec satiare queunt spectando corpora coram,
nor to-sate can-they by-gazing the-bodies face-to-face,
nec manibus quicquam teneris abradere membris
nor with-hands anything from-tender to-scrape-off limbs
possunt errantes incerti corpore toto.
can-they wandering uncertain over-body whole.
denique cum membris conlatis flore fruuntur
finally when with-limbs joined the-flower they-enjoy
aetatis, iam cum praesagit gaudia corpus
of-age, now when foretells joys the-body
atque in eost Venus ut muliebria conserat arva,
and on the-point-is Venus that the-womanly she-may-sow fields,
adfigunt avide corpus iunguntque salivas
they-fasten greedily the-body and-join the-spittle

oris et inspirant pressantes dentibus ora,
of-mouth and breathe-in pressing with-teeth the-mouths,
nequiquam, quoniam nil inde abradere possunt
in-vain, since nothing thence to-scrape-off they-can
nec penetrare et abire in corpus corpore toto:
nor to-pierce and to-go-away into the-body with-body whole:
nam facere interdum velle et certare videntur.
for to-do sometimes to-wish and to-strive they-seem.
usque adeo cupide in Veneris compagibus haerent,
right so-far eagerly in of-Venus the-bonds they-cling,
membra voluptatis dum vi labefacta liquescunt.
the-limbs of-pleasure while by-the-force loosened melt.
tandem ubi se erupit nervis conlecta cupido,
at-length when itself has-burst-out from-the-sinews gathered desire,
parva fit ardoris violenti pausa parumper:
small comes of-ardor violent a-pause for-a-little:
inde redit rabies eadem et furor ille revisit,
then returns the-frenzy same and the-madness that revisits,
cum sibi quid cupiant ipsi contingere quaerunt,
when for-themselves what they-desire themselves to-attain they-seek,
nec reperire malum id possunt quae machina vincat.
nor to-find the-evil that can which device may-conquer.
usque adeo incerti tabescunt volnere caeco.
right so-far uncertain they-waste by-a-wound hidden.

Lovers waste their strength and live at another's nod; duty languishes and good name totters. Estates melt into Babylonian coverlets, Sicyonian shoes, emeralds, and sea-colored gowns soaked with Venus' sweat, and fathers' fortunes into headbands and robes from Alinda and Ceos. Yet from the midst of the fountain of delights rises something bitter: a conscience that stings, a word left ambiguous, a glance cast toward someone else.

Adde quod absumunt viris pereuntque labore,
Add that they-consume their-strength and-perish with-toil,
adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur aetas,
add that of-another beneath the-nod is-spent life,
languent officia atque aegrotat fama vacillans.
languish duties and grows-sick the-good-name tottering.
labitur interea res et Babylonica fiunt,
slips-away meanwhile the-estate and Babylonian-coverlets are-made,
argentum et pulchra in pedibus Sicyonia rident,
silver and beautiful on the-feet Sicyonian-shoes smile,
scilicet et grandes viridi cum luce zmaragdi
surely and great green with light emeralds
auro includuntur, teriturque thalassina vestis
in-gold are-set, and-is-worn sea-colored clothing
adsidue et Veneris sudorem exercita potat.
constantly and of-Venus the-sweat plied drinks.
et bene parta patrum fiunt anademata, mitrae,
and well gotten of-fathers become headbands, turbans,
interdum in pallam atque Alidensia Ciaque vertunt.
sometimes into a-mantle and Alindian and-Cean-robes they-turn.
eximia veste et victu convivia, ludi,
with-choice clothing and fare feasts, games,

pocula crebra, unguenta, coronae, serta parantur,
cups frequent, ointments, crowns, garlands are-prepared,
nequiquam, quoniam medio de fonte leporum
in-vain, since mid from the-fountain of-delights
surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat,
rises of-bitter something, which in very the-flowers may-choke,
aut cum conscius ipse animus se forte remordet
or when conscious itself the-mind itself perchance stings
desidiose agere aetatem lustrisque perire,
idly to-spend life and-in-brothels to-perish,
aut quod in ambiguo verbum iaculata reliquit,
or because in ambiguity a-word darted she-has-left,
quod cupido adfixum cordi vivescit ut ignis,
which in-the-eager fastened heart quickens like fire,
aut nimium iactare oculos aliumve tueri
or too-much to-toss her-eyes or-another to-gaze-at
quod putat in voltuque videt vestigia risus.
which he-thinks in and-her-face sees traces of-a-smile.

IV.36 · THE LOVER'S BLINDNESS

Even happy love brings these evils, unhappy love countless more, so it is better to be on guard than to break the nets once caught. Men blind with desire give their beloveds' faults flattering names: the swarthy is honey-colored, the bony a gazelle. Yet she does all that the ugly do; the shut-out lover would leave at one breath of her, and if she is kind, he should pardon what is human.

Atque in amore mala haec proprio summeque secundo
And in love evils these proper and-utmost prosperous
inveniuntur: in adverso vero atque inopi sunt,
are-found: in adverse but and needy there-are,

prendere quae possis oculorum lumine operto,
to-grasp which you-could of-the-eyes with-light shut,
innumerabilia; ut melius vigilare sit ante,
innumerable; so-that better to-watch be before,
qua docui ratione, cavereque ne inliciaris.
in-which I-have-taught way, and-to-beware lest you-be-enticed.
nam vitare, plagas in amoris ne iaciamur,
for to-shun, the-nets into of-love lest we-be-thrown,
non ita difficilest quam captum retibus ipsis
not so difficult-is as caught in-the-toils themselves
exire et validos Veneris perrumpere nodos.
to-get-out and the-strong of-Venus to-break-through knots.
at tamen implicitus quoque possis inque peditus
but yet entangled also you-could and-in hampered
effugere infestum, nisi tute tibi obvius obstes
escape the-foe, unless you-yourself to-yourself in-the-way stand
et praetermittas animi vitia omnia primum
and pass-over of-mind the-faults all first
aut quae corpori' sunt eius, quam tu petis ac vis.
or which of-body are of-her, whom you seek and want.
nam faciunt homines plerumque cupidine caeci
for do men mostly by-desire blind
et tribuunt ea quae non sunt his commoda vere.
and grant those-things which not are to-these advantages truly.
multimodis igitur pravas turpisque videmus
in-many-ways therefore crooked and-ugly-women we-see
esse in deliciis summoque in honore vigere.
to-be in delights and-highest in honor to-flourish.
atque alios alii inrident Veneremque suadent
and others others mock and-Venus urge

ut placent, quoniam foedo adflictentur amore,
that they-may-appease, since by-foul they-are-afflicted love,
nec sua respiciunt miseri mala maxima saepe.
nor their-own look-back-at the-wretches evils greatest often.
nigra melichrus est, inmunda et fetida acosmos,
the-black honey-hued is, the-dirty and stinking unadorned,
caesia Palladium, nervosa et lignea dorcas,
the-gray-eyed a-Pallas, the-sinewy and wooden a-gazelle,
parvula, pumilio, chariton mia, tota merum sal,
the-tiny, the-dwarf, of-the-Graces one, all pure salt,
magna atque inmanis cataplexis plenaque honoris.
the-big and huge an-amazement and-full of-dignity.
balba loqui non quit, traulizi, muta pudens est:
the-stammerer to-speak not can, she-lisps, the-dumb modest is:
at flagrans, odiosa, loquacula, Lampadium fit.
but the-blazing, odious, chatterbox, a-Little-Torch becomes.
ischnon eromenion tum fit, cum vivere non quit
a-slim little-darling then she-becomes, when to-live not she-can
prae macie: rhadine verost iam mortua tussi.
for leanness: slender but-is the-one-now dead with-a-cough.
at tumida et mammosa Ceres est ipsa ab Iaccho,
but the-swollen and big-breasted Ceres is herself from Iacchus,
simula Silena ac saturast, labeosa philema.
the-snub-nosed a-she-Silenus and a-satyr-is, the-thick-lipped a-kiss.
cetera de genere hoc longumst si dicere coner.
the-rest of kind this long-it-is if to-tell I-should-try.
sed tamen esto iam quantovis oris honore,
but yet let-her-be now of-whatever-great of-face honor,
cui Veneris membris vis omnibus exoriatur:
to-whom of-Venus from-the-limbs the-force all may-arise:

nempe aliae quoque sunt: nempe hac sine viximus ante:
surely others too are: surely this-one without we-lived before:
nempe eadem facit, et scimus facere, omnia turpi,
surely the-same-things she-does, and we-know her-to-do, all as-the-ugly,
et miseram taetris se suffit odoribus ipsa,
and wretched with-foul herself fumigates odors herself,
quam famulae longe fugitant furtimque cachinnant.
whom the-maids far flee and-secretly giggle.
at lacrimans exclusus amator limina saepe
but weeping shut-out the-lover the-threshold often
floribus et sertis operit postisque superbos
with-flowers and garlands covers and-the-doorposts proud
unguit amaracino et foribus miser oscula figit;
anoints with-marjoram and on-the-doors wretched kisses fixes;
quem si iam admissum venientem offenderit aura
whom if now admitted coming should-strike a-breath
una modo, causas abeundi quaerat honestas,
one only, causes for-going-away he-would-seek honorable,
et meditata diu cadat alte sumpta querella,
and rehearsed long would-fall deep drawn the-lament,
stultitiaeque ibi se damnet, tribuisse quod illi
and-of-folly there himself he-would-condemn, to-have-granted that to-her
plus videat quam mortali concedere par est.
more he-would-see than to-a-mortal to-concede fair is.
nec Veneres nostras hoc fallit; quo magis ipsae
nor Venuses our this escapes; whereby the-more themselves
omnia summo opere hos vitae postscaenia celant,
all-things with-the-utmost effort these of-life back-scenes hide,
quos retinere volunt adstrictosque esse in amore,
whom to-keep they-wish and-bound to-be in love,

nequiquam, quoniam tu animo tamen omnia possis
in-vain, since you with-the-mind yet all-things could
protrahere in lucem atque omnis inquirere risus,
to-drag-forth into light and all to-inquire-into the-laughs,
et, si bello animost et non odiosa, vicissim
and, if of-fair mind-she-is and not odious, in-turn
praetermittere et humanis concedere rebus.
to-pass-over and to-human to-yield things.

IV.37 · SHARED PLEASURE

A woman does not always sigh with feigned love; often she desires from her heart and urges the course of love to its end. Nor would birds, herds, beasts, and mares submit to the males unless their own nature burned and they shared the pleasure. Dogs at the crossroads, straining apart while held in Venus' bonds, show that the pleasure is mutual and shared.

Nec mulier semper ficto suspirat amore,
Nor the-woman always with-feigned sighs love,
quae conplexa viri corpus cum corpore iungit
who embracing of-the-man the-body with body joins
et tenet adsuctis umectans oscula labris:
and holds with-sucked moistening kisses lips:
nam facit ex animo saepe et communia quaerens
for she-does-it from the-heart often and shared seeking
gaudia sollicitat spatium decurrere amoris.
joys she-urges the-course to-run of-love.
nec ratione alia volucres armenta feraeque
nor by-means other birds herds and-wild-beasts
et pecudes et equae maribus subsidere possunt,
and flocks and mares to-the-males to-submit can,

si non ipsa quoque illarum subat ardet abundans
if not herself also of-them is-in-heat burns abounding
natura et Venerem salientum laeta retractat.
the-nature and the-Venus of-the-mounting gladly returns.
nonne vides etiam quos mutua saepe voluptas
do-you-not see also those-whom mutual often pleasure
vinxit, ut in vinclis communibus excrucientur?
has-bound, how in bonds shared they-are-tormented?
in triviis quam saepe canes, discedere aventis,
at crossroads how often dogs, to-part longing,
divorsi cupide summis ex viribu' tendunt,
apart eagerly the-utmost of strength strain,
quom interea validis Veneris compagibus haerent!
while meanwhile in-the-strong of-Venus the-couplings they-stick!
quod facerent numquam, nisi mutua gaudia nossent,
which they-would-do never, unless mutual joys they-knew,
quae iacere in fraudem possent vinctosque tenere.
which to-cast into the-trap could and-bound to-hold.
quare etiam atque etiam, ut dico, est communi' voluptas.
wherefore again and again, as I-say, is shared the-pleasure.

When the woman's seed overcomes the man's, children are born like their mothers, and when the father's prevails, like their fathers; when neither wins, they resemble both. Sometimes they recall their grandparents, because parents hide many first-beginnings handed down from the stock, from which Venus brings out faces, voices, and hair. Daughters can come from the father's seed and sons from the mother's, for every birth comes from both seeds, and the child takes more of the parent it resembles.

Et commiscendo quom semine forte virilem
And in-mingling when in-the-seed perchance the-male
femina vim vicit subita vi corripuitque,
the-woman force has-overcome with-sudden force and-seized-it,
tum similes matrum materno semine fiunt,
then like to-mothers by-the-mother's seed they-become,
ut patribus patrio. sed quos utriusque figurae
as to-fathers by-the-father's. but those-whom of-each shape
esse vides, iuxtim miscentes vulta parentum,
to-be you-see, side-by-side mingling the-faces of-the-parents,
corpore de patrio et materno sanguine crescunt,
body of the-father's and the-mother's blood they-grow,
semina cum Veneris stimulis excita per artus
the-seeds when of-Venus by-the-goads roused through the-frame
obvia conflixit conspirans mutuus ardor,
meeting has-clashed breathing-together mutual ardor,
et neque utrum superavit eorum nec superatumst.
and neither which has-overcome of-them nor been-overcome.
fit quoque ut interdum similes existere avorum
it-comes-about also that sometimes like to-come-forth to-grandfathers
possint et referant proavorum saepe figuras
they-can and reproduce of-great-grandfathers often the-shapes

propterea quia multa modis primordia multis
therefore because many in-ways first-beginnings many
mixta suo celant in corpore saepe parentis,
mingled their-own hide in body often the-parents,
quae patribus patres tradunt ab stirpe profecta:
which to-fathers fathers hand-down from the-stock proceeding:
inde Venus varia producit sorte figuras,
thence Venus by-varied brings-forth lot the-shapes,
maiorumque refert voltus vocesque comasque;
and-of-the-ancestors reproduces the-faces and-voices and-hair;
quandoquidem nilo minus haec de semine certo
since-indeed nothing less these from seed fixed
fiunt quam facies et corpora membraque nobis.
arise than faces and bodies and-limbs in-us.
et muliebre oritur patrio de semine saeclum,
and the-female arises the-father's from seed race,
maternoque mares existunt corpore creti:
and-from-the-mother's males come-forth body made:
semper enim partus duplici de semine constat,
always for the-birth double from seed consists,
atque utri similest magis id quodcumque creatur,
and to-whichever like-is more that whatever is-created,
eius habet plus parte aequa; quod cernere possis,
of-that-one it-has more than-share equal; which to-see you-could,
sive virum suboles sivest muliebris origo.
whether of-males the-offspring or-is female the-origin.

The gods do not keep anyone from having children, though men drench the altars with blood in the hope of fruitful wives. Barrenness comes from seed too thick or too thin, and the seeds of man and woman may not suit each other, so that women barren in several marriages bear children with another husband. Diet matters, and so does posture, while the movements harlots use to avoid conception and to please men prevent it, and wives have no need of them.

Nec divina satum genitalem numina cuiquam
Nor divine sowing genital the-powers anyone
absterrent, pater a gnatis ne dulcibus umquam
scare-off, father by children lest sweet ever
appelletur et ut sterili Venere exigat aevom;
he-be-called and that in-barren Venus he-spend life;
quod plerumque putant, et multo sanguine maesti
which mostly they-think, and with-much blood sad
conspergunt aras adolentque altaria donis;
they-sprinkle the-altars and-kindle the-altars with-gifts;
ut gravidas reddant uxores semine largo,
that pregnant they-may-make the-wives with-seed abundant,
nequiquam divom numen sortisque fatigant.
in-vain of-the-gods the-power and-the-lots they-weary.
nam steriles nimium crasso sunt semine partim,
for barren too thick are with-seed some,
et liquido praeter iustum tenuique vicissim.
and with-liquid beyond the-due and-thin in-turn.
tenve locis quia non potis est adfigere adhaesum,
thin to-the-places because not able is to-fix stuck,
liquitur extemplo et revocatum cedit abortu.
it-flows-off forthwith and called-back withdraws in-miscarriage.

crassius his porro quoniam concretius aequo
thicker in-these further since more-condensed than-fair
mittitur, aut non tam prolixo provolat ictu
is-sent, either not so far-reaching it-flies-forward with-stroke
aut penetrare locos aeque nequit aut penetratum
or to-pierce the-places equally cannot or pierced
aegre admiscetur muliebri semine semen.
hardly is-mingled with-womanly seed the-seed.
nam multum harmoniae Veneris differre videntur.
for much the-harmonies of-Venus to-differ seem.
atque alias alii complent magis, ex aliisque
and others others fill more, from and-others
suscipiunt aliae pondus magis inque gravescunt.
receive others the-burden more and-in become-heavy.
et multae steriles Hymenaeis ante fuerunt
and many barren in-Hymen's-rites before have-been
pluribus, et nactae post sunt tamen unde puellos
several, and found afterward have yet whence little-boys
suscipere et partu possent ditescere dulci.
to-take-up and with-offspring could to-grow-rich sweet.
et quibus ante domi fecundae saepe nequissent
and for-whom before at-home fruitful often had-not-been-able
uxores parere, inventast illis quoque compar
wives to-bear, has-been-found for-them also a-matching
natura, ut possent gnatis munire senectam.
nature, that they-could with-children to-fortify their-old-age.
usque adeo magni refert, ut semina possint
right so-far of-great it-matters, that the-seeds can
seminibus commisceri genitaliter apta,
with-seeds to-be-mingled generatively fitted,

crassane conveniant liquidis et liquida crassis.
whether-thick suit with-liquid and liquid with-thick.
atque in eo refert quo victu vita colatur:
and in this it-matters on-what fare life is-tended:
namque aliis rebus concrescunt semina membris,
for by-some things grow-solid the-seeds in-the-limbs,
atque aliis extenvantur tabentque vicissim.
and by-others are-thinned and-waste in-turn.
et quibus ipsa modis tractetur blanda voluptas,
and in-what itself ways is-handled coaxing pleasure,
id quoque permagni refert: nam more ferarum
that also of-very-great it-matters: for in-the-way of-beasts
quadrupedumque magis ritu plerumque putantur
and-of-four-footed-ones more in-the-manner mostly are-thought
concipere uxores, quia sic loca sumere possunt
to-conceive wives, because so the-places to-take can
pectoribus positis sublatis semina lumbis.
with-breasts set-down with-raised the-seeds loins.
nec molles opu' sunt motus uxoribus hilum.
nor soft need are motions for-wives a-whit.
nam mulier prohibet se concipere atque repugnat,
for the-woman prevents herself to-conceive and fights,
clunibus ipsa viri Venerem si laeta retractat
with-the-haunches herself of-the-man the-Venus if gladly she-returns
atque exossato ciet omni pectore fluctus:
and with-boneless rouses whole breast waves:
eicit enim sulcum recta regione viaque
she-throws-out for the-furrow from-straight direction and-path
vomeris, atque locis avertit seminis ictum.
of-the-plowshare, and from-the-places turns of-the-seed the-stroke.

idque sua causa consuerunt scorta moveri,
and-this for-their-own cause are-wont harlots to-move,
ne complerentur crebro gravidaeque iacerent,
lest they-be-filled often and-pregnant lie,
et simul ipsa viris Venus ut concinnior esset;
and at-the-same-time itself for-men Venus that more-pleasing be;
coniugibus quod nil nostris opus esse videtur.
for-wives which nothing our need to-be seems.

IV.40 · HABIT MAKES LOVE

It is not by the gods or Venus' arrows that a woman of little beauty is sometimes loved: by her own ways, her compliance, and her neatly kept person she accustoms a man to live with her. Habit fashions love, for whatever is struck often by a light blow is overcome at last, just as drops of water falling on rock wear it through in a long time.

Nec divinitus interdum Venerisque sagittis
Nor by-divine-will sometimes and-by-Venus' arrows
deteriore fit ut forma muliercula ametur:
of-inferior it-comes-about that beauty a-little-woman is-loved:
nam facit ipsa suis interdum femina factis
for brings-it-about herself by-her-own sometimes the-woman acts
morigerisque modis et munde corpore culto,
and-by-compliant ways and neatly with-body tended,
ut facile insuescat te secum degere vitam.
that easily she-accustoms you with-her to-spend life.
quod superest, consuetudo concinnat amorem:
what remains, habit fashions love:
nam leviter quamvis quod crebro tunditur ictu,
for lightly however what often is-beaten by-stroke,

vincitur in longo spatio tamen atque labascit.
is-overcome in long time yet and totters.
nonne vides etiam guttas in saxa cadentis
do-you-not see also the-drops on the-rocks falling
umoris longo in spatio pertundere saxa?
of-water long in time to-pierce the-rocks?

BOOK V

V.1 · EPICURUS WAS A GOD

No mortal could praise worthily the man who left us the prizes his own breast won. He was a god, renowned Memmius, who first found the plan of life now called wisdom and brought life out of such storms and darkness into clear light. Ceres and Liber gave grain and wine, without which life could go on, but no one lives well without a pure breast. Hercules' monsters would harm no one now, while desires, fears, and pride rend the unpurged heart; he who drove these out with words, not arms, deserves a place among the gods.

Quis potis est dignum pollenti pectore carmen
Who able is worthy with-mighty breast a-song
condere pro rerum maiestate hisque repertis?
to-build for of-things the-majesty and-these discoveries?
quisve valet verbis tantum, qui fingere laudes
or-who is-strong in-words so-much, that to-fashion praises
pro meritis eius possit, qui talia nobis
for the-merits of-him he-can, who such to-us
pectore parta suo quaesitaque praemia liquit?
by-breast won his-own and-sought prizes has-left?
nemo, ut opinor, erit mortali corpore cretus.
no-one, as I-think, will-be of-mortal body sprung.
nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum,
for if, as itself demands the-majesty known of-things,
dicendumst, deus ille fuit, deus, inclyte Memmi,
it-must-be-said, a-god he was, a-god, renowned Memmius,
qui princeps vitae rationem invenit eam quae
who first of-life the-plan found that which
nunc appellatur sapientia, quique per artem
now is-called wisdom, and-who by art

fluctibus e tantis vitam tantisque tenebris
waves out-of so-great life and-so-great darkness
in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit.
in so calm and so clear a-light set.
confer enim divina aliorum antiqua reperta.
compare for the-divine of-others ancient discoveries.
namque Ceres fertur fruges Liberque liquoris
for Ceres is-said grain and-Liber of-the-liquor
vitigeni laticem mortalibus instituisse,
vine-born the-juice for-mortals to-have-established,
cum tamen his posset sine rebus vita manere,
when yet these could without things life to-remain,
ut famast aliquas etiam nunc vivere gentis:
as report-is some even now to-live nations:
at bene non poterat sine puro pectore vivi;
but well not could-one without a-pure breast live;
quo magis hic merito nobis deus esse videtur,
whereby the-more this-man rightly to-us a-god to-be seems,
ex quo nunc etiam per magnas didita gentis
from whom now even through great spread nations
dulcia permulcent animos solacia vitae.
sweet soothe the-minds the-solaces of-life.
Herculis antistare autem si facta putabis,
of-Hercules to-stand-before but if the-deeds you-shall-think,
longius a vera multo ratione ferere.
farther from true by-much reasoning you-will-be-borne.
quid Nemeaeus enim nobis nunc magnus hiatus
what Nemean for to-us now great gape
ille leonis obesset et horrens Arcadius sus?
that of-the-lion would-harm and bristling Arcadian boar?

quidve tripectora tergemini vis Geryonai
or-what the-triple-breasted of-the-threefold the-force Geryon
tanto opere officerent nobis Stymphala colentes?
in-so-great measure would-hinder us Stymphalus (the-birds)-inhabiting?
et Diomedis equi spirantes naribus ignem
and of-Diomedes the-horses breathing from-the-nostrils fire
Thracis Bistoniasque plagas atque Ismara propter,
the-Thracian and-Bistonian regions and Ismarus near,
aureaque Hesperidum servans fulgentia mala,
and-the-golden of-the-Hesperides guarding gleaming apples,
asper, acerba tuens, immani corpore serpens
fierce, sharply glaring, of-huge body the-serpent
arboris amplexus stirpem quid denique obesset
of-the-tree embracing the-stem what finally would-it-harm
propter Atlanteum litus pelageque severa,
near the-Atlantic shore and-the-seas stern,
quo neque noster adit quisquam nec barbarus audet?
whither neither of-ours approaches anyone nor the-barbarian dares?
denique quid Cretae taurus Lernaeaque pestis
finally what of-Crete the-bull and-the-Lernaean pest
hydra venenatis posset vallata colubris?
the-hydra with-venomous could fenced snakes?
cetera de genere hoc quae sunt portenta perempta,
the-rest of kind this which are monsters destroyed,
si non victa forent, quid tandem viva nocerent?
if not conquered they-had-been, what pray alive would-they-harm?
nil, ut opinor: ita ad satiatem terra ferarum
nothing, as I-think: so to fullness the-earth of-wild-beasts
nunc etiam scatit et trepido terrore repletast
now even swarms and with-trembling terror is-filled

per nemora ac montes magnos silvasque profundas;
through groves and mountains great and-forests deep;
quae loca vitandi plerumquest nostra potestas.
which places to-shun mostly-is our power.
at nisi purgatumst pectus, quae proelia nobis
but unless purged-is the-breast, what battles to-us
atque pericula tumst ingratis insinuandum!
and dangers then-must against-our-will be-wound-in!
quantae tum scindunt hominem cuppedinis acris
how-great then rend a-man of-desire sharp
sollicitum curae, quantique perinde timores!
troubled cares, and-how-great likewise fears!
quidve superbia spurcitia ac petulantia? quantas
or-what pride filthiness and wantonness? how-great
efficiunt clades! quid luxus desidiaeque?
do-they-make disasters! what luxury and-sloth?
haec igitur qui cuncta subegerit ex animoque
these therefore who all shall-have-subdued from and-the-mind
expulerit dictis, non armis, nonne decebit
shall-have-driven with-words, not with-arms, will-it-not befit
hunc hominem numero divom dignarier esse?
this man in-the-number of-the-gods to-be-deemed-worthy to-be?
cum bene praesertim multa ac divinitus ipsis
when well especially many-things and divinely the-very
immortalibu' de divis dare dicta suërit
immortal about gods to-give sayings he-was-wont
atque omnem rerum naturam pandere dictis.
and all of-things the-nature to-unfold in-words.

Following in his master's footsteps, Lucretius has shown that the mind is born and mortal and that the dead seen in sleep are images. Now he must show that the world too is mortal and born; how matter founded earth, sky, sea, stars, sun, and moon; which creatures arose and which were never born; how speech began and fear of the gods crept into men's breasts; and how nature steers sun and moon, lest we think they move freely or by the gods' will, since even those who have learned that the gods live untroubled, if they wonder at the heavens, fall back into old religions and harsh masters.

Cuius ego ingressus vestigia dum rationes
Whose I having-entered-on the-footsteps while the-reasonings
persequor ac doceo dictis, quo quaeque creata
I-pursue and teach in-words, by-what each-thing created
foedere sint, in eo quam sit durare necessum
covenant is, in it how it-is to-endure needful
nec validas valeant aevi rescindere leges,
nor strong are-able of-time to-rescind the-laws,
quo genere in primis animi natura repertast
in-which kind in the-first-place of-mind the-nature has-been-found
nativo primum consistere corpore creta
of-born first to-consist of-body made
nec posse incolumis magnum durare per aevom,
nor to-be-able unharmed great to-endure through time,
sed simulacra solere in somnis fallere mentem,
but images to-be-wont in sleep to-deceive the-mind,
cernere cum videamur eum quem vita reliquit,
to-see when we-seem him whom life has-left,
quod superest, nunc huc rationis detulit ordo,
what remains, now hither of-reasoning has-brought the-order,

ut mihi mortali consistere corpore mundum
that by-me of-mortal to-consist body the-world
nativomque simul ratio reddunda sit esse;
and-born at-the-same-time the-account to-be-rendered is to-be;
et quibus ille modis congressus materiai
and in-what that ways the-gathering of-matter
fundarit terram caelum mare sidera solem
founded earth sky sea stars sun
lunaique globum; tum quae tellure animantes
and-of-the-moon the-globe; then what in-the-earth living-creatures
extiterint, et quae nullo sint tempore natae;
have-come-forth, and which at-no have-been time born;
quove modo genus humanum variante loquella
or-in-what way the-race human with-varied speech
coeperit inter se vesci per nomina rerum;
began among themselves to-use through names of-things;
et quibus ille modis divom metus insinuarit
and in-what that ways of-the-gods fear has-wound-into
pectora, terrarum qui in orbi sancta tuetur
the-breasts, of-the-lands which in the-circle holy guards
fana lacus lucos aras simulacraque divom.
shrines lakes groves altars and-images of-the-gods.
praeterea solis cursus lunaeque meatus
besides of-the-sun the-courses and-of-the-moon the-goings
expediam qua vi flectat natura gubernans;
I-will-explain by-what force steers nature governing;
ne forte haec inter caelum terramque reamur
lest perchance these between heaven and-earth we-think
libera sponte sua cursus lustrare perennis,
free of-accord their-own the-courses to-traverse everlasting,

morigera ad fruges augendas atque animantis,
compliant to crops increasing and living-creatures,
neve aliqua divom volvi ratione putemus.
nor-lest by-some of-the-gods to-roll means we-suppose.
nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere aevom,
for well who have-learned the-gods untroubled to-spend time,
si tamen interea mirantur qua ratione
if yet meanwhile they-wonder by-what reasoning
quaeque geri possint, praesertim rebus in illis
each-thing to-be-done can, especially things in those
quae supera caput aetheriis cernuntur in oris,
which above the-head the-ethereal are-seen in shores,
rursus in antiquas referuntur religiones,
back into ancient are-carried religions,
et dominos acris adsciscunt, omnia posse
and masters harsh take-on, all-things to-be-able
quos miseri credunt, ignari quid queat esse,
whom wretched they-believe, ignorant what can to-be,
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
what cannot, a-bounded power finally to-each
quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
by-what is law and deeply boundary-mark fixed.

Sea, lands, and sky, three natures so unlike, will be given to destruction in a single day, and the whole fabric of the world, upheld through many years, will fall. Lucretius knows how new and hard to believe this is, since it cannot be seen or handled, but perhaps the event itself will give his words their proof, when quakes shatter everything in a short time; may fortune steer that far from us, and may reason rather than the event persuade us that all can collapse.

Quod superest, ne te in promissis plura moremur,
What remains, lest you in promises more we-delay,
principio maria ac terras caelumque tuere;
first the-seas and lands and-heaven behold;
quorum naturam triplicem, tria corpora, Memmi,
whose nature threefold, three bodies, Memmius,
tris species tam dissimilis, tria talia texta,
three appearances so unlike, three such textures,
una dies dabit exitio, multosque per annos
one day will-give to-destruction, and-many through years
sustentata ruet moles et machina mundi.
upheld will-fall-in the-mass and fabric of-the-world.
nec me animi fallit quam res nova miraque menti
nor me of-mind escapes how thing new and-wonderful to-the-mind
accidat exitium caeli terraeque futurum,
befalls the-destruction of-heaven and-of-earth to-come,
et quam difficile id mihi sit pervincere dictis;
and how difficult that for-me is to-win-through in-words;
ut fit ubi insolitam rem adportes auribus ante,
as it-comes-about when an-unwonted thing you-bring to-the-ears before,
nec tamen hanc possis oculorum subdere visu
nor yet it you-can of-the-eyes to-subject to-the-sight

nec iacere indu manus, via qua munita fidei
nor to-cast into the-hands, the-road by-which paved of-belief
proxima fert humanum in pectus templaque mentis.
nearest bears human into the-breast and-the-precincts of-the-mind.
sed tamen effabor. dictis dabit ipsa fidem res,
but yet I-will-speak-out. to-my-words will-give itself belief the-fact,
forsitan, et graviter terrarum motibus ortis
perhaps, and heavily of-the-earth with-quakes risen
omnia conquassari in parvo tempore cernes.
all-things to-be-shattered in short time you-will-see.
quod procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans,
which far from us may-steer fortune governing,
et ratio potius quam res persuadeat ipsa
and reasoning rather than the-fact persuade itself
succidere horrisono posse omnia victa fragore.
to-collapse with-horrid-sounding to-be-able all-things overcome crash.

V.4 · THE HEAVENS ARE NOT DIVINE

Before pronouncing more surely than the Pythia from Phoebus' tripod, Lucretius warns Memmius not to think from religious fear that earth, sun, sky, sea, stars, and moon are divine and everlasting, and that those who shake the walls of the world by reasoning should pay a Giants' penalty. These things are so far from divine that they show what lacks life and sense: mind cannot exist in just any body, and since even in ours it has a fixed place, it cannot endure in clods of earth, the sun's fire, water, or the ether.

Qua prius adgrediar quam de re fundere fata
Which before I-approach than about the-matter to-pour-out oracles
sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam
more-holily and by-much sure reasoning more than

Pythia quae tripode a Phoebi lauroque profatur,
the-Pythia who the-tripod from of-Phoebus and-laurel speaks-forth,
multa tibi expediam doctis solacia dictis,
many to-you I-will-unfold with-learned solaces words,
religione refrenatus ne forte rearis
by-religion reined-in lest perchance you-think
terras et solem et caelum, mare sidera lunam,
the-lands and the-sun and heaven, sea stars moon,
corpore divino debere aeterna manere,
with-body divine ought everlasting to-remain,
proptereaque putes ritu par esse Gigantum
and-therefore you-think in-the-manner fair to-be of-the-Giants
pendere eos poenas inmani pro scelere omnis,
to-pay them penalties monstrous for crime all,
qui ratione sua disturbent moenia mundi
who by-reasoning their-own shake the-walls of-the-world
praeclarumque velint caeli restinguere solem,
and-the-glorious would of-heaven to-quench sun,
inmortalia mortali sermone notantes;
immortal-things with-mortal speech branding;
quae procul usque adeo divino a numine distant
which far right so-far divine from power stand-apart
inque deum numero quae sint indigna videntur,
and-in of-the-gods the-number which are unworthy seem,
notitiam potius praebere ut posse putentur
a-notion rather to-afford that to-be-able they-are-thought
quid sit vitali motu sensuque remotum.
of-what is from-vital motion and-sense removed.
quippe etenim non est, cum quovis corpore ut esse
for indeed not it-is, with any body that to-be

posse animi natura putetur consiliumque.
to-be-able of-mind the-nature be-thought and-judgment.
quod quoniam nostro quoque constat corpore certum
which since in-our also stands body fixed
dispositumque videtur ubi esse et crescere possit
and-arranged seems where to-be and to-grow it-can
seorsum anima atque animus, tanto magis infitiandum
apart the-spirit and the-mind, so-much the-more must-it-be-denied
totum posse extra corpus formamque animalem
whole to-be-able outside the-body and-the-form living
putribus in glebis terrarum aut solis in igni
crumbling in clods of-the-earth or of-the-sun in fire
aut in aqua durare aut altis aetheris oris.
or in water to-endure or in-high of-the-ether shores.
haud igitur constant divino praedita sensu,
not therefore they-stand with-divine endowed sense,
quandoquidem nequeunt vitaliter esse animata.
since-indeed they-cannot with-life to-be animated.

V.5 · THE GODS DID NOT MAKE THE WORLD FOR US

The gods' holy seats are in no part of our world, for their nature is too thin to touch anything of ours. To say they made the world for man's sake is folly: what could our gratitude profit the blessed, what novelty tempt them from rest, and whence their pattern, if nature gave none? The first-beginnings, trying every union through infinite time, fell into the present order.

Illud item non est ut possis credere, sedes
That likewise not is that you-can to-believe, the-seats
esse deum sanctas in mundi partibus ullis.
to-be of-the-gods holy in of-the-world parts any.

tenvis enim natura deum longeque remota
thin for the-nature of-the-gods and-far removed
sensibus ab nostris animi vix mente videtur;
senses from our of-the-mind scarcely with-mind [intellect] is-seen;
quae quoniam manuum tactum suffugit et ictum,
which since of-hands the-touch escapes and the-blow,
tactile nil nobis quod sit contingere debet:
tangible nothing to-us which is to-touch must:
tangere enim non quit quod tangi non licet ipsum.
to-touch for not can what to-be-touched not is-allowed itself.
quare etiam sedes quoque nostris sedibus esse
wherefore also the-seats too from-our seats to-be
dissimiles debent, tenues pro corpore eorum;
unlike must, thin in-keeping-with body their;
quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo.
which to-you later in-ample speech I-will-prove.
dicere porro hominum causa voluisse parare
to-say further of-men for-the-sake (them)-to-have-wished to-prepare
praeclaram mundi naturam, proptereaque
the-glorious of-the-world nature, and-therefore
adlaudabile opus divom laudare decere
praiseworthy the-work of-the-gods to-praise to-befit
aeternumque putare atque inmortale futurum,
and-everlasting to-think and immortal going-to-be,
nec fas esse, deum quod sit ratione vetusta
nor right to-be, of-the-gods what is by-reasoning ancient
gentibus humanis fundatum perpetuo aevo,
for-the-nations human founded for-everlasting time,
sollicitare suis ulla vi ex sedibus umquam,
to-disturb its-own by-any force from seats ever,

nec verbis vexare et ab imo evertere summa,
nor with-words to-harass and from the-bottom to-overturn the-top,
cetera de genere hoc adfingere et addere, Memmi,
the-rest of kind this to-invent and to-add, Memmius,
desiperest. quid enim inmortalibus atque beatis
is-folly. what for to-the-immortal and blessed
gratia nostra queat largirier emolumenti,
gratitude our could to-bestow of-profit,
ut nostra quicquam causa gerere adgrediantur?
that for-our anything sake to-do they-should-undertake?
quidve novi potuit tanto post ante quietos
or-what novelty could so-long after before calm
inlicere ut cuperent vitam mutare priorem?
to-entice that they-should-desire life to-change their-former?
nam gaudere novis rebus debere videtur
for to-rejoice in-new things ought it-seems
cui veteres obsunt: sed cui nil accidit aegri
he-whom the-old hurt: but to-whom nothing has-befallen of-ill
tempore in anteacto, cum pulchre degeret aevom,
time in past, when finely he-spent his-life,
quid potuit novitatis amorem accendere tali?
what could of-novelty love to-kindle in-such-a-one?
at, credo, in tenebris vita ac maerore iacebat,
but, I-suppose, in darkness life and grief lay,
donec diluxit rerum genitalis origo.
until dawned of-things the-generative origin.
quidve mali fuerat nobis non esse creatis?
or-what of-evil had-it-been for-us not to-be created?
natus enim debet quicumquest velle manere
born for must whoever-is to-wish to-remain

in vita, donec retinebit blanda voluptas:
in life, as-long-as shall-hold coaxing pleasure:
qui numquam vero vitae gustavit amorem
who never but of-life has-tasted the-love
nec fuit in numero, quid obest non esse creatum?
nor was in the-number, what does-it-harm not to-be created?
exemplum porro gignundis rebus et ipsa
the-pattern further for-begetting things and itself
notities divis hominum undest insita primum,
the-notion for-the-gods of-men whence-was implanted first,
quid vellent facere ut scirent animoque viderent,
what they-wished to-make that they-might-know and-with-the-mind see,
quove modost umquam vis cognita principiorum,
or-in-what way-was ever the-force known of-the-first-elements,
quidque inter sese permutato ordine possent,
and-what among themselves with-changed order they-could,
si non ipsa dedit specimen natura creandi?
if not herself has-given a-sample nature of-creating?
namque ita multa modis multis primordia rerum
for so many in-ways many the-first-beginnings of-things
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
from infinite now time struck by-blows
ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri
and-by-weights their-own have-been-wont driven to-be-borne
omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
and-in-all-ways to-meet and all-things to-try,
quaecumque inter se possent congressa creare,
whatsoever among themselves they-could gathered to-create,
ut non sit mirum, si in talis disposituras
that not it-is wonderful, if into such arrangements

deciderunt quoque et in talis venere meatus,
they-have-fallen also and into such have-come motions,
qualibus haec rerum geritur nunc summa novando.
by-such-as this of-things is-carried-on now the-sum by-renewing.

V.6 · THE WORLD'S FAULTS

Even without knowing the first-beginnings, Lucretius could show from the heavens' workings that the world was not made for us by the gods, so great are its faults. Mountains, forests, rocks, marshes, and sea greedily take a share of the earth; heat and frost take nearly two parts of the rest; and what remains needs the plow, though weather sometimes ruins the crops. Beasts threaten us, the seasons bring disease, untimely death roams, and the newborn child lies naked and wailing while flocks and herds grow without care.

Quod si iam rerum ignorem primordia quae sint,
But if now of-things I-were-ignorant the-first-beginnings what they-are,
hoc tamen ex ipsis caeli rationibus ausim
this yet from the-very of-heaven workings I-would-dare
confirmare aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,
to-affirm and-other from things to-render many,
nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam
by-no-means for-us by-divine-power to-be prepared
naturam rerum: tanta stat praedita culpa.
the-nature of-things: with-so-great it-stands endowed fault.
principio quantum caeli tegit impetus ingens,
first of-all-that-which of-heaven covers the-sweep huge,
inde avide partem montes silvaeque ferarum
thence greedily a-part mountains and-forests of-wild-beasts
possedere, tenent rupes vastaeque paludes
have-possessed, hold-it rocks and-waste marshes

et mare, quod late terrarum distinet oras.
and the-sea, which widely of-the-lands holds-apart the-shores.
inde duas porro prope partis fervidus ardor
then two further nearly parts burning heat
adsiduusque geli casus mortalibus aufert.
and-constant of-frost the-fall from-mortals takes-away.
quod superest arvi, tamen id natura sua vi
what remains of-tilled-land, yet that nature by-its-own force
sentibus obducat, ni vis humana resistat
with-thorns would-overspread, unless the-force human resists
vitai causa valido consueta bidenti
of-life for-the-sake to-the-strong accustomed mattock
ingemere et terram pressis proscindere aratris.
to-groan and the-earth with-pressed to-cleave plows.
si non fecundas vertentes vomere glebas
if not the-fruitful turning with-the-plowshare clods
terraique solum subigentes cimus ad ortus,
and-of-the-earth the-soil subduing we-call-them to birth,
sponte sua nequeant liquidas existere in auras.
of-accord their-own they-could-not the-clear to-come-forth into breezes.
et tamen interdum magno quaesita labore
and yet sometimes with-great sought toil
cum iam per terras frondent atque omnia florent,
when now through the-lands they-leaf and all-things flower,
aut nimiis torret fervoribus aetherius sol
either with-too-great scorches heats the-ethereal sun
aut subiti peremunt imbris gelidaeque pruinae,
or sudden destroy rains and-chill frosts,
flabraque ventorum violento turbine vexant.
and-the-blasts of-the-winds with-violent whirlwind harass.

praeterea genus horriferum natura ferarum
besides the-race horrible nature of-wild-beasts
humanae genti infestum terraque marique
to-the-human race hostile and-by-land and-by-sea
cur alit atque auget? cur anni tempora morbos
why does-it-nourish and increase? why of-the-year the-seasons diseases
adportant? quare mors inmatura vagatur?
bring? why death untimely roams?
tum porro puer, ut saevis proiectus ab undis
then further the-child, like savage cast-up from waves
navita, nudus humi iacet, infans, indigus omni
a-sailor, naked on-the-ground lies, speechless, in-need of-every
vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
vital help, when first into of-light the-shores
nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,
by-throes from the-womb of-the-mother nature has-poured-forth,
vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut aequumst
and-with-wailing the-place mournful fills, as fair-is
cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum.
for-one-to-whom so-much in life remains to-pass-through of-ills.
at variae crescunt pecudes armenta feraeque,
but various grow flocks herds and-wild-beasts,
nec crepitacillis opus est, nec cuiquam adhibendast
nor of-rattles need is, nor to-any must-be-applied
almae nutricis blanda atque infracta loquella,
of-the-kindly nurse the-coaxing and broken speech,
nec varias quaerunt vestes pro tempore caeli,
nor varied they-seek clothes for the-season of-heaven,
denique non armis opus est, non moenibus altis,
finally not of-arms need is, not of-walls high,

quis sua tutentur, quando omnibus omnia large
with-which their-own they-may-guard, since to-all all-things abundantly
tellus ipsa parit naturaque daedala rerum.
the-earth herself brings-forth and-nature the-cunning-artificer of-things.

V.7 · EARTH IS BORN AND DIES

Earth, water, air, and fire, of which the sum of things seems to consist, are all born and mortal, so the whole world must be, as a whole is whose parts we see born and dying. Lucretius has not seized this conclusion unfairly: parts of the earth are burnt by suns and blown away as dust, or washed into rivers by the rains, and whatever she feeds is paid back to her, since she is at once the all-mother and the common tomb of things, and so she is diminished and grows again.

Principio quoniam terrai corpus et umor
First since of-the-earth the-body and moisture
aurarumque leves animae calidique vapores,
and-of-the-breezes the-light breaths and-hot vapors,
e quibus haec rerum consistere summa videtur,
of which this of-things to-consist the-sum seems,
omnia nativo ac mortali corpore constant,
all of-born and mortal body consist,
debet eodem omnis mundi natura putari.
must of-the-same the-whole of-the-world nature to-be-thought.
quippe etenim, quorum partis et membra videmus
for indeed, of-which-things the-parts and members we-see
corpore nativo ac mortalibus esse figuris,
of-body born and of-mortal to-be shapes,
haec eadem ferme mortalia cernimus esse
these same nearly mortal we-see to-be

et nativa simul. quapropter maxima mundi
and born at-the-same-time. wherefore the-greatest of-the-world
cum videam membra ac partis consumpta regigni,
when I-see the-members and parts consumed to-be-reborn,
scire licet caeli quoque item terraeque fuisse
to-know one-may of-heaven also likewise and-of-earth to-have-been
principiale aliquod tempus clademque futuram.
a-primal some time and-a-destruction to-come.
Illud in his rebus ne corripuisse rearis
That in these things lest to-have-seized you-think
me mihi, quod terram atque ignem mortalia sumpsi
me for-myself, that earth and fire mortal I-have-assumed
esse, neque umorem dubitavi aurasque perire,
to-be, nor moisture have-I-doubted and-the-breezes to-perish,
atque eadem gigni rursusque augescere dixi:
and the-same to-be-begotten and-again to-increase have-said:
principio pars terrai nonnulla, perusta
first part of-the-earth not-a-little, scorched
solibus adsiduis, multa pulsata pedum vi,
by-suns constant, by-much beaten of-feet by-the-force,
pulveris exhalat nebulam nubesque volantis,
of-dust breathes-out a-mist and-clouds flying,
quas validi toto dispergunt aëre venti.
which strong through-whole scatter the-air winds.
pars etiam glebarum ad diluviem revocatur
part also of-the-clods to a-flood is-recalled
imbribus et ripas radentia flumina rodunt.
by-rains and the-banks scraping rivers gnaw.
praeterea pro parte sua, quodcumque alid auget,
besides for part its-own, whatever else it-increases,

redditur: et quoniam dubio procul esse videtur
is-paid-back: and since doubt far-from to-be it-seems
omniparens eadem rerum commune sepulcrum,
the-all-mother the-same of-things the-common tomb,
ergo terra tibi libatur et aucta recrescit.
therefore the-earth for-you is-diminished and increased grows-again.

V.8 · AIR IS ALWAYS CHANGING

Air changes countless times every hour, since everything that flows from things is carried into the great sea of air; if it did not give bodies back to things and renew them as they flow, everything would long ago have dissolved into air. So air never ceases to be born from things and to fall back into them.

Aëra nunc igitur dicam, qui corpore toto
The-air now therefore I-will-speak-of, which in-body whole
innumerabiliter privas mutatur in horas.
innumerably each is-changed into hours.
semper enim, quodcumque fluit de rebus, id omne
always for, whatever flows from things, that all
aëris in magnum fertur mare; qui nisi contra
of-air into the-great is-borne sea; which unless in-turn
corpora retribuat rebus recreetque fluentis,
bodies should-give-back to-things and-restore-them flowing,
omnia iam resoluta forent et in aëra versa:
all-things now dissolved would-be and into air turned:
haut igitur cessat gigni de rebus et in res
not therefore it-ceases to-be-begotten from things and into things
reccidere, adsidue quoniam fluere omnia constat.
to-fall-back, constantly since to-flow all-things it-is-agreed.

The sun is an abundant fountain that floods the sky with new brightness, since each first flash perishes wherever it falls, as the shade under a passing cloud shows. Lamps and torches likewise hurry to supply new light without a break. So sun, moon, and stars cast light from fresh sources and lose the old, and we must not think them inviolable.

Largus item liquidi fons luminis, aetherius sol,
Abundant likewise of-clear the-fountain of-light, ethereal the-sun,
inrigat adsidue caelum candore recenti
waters constantly heaven with-brightness fresh
suppeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen.
and-supplies with-new at-once light light.
nam primum quicquid fulgoris disperit ei,
for first whatever of-brightness perishes for-it,
quocumque accidit. id licet hinc cognoscere possis,
wherever it-falls. that one-may hence to-learn you-can,
quod simul ac primum nubes succedere soli
that as-soon as first clouds to-pass-under the-sun
coepere et radios inter quasi rumpere lucis,
have-begun and the-rays between as-it-were to-break of-light,
extemplo inferior pars horum disperit omnis,
forthwith the-lower part of-them perishes all,
terraque inumbratur qua nimbi cumque feruntur;
and-the-earth is-shadowed where the-storm-clouds soever are-borne;
ut noscas splendore novo res semper egere,
so-that you-may-know with-brightness new things always to-need,
et primum iactum fulgoris quemque perire,
and the-first cast of-brightness each to-perish,

nec ratione alia res posse in sole videri,
nor by-means other things to-be-able in the-sun to-be-seen,
perpetuo ni suppeditet lucis caput ipsum.
continually unless should-supply of-light the-source itself.
quin etiam nocturna tibi, terrestria quae sunt,
nay even nightly for-you, earthly which are,
lumina, pendentes lychni claraeque coruscis
lights, hanging lamps and-bright with-flashing
fulguribus pingues multa fuligine taedae
gleams rich with-much soot torches
consimili properant ratione, ardore ministro,
in-like hasten fashion, with-heat as-servant,
suppeditare novom lumen, tremere ignibus instant,
to-supply new light, to-flicker with-fires they-press-on,
instant, nec loca lux inter quasi rupta relinquit:
they-press-on, nor places the-light between as-it-were broken leaves:
usque adeo properanter obortis ignibus ei
right so-far hastily with-risen fires for-it
exitium celeri celatur origine flammae.
the-destruction by-swift is-hidden the-origin of-flame.
sic igitur solem lunam stellasque putandumst
so therefore sun moon and-stars it-must-be-thought
ex alio atque alio lucem iactare subortu
from one and another light to-cast new-rising
et primum quicquid flammarum perdere semper,
and the-first whatever of-flames to-lose always,
inviolabilia haec ne credas forte vigere.
inviolable these lest you-believe perchance to-thrive.

That sea, rivers, and springs always overflow with new moisture needs no proof, but the first water is always carried off, so that on the whole there is no excess, partly by the winds sweeping the sea and the sun's rays, partly by seepage through the earth, where the salt is strained out and the water returns to the springs to flow over the land again.

Quod superest, umore novo mare flumina fontes
What remains, with-moisture new the-sea rivers springs
semper abundare et latices manare perennis
always to-overflow and waters to-trickle everlasting
nil opus est verbis: magnus decursus aquarum
nothing need is of-words: the-great downflow of-waters
undique declarat. sed primum quicquid aquai
everywhere declares. but first whatever of-water
tollitur, in summaque fit ut nil umor abundet,
is-lifted, in and-the-sum it-comes-about that nothing the-moisture overflows,
partim quod validi verrentes aequora venti
partly because strong sweeping the-seas winds
diminuunt radiisque retexens aetherius sol,
diminish-it and-with-rays unweaving the-ethereal sun,
partim quod supter per terras diditur omnis:
partly because beneath through the-lands it-is-spread all:
percolatur enim virus, retroque remanat
is-strained for the-brine, and-back flows
materies umoris et ad caput amnibus omnis
the-matter of-moisture and to the-source for-rivers all

convenit, inde super terras fluit agmine dulci
meets, thence over the-lands it-flows in-column sweet
qua via secta semel liquido pede detulit undas.
where the-path cut once with-liquid foot has-brought the-waves.

V.11 · EVEN STONES GROW OLD

Do we not see stones overcome by time, towers fall, temples and the images of the gods crack and wear out, the holy power of fate unable to stretch its bounds against nature's covenants, and monuments of men fall to pieces? Flints torn from mountains could not suddenly fall if they had endured the tortures of age from infinite time.

Denique non lapides quoque vinci cernis ab aevo,
Finally not stones also to-be-conquered do-you-see by time,
non altas turris ruere et putrescere saxa,
not high towers to-fall and to-rot rocks,
non delubra deum simulacraque fessa fatisci,
not the-shrines of-the-gods and-images weary to-crack,
nec sanctum numen fati protollere finis
nor holy the-power of-fate to-extend the-bounds
posse neque adversus naturae foedera niti?
to-be-able nor against of-nature the-covenants to-strive?
denique non monimenta virum dilapsa videmus?
finally not the-monuments of-men fallen-apart do-we-see?
quaerere † proporro sibi † cumque senescere credas.
to-ask (corrupt) further to-them (corrupt) soever to-age you-think.
non ruere avolsos silices a montibus altis
not to-fall torn-away flints from mountains high
nec validas aevi vires perferre patique
nor strong of-time the-forces to-bear and-to-endure

finiti? neque enim caderent avolsa repente,
limited? nor for would-they-fall torn-away suddenly,
ex infinito quae tempore pertolerassent
from infinite which time had-endured
omnia tormenta aetatis, privata fragore.
all the-tortures of-age, freed from-crash.

V.12 · THE SKY IS MORTAL TOO

If the sky around and above the earth creates all things from itself and takes them back when they die, as some say, it must itself be born and mortal, since whatever gives of itself to feed other things must be diminished, and must be restored when it takes them back.

Denique iam tuere hoc, circum supraque quod omnem
Finally now behold this, around and-above which all
continet amplexu terram: si procreat ex se
holds in-embrace the-earth: if it-begets from itself
omnia, quod quidam memorant, recipitque perempta,
all-things, as some relate, and-takes-back destroyed,
totum nativo ac mortali corpore constat.
whole of-born and mortal body it-consists.
nam quodcumque alias ex se res auget alitque,
for whatever other from itself things increases and-feeds,
deminui debet, recreari, cum recipit res.
to-be-diminished must, to-be-restored, when it-takes-back things.

If earth and sky had no beginning, why have poets sung of nothing before the Theban war and the fall of Troy? The world is young: arts are still being polished, ships improved, music invented, and Lucretius himself is among the first to put this philosophy into his native tongue. If earlier races perished by fire, flood, or earthquake, that only proves the more that earth and sky will perish, as we prove ourselves mortal by our diseases.

Praeterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo
Besides if no there-was generative origin
terrarum et caeli semperque aeterna fuere,
of-the-lands and of-heaven and-always everlasting they-were,
cur supera bellum Thebanum et funera Troiae
why beyond the-war Theban and the-deaths of-Troy
non alias alii quoque res cecinere poëtae?
not other others also deeds have-sung poets?
quo tot facta virum totiens cecidere neque usquam
whither so-many deeds of-men so-often have-fallen nor anywhere
aeternis famae monimentis insita florent?
in-everlasting of-fame monuments set flourish?
verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa, recensque
but, as I-think, has newness the-sum, and-new
naturast mundi neque pridem exordia cepit.
the-nature-is of-the-world nor long-ago its-beginnings took.
quare etiam quaedam nunc artes expoliuntur,
wherefore also some now arts are-polished,
nunc etiam augescunt: nunc addita navigiis sunt
now even grow: now added to-ships have-been
multa, modo organici melicos peperere sonores,
many-things, just-now organists melodious have-brought-forth sounds,

denique natura haec rerum ratioque repertast
finally nature this of-things and-the-reasoning has-been-found
nuper, et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus
lately, and it first among the-first myself found
nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim vertere voces.
now I am into ancestral who can to-turn words.
quod si forte fuisse antehac eadem omnia credis,
but if perchance to-have-been before-this the-same all-things you-believe,
sed periisse hominum torrenti saecla vapore,
but to-have-perished of-men with-scorching the-generations vapor,
aut cecidisse urbis magno vexamine mundi,
or to-have-fallen the-cities by-great upheaval of-the-world,
aut ex imbribus adsiduis exisse rapaces
or from rains constant to-have-gone-forth ravening
per terras amnes atque oppida cooperuisse,
through the-lands rivers and towns to-have-overwhelmed,
tanto quique magis victus fateare necessest
so-much by-each the-more conquered you-confess must-needs
exitium quoque terrarum caelique futurum:
the-destruction also of-the-lands and-of-heaven to-come:
nam cum res tantis morbis tantisque periclis
for when things by-so-great diseases and-so-great dangers
temptarentur, ibi si tristior incubuisset
were-tried, then if a-grimmer had-pressed-on
causa, darent late cladem magnasque ruinas.
cause, they-would-give widely destruction and-great ruins.
nec ratione alia mortales esse videmur
nor by-means other mortal to-be we-seem

inter nos, nisi quod morbis aegrescimus isdem
among ourselves, except that with-diseases we-sicken the-same
atque illi quos a vita natura removit.
as those whom from life nature has-removed.

V.14 · WHAT LASTS FOREVER

Only three kinds of thing are everlasting: solid bodies that repel blows, like the first-beginnings; the void, which no blow touches; and the sum of all sums, outside which there is no place to fly to and no body to strike it. The world is none of these, since it has void mixed in, bodies can strike it from the infinite, and there is space for its walls to scatter. So the door of death stands open to it, and it must also have been born, since mortal things could not have scorned time's forces through infinite ages.

Praeterea quaecumque manent aeterna necessust
Besides whatsoever remain everlasting must-needs
aut, quia sunt solido cum corpore, respuere ictus
either, because they-are solid with body, to-repel blows
nec penetrare pati sibi quicquam quod queat artas
nor to-pierce to-suffer themselves anything which could close
dissociare intus partis, ut materiai
to-sunder within the-parts, as of-matter
corpora sunt, quorum naturam ostendimus ante,
the-bodies are, whose nature we-have-shown before,
aut ideo durare aetatem posse per omnem,
or therefore to-endure time to-be-able through all,
plagarum quia sunt expertia, sicut inanest,
of-blows because they-are free, as the-void-is,
quod manet intactum neque ab ictu fungitur hilum,
which remains untouched nor by a-blow is-affected a-whit,

aut etiam quia nulla loci fit copia circum,
or also because no of-place there-is store around,
quo quasi res possint discedere dissoluique,
whither as-it-were the-things could to-depart and-to-be-dissolved,
sicut summarum summast aeterna, neque extra
as of-sums the-sum-is everlasting, nor outside
qui locus est quo dissiliat, neque corpora sunt quae
any place is whither it-may-leap-apart, nor bodies are which
possint incidere et valida dissolvere plaga.
can to-fall-upon and with-strong to-dissolve blow.
at neque, uti docui, solido cum corpore mundi
but neither, as I-have-taught, solid with body of-the-world
naturast, quoniam admixtumst in rebus inane,
the-nature-is, since mingled-is in things void,
nec tamen est ut inane, neque autem corpora desunt,
nor yet is-it like the-void, nor again bodies are-lacking,
ex infinito quae possint forte coorta
from infinite which could perchance having-risen
corruere hanc rerum violento turbine summam
to-overthrow this of-things with-violent whirlwind sum
aut aliam quamvis cladem inportare per ictus,
or other any destruction to-bring-in through blows,
nec porro natura loci spatiumque profundi
nor further the-nature of-place and-the-space of-the-deep
deficit, exspargi quo possint moenia mundi,
is-lacking, to-be-scattered whither could the-walls of-the-world,
aut alia quavis possunt vi pulsa perire.
or by-other any can force struck to-perish.
haut igitur leti praeclusast ianua caelo
not therefore of-death is-shut the-door to-heaven

nec soli terraeque neque altis aequoris undis,
nor to-the-sun and-earth nor to-the-high of-the-sea waves,
sed patet immani et vasto respectat hiatu.
but it-lies-open with-monstrous and vast it-looks-back gape.
quare etiam nativa necessumst confiteare
wherefore also born must-needs you-confess
haec eadem: neque enim, mortali corpore quae sunt,
these same-things: nor for, with-mortal body which are,
ex infinito iam tempore adhuc potuissent
from infinite now time hitherto could-they-have
inmensi validas aevi contemnere vires.
of-immeasurable the-strong of-time to-scorn forces.

V.15 · THE WAR OF THE ELEMENTS

The great members of the world wage war with one another, and it may end when the sun and heat drink up all the water; the rivers threaten in vain to flood everything, since winds and sun diminish them, and so far the two fight on equal terms. Fire once prevailed, as the old Greek poets sang of Phaethon thrown from the sun's horses by the almighty father, a tale far from true reasoning, since fire prevails when more matter rises from the infinite; and water once drowned cities, until that force withdrew.

Denique tantopere inter se cum maxima mundi
Finally so-greatly among themselves since the-greatest of-the-world
pugnent membra, pio nequaquam concita bello,
fight members, by-pious by-no-means roused war,
nonne vides aliquam longi certaminis ollis
do-you-not see some of-long contest for-them
posse dari finem, vel cum sol et vapor omnis
to-be-able to-be-given an-end, either when the-sun and vapor all

omnibus epotis umoribus exsuperarint?
with-all drunk-up moistures shall-have-prevailed?
quod facere intendunt, neque adhuc conata patrantur:
which to-do they-strive, nor yet their-attempts are-accomplished:
tantum suppeditant amnes ultraque minantur
so-much supply the-rivers and-beyond threaten
omnia diluviare ex alto gurgite ponti,
all-things to-flood from the-deep abyss of-the-sea,
nequiquam, quoniam verrentes aequora venti
in-vain, since sweeping the-seas the-winds
deminuunt radiisque retexens aetherius sol,
diminish-them and-with-rays unweaving the-ethereal sun,
et siccare prius confidunt omnia posse
and to-dry before they-trust all-things to-be-able
quam liquor incepti possit contingere finem.
than the-liquid of-the-undertaking could to-reach the-end.
tantum spirantes aequo certamine bellum
so-much breathing with-equal contest war
magnis inter se de rebus cernere certant,
great among themselves about things to-decide they-strive,
cum semel interea fuerit superantior ignis
when once meanwhile was more-prevailing fire
et semel, ut famast, umor regnarit in arvis.
and once, as report-is, moisture has-reigned in the-fields.
ignis enim superavit et ardens multa perussit,
fire for prevailed and burning many-things scorched,
avia cum Phaethonta rapax vis solis equorum
pathless when Phaethon snatching the-force of-the-sun of-the-horses
aethere raptavit toto terrasque per omnis:
through-the-ether whirled whole and-the-lands through all:

at pater omnipotens ira tum percitus acri
but the-father almighty with-wrath then roused sharp
magnanimum Phaethonta repenti fulminis ictu
the-great-hearted Phaethon with-sudden of-the-thunderbolt stroke
deturbavit equis in terram, solque cadenti
struck-down from-the-horses to the-earth, and-the-sun the-falling
obvius aeternam succepit lampada mundi,
meeting the-everlasting caught-up lamp of-the-world,
disiectosque redegit equos iunxitque trementis,
and-the-scattered brought-back horses and-yoked-them trembling,
inde suum per iter recreavit cuncta gubernans,
then its-own through course restored all-things governing,
scilicet, ut veteres Graium cecinere poëtae.
surely, as the-old of-the-Greeks have-sung poets.
quod procul a vera nimis est ratione repulsum.
which far from true too-much is reasoning thrust-away.
ignis enim superare potest ubi materiai
fire for to-prevail can when of-matter
ex infinito sunt corpora plura coorta,
from infinite are bodies more having-risen,
* * *
(lacuna)
inde cadunt vires aliqua ratione revictae,
then fall its-forces by-some means overcome,
aut pereunt res exustae furentibus auris.
or perish things burnt-up by-raging breezes.
umor item quondam coepit superare coortus,
moisture likewise once began to-prevail having-risen,
ut famast, hominum multas quando obruit urbis:
as report-is, of-men many when it-overwhelmed cities:

inde ubi vis aliqua ratione aversa recessit,
then when the-force by-some means turned-aside withdrew,
ex infinito fuerat quaecumque coorta,
from infinite had whatsoever risen,
constiterunt imbres et flumina vim minuerunt.
ceased the-rains and the-rivers their-force diminished.

V.16 · NOT BY DESIGN

Lucretius now sets out how the gathering of matter founded earth, sky, sea, and the courses of sun and moon. The first-beginnings did not take their places by design or bargain for their motions, but, struck by blows and borne by their weights through endless time, they tried every kind of combination until at last those came together that became the beginnings of earth, sea, sky, and living things.

Sed quibus ille modis coniectus materiai
But in-what that ways the-gathering of-matter
fundarit terram et caelum pontique profunda,
founded earth and heaven and-of-the-sea the-depths,
solis lunai cursus, ex ordine ponam.
of-the-sun of-the-moon the-courses, in order I-will-set-out.
nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
for certainly neither by-design the-first-beginnings of-things
ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt
in-order themselves their-own each by-shrewd mind placed
nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto,
nor what each should-give motions bargained surely,
sed quia multa modis multis primordia rerum
but because many in-ways many the-first-beginnings of-things
ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
from infinite now time struck by-blows

ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri
and-by-weights their-own have-been-wont driven to-be-borne
omnimodisque coire atque omnia pertemptare,
and-in-all-ways to-meet and all-things to-try,
quaecumque inter se possent congressa creare,
whatsoever among themselves they-could gathered to-create,
propterea fit uti magnum volgata per aevom
therefore it-comes-about that great spread-abroad through time
omne genus coetus et motus experiundo
every kind of-gathering and motion by-trying
tandem conveniant ea quae convecta repente
at-length they-come-together those which brought-together suddenly
magnarum rerum fiunt exordia saepe,
of-great things become the-beginnings often,
terrai maris et caeli generisque animantum.
of-earth of-sea and of-heaven and-of-the-race of-living-creatures.

V.17 · THE STORM OF FIRST-BEGINNINGS

At first there was no sun, stars, sea, sky, or earth, but a strange storm and mass of first-beginnings of every kind, their discord confusing intervals, paths, weights, blows, and motions. Then the parts began to separate, like joining with like, and to divide the world into its members: heaven parted from earth, the sea set apart, and the fires of the pure ether apart as well.

Hic neque tum solis rota cerni lumine largo
Here neither then of-the-sun the-wheel to-be-seen with-light abundant
altivolans poterat nec magni sidera mundi
high-flying could nor of-the-great the-stars world
nec mare nec caelum nec denique terra neque aër
nor sea nor heaven nor finally earth nor air

nec similis nostris rebus res ulla videri,
nor like to-our things thing any to-be-seen,
sed nova tempestas quaedam molesque coorta
but new a-storm some and-a-mass risen
omne genus de principiis, discordia quorum
of-every kind from first-elements, discord whose
intervalla vias conexus pondera plagas
intervals paths connections weights blows
concursus motus turbabat proelia miscens,
meetings motions confounded battles joining,
propter dissimilis formas variasque figuras
because-of unlike forms and-varied shapes
quod non omnia sic poterant coniuncta manere
because not all so could joined to-remain
nec motus inter sese dare convenientis.
nor motions among themselves to-give suitable.
diffugere inde loci partes coepere, paresque
to-flee-apart then of-the-place the-parts began, and-like
cum paribus iungi res et discludere mundum
with like to-be-joined things and to-shut-off the-world
membraque dividere et magnas disponere partes,
and-the-members to-divide and great to-arrange the-parts,
hoc est, a terris altum secernere caelum,
that is, from the-earth high to-separate heaven,
et sorsum mare, uti secreto umore pateret,
and apart the-sea, that with-separate moisture it-might-spread,
seorsus item puri secretique aetheris ignes.
apart likewise of-pure and-separate ether the-fires.

The heavy, tangled bodies of earth met in the middle and pressed out the lighter ones, which made the ether, sun, moon, and stars, as morning mist rises from lakes and rivers. The ether wrapped the rest in its embrace, and sun and moon took the middle region. The earth sank where the sea now spreads, and as the ether's heat and the sun's rays pressed it, salt sweat oozed out to swell the sea, while the plains sank and the mountains rose.

Quippe etenim primum terrai corpora quaeque,
For indeed first of-the-earth the-bodies each,
propterea quod erant gravia et perplexa, coibant
therefore because they-were heavy and entangled, met
in medio atque imas capiebant omnia sedes;
in the-middle and the-lowest took all seats;
quae quanto magis inter se perplexa coibant,
which by-how-much more among themselves entangled met,
tam magis expressere ea quae mare sidera solem
the more they-squeezed-out those which sea stars sun
lunamque efficerent et magni moenia mundi:
and-moon would-make and of-the-great the-walls world:
omnia enim magis haec e levibus atque rutundis
all for more these from smooth and round
seminibus multoque minoribu' sunt elementis
seeds and-by-much smaller are elements
quam tellus. ideo, per rara foramina, terrae
than the-earth. therefore, through loose passages, of-the-earth
partibus erumpens primus se sustulit aether
from-the-parts bursting first itself lifted the-ether
ignifer et multos secum levis abstulit ignis,
fire-bearing and many with-itself light carried-off fires,

non alia longe ratione ac saepe videmus,
not by-other far fashion than often we-see,
aurea cum primum gemmantis rore per herbas
golden when first jeweled with-dew through the-grasses
matutina rubent radiati lumina solis,
the-morning redden radiant lights of-the-sun,
* * *
(lacuna)
exhalantque lacus nebulam fluviique perennes,
and-breathe-out the-lakes a-mist and-the-rivers everlasting,
ipsaque ut interdum tellus fumare videtur;
and-itself as sometimes the-earth to-smoke seems;
omnia quae sursum cum conciliantur, in alto
all which upward when they-are-gathered, on high
corpore concreto subtexunt nubila caelum.
with-body condensed weave-beneath clouds heaven.
sic igitur tum se levis ac diffusilis aether
so therefore then itself light and diffusible ether
corpore concreto circumdatus undique flexit
with-body condensed surrounded everywhere it-bent
et late diffusus in omnis undique partis
and widely spread into all everywhere parts
omnia sic avido complexu cetera saepsit.
all so with-greedy embrace the-rest fenced.
hunc exordia sunt solis lunaeque secuta,
it the-beginnings have of-the-sun and-of-the-moon followed,
interutrasque globi quorum vertuntur in auris;
between-both the-globes whose turn in the-breezes;
quae neque terra sibi adscivit nec maximus aether,
which neither earth to-itself took nor the-greatest ether,

quod neque tam fuerunt gravia ut depressa sederent,
because neither so they-were heavy that pressed-down they-should-settle,
nec levia ut possent per summas labier oras,
nor light that they-could through the-highest to-glide the-shores,
et tamen interutrasque ita sunt, ut corpora viva
and yet between-both so they-are, that bodies living
versent et partes ut mundi totius extent;
they-turn and parts as of-the-world of-the-whole stand-out;
quod genus in nobis quaedam licet in statione
which kind in us some one-may at rest
membra manere, tamen cum sint ea quae moveantur.
members to-remain, yet when there-be those which are-moved.
his igitur rebus retractis terra repente,
with-these therefore things withdrawn the-earth suddenly,
maxuma qua nunc se ponti plaga caerula tendit,
greatest where now itself of-the-sea the-tract blue stretches,
succidit et salso suffudit gurgite fossas.
sank and with-salt flooded abyss the-hollows.
inque dies quanto circum magis aetheris aestus
and-from-day-to day by-how-much around more of-the-ether the-heat
et radii solis cogebant undique terram,
and the-rays of-the-sun compelled from-everywhere the-earth,
verberibus crebris extrema ad limina in artum
with-blows frequent outermost to borders into a-narrow-space
in medio ut propulsa suo condensa coiret,
in the-middle that driven its-own condensed it-should-come-together,
tam magis expressus salsus de corpore sudor
the more squeezed-out the-salt from body sweat
augebat mare manando camposque natantis,
increased the-sea by-oozing and-the-fields floating,

et tanto magis illa foras elapsa volabant
and so-much the-more those outward slipped flew
corpora multa vaporis et aëris altaque caeli
bodies many of-vapor and of-air and-the-high of-heaven
densebant procul a terris fulgentia templa.
condensed far from the-earth shining precincts.
sidebant campi, crescebant montibus altis
sank the-plains, grew for-mountains high
ascensus: neque enim poterant subsidere saxa
the-ascents: nor for could to-sink the-rocks
nec pariter tantundem omnes succumbere partis.
nor alike just-as-much all to-subside the-parts.

V.19 · THE LAYERS OF THE WORLD

So the earth's weight settled like dregs at the bottom, and above it sea, air, and fiery ether were left in order, each lighter than the last. The ether flows above all, untouched by the storms of the air beneath, and bears its fires in a steady sweep, as the Pontus flows with a constant current.

Sic igitur terrae concreto corpore pondus
So therefore of-the-earth with-condensed body the-weight
constitit, atque omnis mundi quasi limus in imum
settled, and all of-the-world as-it-were the-slime into the-bottom
confluxit gravis et subsedit funditus ut faex;
flowed-together heavy and sank utterly like dregs;
inde mare, inde aër, inde aether ignifer ipse
then the-sea, then the-air, then the-ether fire-bearing itself
corporibus liquidis sunt omnia pura relicta
with-bodies liquid were all pure left

et leviora aliis alia, et liquidissimus aether
and lighter than-others others, and most-liquid the-ether
atque levissimus aërias super influit auras,
and lightest the-airy over flows breezes,
nec liquidum corpus turbantibus aëris auris
nor its-liquid body with-the-disturbing of-the-air breezes
commiscet; sinit haec violentis omnia verti
mingles; it-lets these by-violent all-things to-be-turned
turbinibus, sinit incertis turbare procellis,
whirlwinds, it-lets with-uncertain to-riot storms,
ipse suos ignis certo fert impete labens.
itself its-own fires with-fixed bears sweep gliding.
nam modice fluere atque uno posse aethera nisu
for moderately to-flow and with-one to-be-able the-ether effort
significat Pontos, mare certo quod fluit aestu
shows the-Pontus, a-sea with-fixed which flows current
unum labendi conservans usque tenorem.
one of-gliding keeping continually tenor.

V.20 · WHY THE EARTH RESTS IN THE MIDDLE

The earth rests in the middle of the world because its weight fades away beneath, joined from the beginning to an airy nature below it, as our limbs are no burden to us and the head none to the neck. So the earth shakes everything above it when thunder strikes, and the thin force of the spirit can lift our heavy body, because each is joined as one with the other.

Terraque ut in media mundi regione quiescat,
And-the-earth that in the-middle of-the-world region may-rest,
evanescere paulatim et decrescere pondus
to-vanish little-by-little and to-decrease the-weight

convenit, atque aliam naturam supter habere
is-fitting, and another nature beneath to-have
ex ineunte aevo coniunctam atque uniter aptam
from the-beginning time joined and as-one fitted
partibus aëriis mundi, quibus insita vivit.
to-the-parts airy of-the-world, in-which set it-lives.
propterea non est oneri neque deprimit auras
therefore not it-is a-burden nor presses-down the-breezes
ut sua cuique homini nullo sunt pondere membra,
as its-own to-every man with-no are weight the-limbs,
nec caput est oneri collo, nec denique totum
nor the-head is a-burden to-the-neck, nor finally the-whole
corporis in pedibus pondus sentimus inesse:
of-the-body on the-feet the-weight we-feel to-be-in:
at quaecumque foris veniunt inpostaque nobis
but whatsoever from-outside come and-laid-upon us
pondera sunt laedunt, permulto saepe minora.
weights are hurt, by-much often smaller.
usque adeo magni refert quid quaeque queat res.
right so-far of-great-importance it-is what each can thing.
sic igitur tellus non est aliena repente
so therefore the-earth not is foreign suddenly
allata atque auris aliunde obiecta alienis,
brought and to-breezes from-elsewhere thrown-against foreign,
sed pariter prima concepta ab origine mundi
but alike first conceived from the-origin of-the-world
certaque pars eius, quasi nobis membra, videtur.
and-a-fixed part of-it, as-it-were for-us the-limbs, it-seems.
praeterea grandi tonitru concussa repente
besides by-great thunder shaken suddenly

terra supra quae se sunt concutit omnia motu;
the-earth above which itself are shakes all-things with-motion;
quod facere haut ulla posset ratione, nisi esset
which to-do not by-any could means, unless it-were
partibus aëriis mundi caeloque revincta:
to-the-parts airy of-the-world and-to-heaven bound:
nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent
for by-common among themselves roots they-cling
ex ineunte aevo coniuncta atque uniter apta.
from the-beginning time joined and as-one fitted.
nonne vides etiam quam magno pondere nobis
do-you-not see also how by-great weight for-us
sustineat corpus tenuissima vis animai
sustains the-body the-thinnest force of-the-spirit
propterea quia tam coniuncta atque uniter aptast?
therefore because so joined and as-one fitted-it-is?
denique iam saltu pernici tollere corpus
finally now with-a-leap nimble to-lift the-body
quid potis est nisi vis animae, quae membra gubernat?
what able is except the-force of-spirit, which the-limbs governs?
iamne vides quantum tenuis natura valere
now do-you-see how-much thin nature to-avail
possit, ubist coniuncta gravi cum corpore, ut aër
can, when-it-is joined heavy with body, as the-air
coniunctus terris et nobis est animae vis?
joined to-the-earth and to-us is of-spirit the-force?

Lucretius sings the causes of the stars' motions. If the whole sphere of heaven turns, air may press on it at the poles and currents flow above or below it, as rivers turn wheels and buckets; or heaven may stand still while the stars move, driven by currents of ether, by air from outside, or creeping where their fiery food calls them. In various worlds various causes hold, and he sets them all out without deciding which works here.

Motibus astrorum nunc quae sit causa canamus.
For-the-motions of-the-stars now what be the-cause let-us-sing.

principio magnus caeli si vortitur orbis,
first the-great of-heaven if is-turned sphere,

ex utraque polum parti premere aëra nobis
from either of-the-poles part to-press the-air by-us

dicendumst extraque tenere et claudere utrimque;
it-must-be-said and-outside to-hold and to-close on-both-sides;

inde alium supra fluere atque intendere eodem,
then another above to-flow and to-strain the-same-way,

quo volvenda micant aeterni sidera mundi;
whither rolling glitter of-the-everlasting the-stars world;

aut alium supter, contra qui subvehat orbem,
or another beneath, in-the-opposite-direction which may-carry-up the-sphere,

ut fluvios versare rotas atque haustra videmus.
as rivers to-turn wheels and buckets we-see.

est etiam quoque uti possit caelum omne manere
it-is even also that can the-heaven whole to-remain

in statione, tamen cum lucida signa ferantur,
at rest, yet while the-shining constellations are-borne,

sive quod inclusi rapidi sunt aetheris aestus
either because shut-in swift are of-the-ether the-currents

quaerentesque viam circumversantur et ignes
and-seeking a-way roll-around and the-fires
passim per caeli volvunt summania templa,
everywhere through of-heaven roll the-nightly precincts,
sive aliunde fluens alicunde extrinsecus aër
or from-elsewhere flowing from-somewhere from-outside the-air
versat agens ignis, sive ipsi serpere possunt
turns driving the-fires, or themselves to-creep can
quo cuiusque cibus vocat atque invitat euntis,
whither of-each the-food calls and invites them-going,
flammea per caelum pascentis corpora passim.
the-flaming through heaven feeding bodies everywhere.
nam quid in hoc mundo sit eorum ponere certum
for which in this world be of-them to-lay-down for-certain
difficilest: sed quid possit fiatque per omne
difficult-is: but what can and-happens through the-whole
in variis mundis varia ratione creatis,
in various worlds in-various fashion created,
id doceo, plurisque sequor disponere causas,
that I-teach, and-several I-go-on to-set-forth causes,
motibus astrorum quae possint esse per omne;
for-the-motions of-the-stars which can to-be through the-whole;
e quibus una tamen siet hic quoque causa necessest,
of which one yet be here also the-cause must-needs,
quae vegeat motum signis: sed quae sit earum
which quickens the-motion for-the-constellations: but which be of-them
praecipere hautquaquamst pedetemptim progredientis.
to-prescribe by-no-means-is step-by-step of-one-advancing.

The sun's wheel cannot be much larger or smaller than it looks, since fires near enough to warm us do not seem to lose bulk with distance. The moon, whether lit by another's light or its own, is the size it appears, because things far off blur before they shrink and the moon's outline is sharp. The fires of the ether, judged by fires on earth, can be only a little smaller or larger than they seem.

Nec minimo solis maior rota nec minor ardens
Nor by-the-least of-the-sun greater the-wheel nor smaller burning
esse potest, nostris quam sensibus esse videtur.
to-be can, to-our than senses to-be it-seems.
nam quibus e spatiis cumque ignes lumina possunt
for what from distances soever fires lights can
adicere et calidum membris adflare vaporem,
to-cast and hot on-the-limbs to-breathe vapor,
nil illa his intervallis de corpore libant
nothing those by-these intervals from body take-away
flammarum, nil ad speciemst contractior ignis.
of-the-flames, nothing to the-sight-is more-shrunken the-fire.
proinde, calor quoniam solis lumenque profusum
therefore, the-heat since of-the-sun and-the-light poured-forth
perveniunt nostros ad sensus et loca mulcent,
reach our to senses and the-places soothe,
forma quoque hinc solis debet filumque videri,
the-shape also hence of-the-sun must and-the-outline to-be-seen,
nil adeo ut possis plus aut minus addere, vere.
nothing so-far that you-can more or less add, truly.
lunaque sive notho fertur loca lumine lustrans,
and-the-moon whether with-a-bastard is-borne the-places light traversing,

sive suam proprio iactat de corpore lucem,
or her-own her-proper casts from body light,
quidquid id est, nilo fertur maiore figura
whatever it is, by-nothing is-borne greater shape
quam, nostris oculis qua cernimus, esse videtur.
than, with-our eyes with-which we-see, to-be it-seems.
nam prius omnia, quae longe semota tuemur
for before all-things, which far removed we-behold
aëra per multum, specie confusa videntur
air through much, in-appearance blurred seem
quam minui filum. quapropter luna necessest,
than to-be-diminished the-outline. wherefore the-moon must-needs,
quandoquidem claram speciem certamque figuram
since-indeed a-clear appearance and-a-sure shape
praebet, ut est oris extremis cumque notata
she-affords, as she-is by-rims outermost soever marked
quantaque quantast hinc nobis videatur in alto.
and-as-great-as she-is hence to-us be-seen on high.
postremo quoscumque vides hinc aetheris ignes,
lastly whatever you-see hence of-the-ether fires,
quandoquidem quoscumque in terris cernimus ignes,
since-indeed whatever on earth we-see fires,
dum tremor est clarus, dum cernitur ardor eorum,
while the-flicker is clear, while is-seen the-blaze of-them,
perparvom quiddam interdum mutare videntur
very-little something sometimes to-change they-seem
alteram utram in partem filum, quo longius absunt,
one or-other into direction the-outline, by-how-much farther they-are-distant,

scire licet perquam pauxillo posse minores
to-know one-may by-very little to-be-able smaller
esse vel exigua maioris parte brevique.
to-be or by-a-small larger by-part and-short.

V.23 · HOW SO SMALL A SUN GIVES SO MUCH LIGHT

It is no wonder that so small a sun can fill sea, earth, and sky with light and heat, since the elements of heat may flow together from the whole world into it as into a single fountain, as a small spring waters wide meadows. Its heat may kindle the air around it, as one spark sets a field ablaze, or it may be ringed by hidden fires that increase the stroke of its rays.

Illud item non est mirandum, qua ratione
That likewise not is to-be-wondered-at, by-what means
tantulus ille queat tantum sol mittere lumen,
so-tiny that can so-much the-sun to-send light,
quod maria ac terras omnis caelumque rigando
which seas and lands all and-heaven by-watering
compleat et calido perfundat cuncta vapore.
should-fill and with-hot should-steep all-things vapor.
nam licet hinc mundi patefactum totius unum
for one-may hence of-the-world opened of-the-whole one
largifluum fontem scatere atque erumpere lumen,
abundant fountain to-gush and to-burst-forth light,
ex omni mundo quia sic elementa vaporis
from every world because so the-elements of-vapor
undique conveniunt et sic coniectus eorum
everywhere meet and so the-throwing-together of-them
confluit, ex uno capite hic ut profluat ardor.
flows-together, from one source here that should-flow-forth the-heat.

nonne vides etiam quam late parvus aquai
do-you-not see also how widely a-small of-water
prata riget fons interdum campisque redundet?
meadows waters spring sometimes and-the-plains floods?
est etiam quoque uti non magno solis ab igni
it-is even also that not great of-the-sun from fire
aëra percipiat calidis fervoribus ardor,
the-air may-seize with-hot heats the-heat,
opportunus itast si forte et idoneus aër,
suitable so-it-is if perchance and fit the-air,
ut queat accendi parvis ardoribus ictus;
that it-can to-be-kindled by-small heats struck;
quod genus interdum segetes stipulamque videmus
which kind sometimes standing-crops and-stubble we-see
accidere ex una scintilla incendia passim.
to-catch from one spark fires everywhere.
forsitan et rosea sol alte lampade lucens
perhaps also with-rosy the-sun on-high lamp shining
possideat multum caecis fervoribus ignem
may-possess much with-hidden heats fire
circum se, nullo qui sit fulgore notatus,
around itself, by-no which is gleam marked,
aestifer ut tantum radiorum exaugeat ictum.
heat-bearing so-that so-much of-rays it-may-increase the-stroke.

Several causes may explain why the sun moves between Capricorn and Cancer in a year while the moon covers the same course in a month. Democritus held that the lower a star lies, the less it is swept by the whirl of heaven, so the sun falls behind the signs and the moon falls further still; or alternate currents of air may thrust them across the sky, as clouds are driven different ways by different winds.

Nec ratio solis simplex et certa patescit,
Nor the-account of-the-sun simple and sure lies-open,
quo pacto aestivis e partibus aegocerotis
in-what way summer from parts of-the-goat-horned
brumalis adeat flexus atque inde revertens
the-wintry it-approaches turnings and thence returning
cancri se ut vertat metas ad solstitialis,
of-the-crab itself that it-turns the-goals to solstitial,
lunaque mensibus id spatium videatur obire,
and-the-moon in-months that space seems to-traverse,
annua sol in quo consumit tempora cursu.
yearly the-sun in which spends the-times course.
non, inquam, simplex his rebus reddita causast.
not, I-say, simple for-these things rendered the-cause-is.
nam fieri vel cum primis id posse videtur
for to-happen even among the-first that to-be-able seems
Democriti, quod sancta viri sententia ponit,
of-Democritus, which the-holy of-the-man opinion lays-down,
quanto quaeque magis sint terram sidera propter,
by-how-much each the-more be the-earth stars near,
tanto posse minus cum caeli turbine ferri:
by-so-much to-be-able the-less with of-heaven the-whirl to-be-borne:

evanescere enim rapidas illius et acris
to-vanish for the-swift of-it and keen
imminui supter viris, ideoque relinqui
to-be-diminished beneath the-forces, and-therefore to-be-left
paulatim solem cum posterioribu' signis,
little-by-little the-sun with the-hinder signs,
inferior multo quod sit quam fervida signa.
lower by-much because it-is than the-burning signs.
et magis hoc lunam: quanto demissior eius
and more this the-moon: by-how-much lower its
cursus abest procul a caelo terrisque propinquat,
course is-distant far from heaven and-to-the-earth draws-near,
tanto posse minus cum signis tendere cursum.
by-so-much to-be-able the-less with the-signs to-hold its-course.
flaccidiore etenim quanto iam turbine fertur
with-slacker for by-how-much now whirl it-is-borne
inferior quam sol, tanto magis omnia signa
lower than the-sun, by-so-much the-more all the-signs
hanc adipiscuntur circum, praeterque feruntur.
her overtake around, and-past are-borne.
propterea fit ut haec ad signum quodque reverti
therefore it-comes-about that she to sign each to-return
mobilius videatur, ad hanc quia signa revisunt.
more-nimbly seems, to her because the-signs revisit.
fit quoque ut e mundi transversis partibus aër
it-comes-about also that from of-the-world cross parts air
alternis certo fluere alter tempore possit,
alternately at-fixed to-flow one time can,
qui queat aestivis solem detrudere signis
which could from-summer the-sun to-thrust-down signs

brumalis usque ad flexus gelidumque rigorem,
wintry right to the-turnings and-chill stiffness,
et qui reiciat gelidis a frigoris umbris
and which could-throw-back the-chill from of-cold shadows
aestiferas usque in partis et fervida signa.
heat-bearing right into parts and burning signs.
et ratione pari lunam stellasque putandumst,
and in-measure equal the-moon and-the-stars it-must-be-thought,
quae volvunt magnos in magnis orbibus annos,
which roll great in great orbits years,
aëribus posse alternis e partibus ire.
by-airs to-be-able alternate from parts to-go.
nonne vides etiam diversis nubila ventis
do-you-not see also with-diverse clouds winds
diversas ire in partis inferna supernis?
diverse to-go into directions the-lower to-the-upper?
qui minus illa queant per magnos aetheris orbis
how less those could through great of-the-ether orbits
aestibus inter se diversis sidera ferri?
by-currents among themselves diverse the-stars to-be-borne?

Night falls either because the sun, worn out by its long course, breathes out its fires, or because the same force that carried it above the earth turns it underneath. Dawn comes either because the sun returns and lights the sky ahead of itself, or because fires gather at a fixed time, as the scattered fires seen from Mount Ida are said to come together into a ball. Many things happen at fixed times: flowers, teeth, beards, thunder, and snow.

At nox obruit ingenti caligine terras,
But night overwhelms with-huge murk the-lands,
aut ubi de longo cursu sol ultima caeli
either when from long course the-sun the-farthest of-heaven
impulit atque suos efflavit languidus ignis
has-struck and its-own has-breathed-out languid fires
concussos itere et labefactos aëre multo,
shaken by-the-journey and weakened by-air much,
aut quia sub terras cursum convortere cogit
or because beneath the-earth its-course to-turn compels
vis eadem, supra quae terras pertulit orbem.
the-force same, above which the-earth bore the-sphere.
Tempore item certo roseam natura per oras
At-time likewise fixed the-rosy nature through the-shores
aetheris auroram differt et lumina pandit,
of-the-ether dawn spreads and the-lights opens,
aut quia sol idem, sub terras ille revertens,
either because the-sun same, beneath the-earth he returning,
anticipat caelum radiis accendere temptans,
anticipates heaven with-rays to-kindle trying,
aut quia conveniunt ignes et semina multa
or because meet fires and seeds many

confluere ardoris consuerunt tempore certo,
to-flow-together of-heat are-wont at-time fixed,
quae faciunt solis nova semper lumina gigni:
which make of-the-sun new always lights to-be-born:
quod genus Idaeis famast e montibus altis
which kind Idaean report-is from mountains high
dispersos ignis orienti lumine cerni,
scattered fires at-rising light to-be-seen,
inde coire globum quasi in unum et conficere orbem.
then to-come-together a-ball as-it-were into one and to-make a-sphere.
nec tamen illud in his rebus mirabile debet
nor yet that in these things wonderful must
esse, quod haec ignis tam certo tempore possunt
to-be, that these of-fire at-so fixed time can
semina confluere et solis reparare nitorem.
seeds to-flow-together and of-the-sun to-renew the-brightness.
multa videmus enim, certo quae tempore fiunt
many-things we-see for, at-fixed which time happen
omnibus in rebus. florescunt tempore certo
all in things. flower at-time fixed
arbusta et certo dimittunt tempore florem:
the-trees and at-fixed let-fall time the-blossom:
nec minus in certo dentes cadere imperat aetas
and-not less at fixed the-teeth to-fall bids age
tempore et inpubem molli pubescere veste
time and the-beardless with-soft to-grow-downy clothing
et pariter mollem malis demittere barbam:
and alike soft from-the-cheeks to-let-fall a-beard:
fulmina postremo, nix, imbres, nubila, venti,
thunderbolts lastly, snow, rains, clouds, winds,

non nimis incertis fiunt in partibus anni.
not too uncertain happen in parts of-the-year.
namque ubi sic fuerunt causarum exordia prima
for when so were of-causes the-beginnings first
atque ita res mundi cecidere ab origine prima,
and so the-things of-the-world fell from the-origin first,
consecue quoque iam redeunt ex ordine certo.
consequently also now they-return in order fixed.

V.26 · WHY DAYS AND NIGHTS CHANGE LENGTH

Days lengthen and nights shorten either because the sun runs unequal arcs above and below the earth until it reaches the sign where the year's node makes night equal to day, as the astronomers' mapped signs declare; or because the air is thicker at certain seasons and the sun's light falters beneath the earth; or because the fires that make the sun gather more slowly and swiftly at alternate seasons.

Crescere itemque dies licet et tabescere noctes,
To-grow and-likewise the-days one-may and to-waste the-nights,
et minui luces, cum sumant augmina noctes,
and to-be-diminished the-days, when take increases the-nights,
aut quia sol idem sub terras atque superne
either because the-sun same beneath the-earth and above
imparibus currens amfractibus aetheris oras
in-unequal running windings of-the-ether the-shores
partit et in partis non aequas dividit orbem,
parts and into parts not equal divides the-sphere,
et quod ab alterutra detraxit parte, reponit
and what from one-or-other he-has-taken part, puts-back
eius in adversa tanto plus parte relatus,
of-it in the-opposite so-much more part carried-back,

donec ad id signum caeli pervenit, ubi anni
until to that sign of-heaven he-comes, where of-the-year
nodus nocturnas exaequat lucibus umbras:
the-node the-nightly equals with-the-days shadows:
nam medio cursu flatus aquilonis et austri
for in-the-middle course of-the-blast of-the-north-wind and of-the-south-wind
distinet aequato caeli discrimine metas,
holds-apart with-equal of-heaven division the-goals,
propter signiferi posituram totius orbis
because-of of-the-sign-bearing the-position of-the-whole orbit
obliqui, terras et caelum lumine lustrans
slanting, lands and heaven with-light traversing
annua sol in quo concludit tempora serpens,
yearly the-sun in which closes the-times creeping,
ut ratio declarat eorum qui loca caeli
as the-reasoning declares of-those who the-places of-heaven
omnia dispositis signis ornata notarunt.
all with-arranged signs adorned have-marked.
aut quia crassior est certis in partibus anni
or because thicker is fixed in parts of-the-year
* * *
(lacuna)
sub terris ideo tremulum iubar haesitat ignis
beneath the-earth therefore the-trembling radiance falters of-fire
nec penetrare potest facile atque emergere ad ortus:
nor to-pierce can easily and to-emerge to its-rising:
propterea noctes hiberno tempore longae
therefore the-nights in-winter time long
cessant, dum veniat radiatum insigne diei.
linger, until may-come the-rayed badge of-day.

aut etiam, quia sic alternis partibus anni
or also, because so in-alternate parts of-the-year
tardius et citius consuerunt confluere ignes,
more-slowly and more-swiftly are-wont to-flow-together fires,
qui faciunt solem certa desurgere parte
which make the-sun at-fixed to-rise part
propterea fit uti videantur dicere verum,
therefore it-comes-about that they-seem to-speak the-truth,
* * *
(lacuna)

V.27 · THE MOON'S PHASES AND THE SEASONS

The moon may shine with the sun's light, turning more of it toward us as she draws away from the sun; or she may roll with her own light, a dark body gliding beside her and blocking it, or she may turn like a ball half bright, as the Babylonian Chaldaeans teach against the astronomers, though either view may be true; or a new moon may be made each day. So many things come in fixed order, spring with Venus and her winged herald, summer with Ceres, autumn with Bacchus, then the winds, and winter with its chattering cold, that a moon born and blotted out at fixed times is no wonder.

705 Luna potest solis radiis percussa nitere
The-moon can of-the-sun by-the-rays struck to-shine
inque dies magis id lumen convertere nobis
and-from-day-to day more that light to-turn to-us
ad speciem, quantum solis secedit ab orbi,
to sight, as-far-as of-the-sun she-withdraws from orb,
donique eum contra pleno bene lumine fulsit
until him opposite with-full well light she-has-shone

atque oriens obitus eius super edita vidit:
and rising the-setting his above uplifted has-seen:
inde minutatim retro quasi condere lumen
then little-by-little back as-it-were to-hide her-light
debet item, quanto propius iam solis ad ignem
must likewise, by-how-much nearer now of-the-sun to the-fire
labitur ex alia signorum parte per orbem;
she-glides from other of-the-signs part through the-orbit;
ut faciunt, lunam qui fingunt esse pilai
as do-they, the-moon who imagine to-be of-a-ball
consimilem cursusque viam sub sole tenere.
very-like and-of-her-course the-way beneath the-sun to-hold.
est etiam quare proprio cum lumine possit
there-is also why her-own with light she-can
volvier et varias splendoris reddere formas:
to-roll and varied of-brightness to-render shapes:
corpus enim licet esse aliud, quod fertur et una
a-body for one-may to-be another, which is-borne and along
labitur omnimodis occursans officiensque,
glides in-all-ways meeting and-obstructing,
nec potis est cerni, quia cassum lumine fertur.
nor able is to-be-seen, because empty of-light it-is-borne.
versarique potest, globus ut si forte pilai
and-to-be-turned she-can, a-globe as if perchance of-a-ball
dimidia ex parti candenti lumine tinctus,
half from part with-gleaming light dyed,
versandoque globum variantis edere formas,
and-by-turning the-globe varying to-produce shapes,
donique eam partem, quaecumquest ignibus aucta,
until that part, whichever-is with-fires increased,

ad speciem vertit nobis oculosque patentis:
to sight she-turns to-us and-the-eyes open:
inde minutatim retro contorquet et aufert
then little-by-little back she-twists and takes-away
luciferam partem glomeraminis atque pilai;
the-light-bearing part of-the-globe and of-the-ball;
ut Babylonica Chaldaeum doctrina refutans
as the-Babylonian of-the-Chaldaeans doctrine refuting
astrologorum artem contra convincere tendit,
of-the-astronomers the-art against to-convict strives,
proinde quasi id fieri nequeat quod pugnat uterque,
just as-if that to-happen could-not for-which fights either,
aut minus hoc illo sit cur amplectier ausis.
or less this than-that be why to-embrace you-should-dare.
denique cur nequeat semper nova luna creari
finally why could-not always a-new moon to-be-created
ordine formarum certo certisque figuris,
in-order of-shapes fixed and-with-fixed figures,
inque dies privos aborisci quaeque creata
and-from-day-to day singly to-perish each created
atque alia illius reparari in parte locoque,
and another of-it to-be-restored in part and-place,
difficilest ratione docere et vincere verbis,
difficult-is by-reasoning to-teach and to-prove in-words,
ordine cum possint tam certo multa creari.
in-order when can so fixed many-things to-be-created.
it ver et Venus et Veneris praenuntius ante
goes spring and Venus and of-Venus the-harbinger before
pennatus graditur, zephyri vestigia propter
winged steps, of-the-west-wind the-footprints near

Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai
Flora for-whom mother strewing before of-the-way
cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.
all with-colors choice and smells fills.
inde loci sequitur calor aridus et comes una
then in-place follows heat dry and companion along
pulverulenta Ceres et etesia flabra aquilonum.
dusty Ceres and the-etesian blasts of-the-north-winds.
inde autumnus adit, graditur simul Euhius Euan.
then autumn approaches, steps at-the-same-time Euhius Euan.
inde aliae tempestates ventique secuntur,
then other weathers and-winds follow,
altitonans Volturnus et auster fulmine pollens.
high-thundering Volturnus and the-south-wind with-lightning mighty.
tandem bruma nives adfert pigrumque rigorem
at-length the-winter-solstice snows brings and-sluggish stiffness
didit hiems, sequitur crepitans hanc dentibus algor.
spreads winter, follows chattering it with-teeth cold.
quo minus est mirum, si certo tempore luna
whereby the-less is-it wonderful, if at-fixed time the-moon
gignitur et certo deletur tempore rusus,
is-begotten and at-fixed is-blotted-out time again,
cum fieri possint tam certo tempore multa.
when to-happen can at-so fixed time many-things.

Eclipses of sun and moon may have several causes. The moon may block the sun, or another dark body may; the sun may let go its fires when it passes through places hostile to flame; the earth may rob the moon of light by passing between, or another body may; and if the moon shines with her own light, she may grow faint while she crosses regions hostile to it.

Solis item quoque defectus lunaeque latebras
Of-the-sun likewise also the-eclipses and-of-the-moon the-hidings
pluribus e causis fieri tibi posse putandumst.
several from causes to-happen for-you to-be-able it-must-be-thought.
nam cur luna queat terram secludere solis
for why the-moon could the-earth to-shut-off of-the-sun
lumine et a terris altum caput obstruere ei,
from-the-light and from the-earth (his)-high head to-block for-him,
obiciens caecum radiis ardentibus orbem,
setting-against her-dark to-the-rays burning orb,
tempore eodem aliud facere id non posse putetur
at-time the-same another to-do this not to-be-able should-be-thought
corpus, quod cassum labatur lumine semper?
body, which empty glides of-light always?
solque suos etiam dimittere languidus ignis
and-the-sun his-own also to-let-go languid fires
tempore cur certo nequeat, recreareque lumen,
at-time why fixed could-not, and-to-renew his-light,
cum loca praeteriit flammis infesta per auras,
when the-places he-has-passed to-flames hostile through the-breezes,
quae faciunt ignis interstingui atque perire?
which make the-fires to-be-quenched and to-perish?

et cur terra queat lunam spoliare vicissim
and why the-earth could the-moon to-despoil in-turn
lumine et oppressum solem super ipsa tenere,
of-light and oppressed the-sun above herself to-hold,
menstrua dum rigidas coni perlabitur umbras,
monthly while the-rigid of-the-cone she-glides-through shadows,
tempore eodem aliud nequeat succurrere lunae
at-time the-same another could-not to-run-under the-moon
corpus vel supra solis perlabier orbem,
body or above of-the-sun to-glide-over the-orb,
quod radios interrumpat lumenque profusum?
which the-rays should-interrupt and-the-light poured-forth?
et tamen ipsa suo si fulget luna nitore,
and yet herself with-her-own if shines the-moon brightness,
cur nequeat certa mundi languescere parte,
why could-she-not in-fixed of-the-world to-grow-faint part,
dum loca luminibus propriis inimica per exit?
while the-places to-lights her-own hostile through she-passes?

Having explained the heavens, Lucretius returns to the earth's youth. She first raised grass and shrubs, as feathers and hair first grow on a body, then living creatures, which cannot have fallen from the sky or come from the salt pools; so she rightly bears the name of mother, and many still spring from her by rain and sun. Birds hatched first; then wombs rooted in the earth bore the first humans, whom she fed with a milky juice from her veins, in a world that roused no harsh cold, heat, or wind.

Quod superest, quoniam magni per caerula mundi
What remains, since of-the-great through the-blue world
qua fieri quicquid posset ratione resolvi,
in-what to-happen anything could way I-have-resolved,
solis uti varios cursus lunaeque meatus
of-the-sun that the-varied courses and-of-the-moon the-goings
noscere possemus quae vis et causa cieret,
to-know we-might what force and cause roused,
quove modo possent offecto lumine obire
or-in-what way they-could with-blocked light to-go-down
et neque opinantis tenebris obducere terras,
and not expecting with-darkness to-overspread the-lands,
cum quasi conivent et aperto lumine rursum
when as-it-were they-wink and with-opened light again
omnia convisunt clara loca candida luce,
all revisit clear the-places with-white light,
nunc redeo ad mundi novitatem et mollia terrae
now I-return to of-the-world the-newness and the-soft of-the-earth
arva, novo fetu quid primum in luminis oras
fields, with-new offspring what first into of-light the-shores

tollere et incertis crerint committere ventis.
to-raise and to-the-uncertain they-resolved to-entrust winds.
Principio genus herbarum viridemque nitorem
First the-race of-grasses and-green sheen
terra dedit circum collis camposque per omnis,
the-earth gave around the-hills and-the-plains through all,
florida fulserunt viridanti prata colore,
flowery shone with-greening the-meadows color,
arboribusque datumst variis exinde per auras
and-to-the-trees was-given various thereafter through the-breezes
crescendi magnum inmissis certamen habenis.
of-growing a-great with-loosened contest reins.
ut pluma atque pili primum saetaeque creantur
as feathers and hairs first and-bristles are-created
quadripedum membris et corpore pennipotentum,
of-four-footed-ones on-the-limbs and on-the-body of-the-wing-strong,
sic nova tum tellus herbas virgultaque primum
so new then the-earth grasses and-shrubs first
sustulit, inde loci animalia saecla creavit
raised, then in-place living generations created
multa modis multis varia ratione coorta.
many in-ways many in-varied fashion risen.
nam neque de caelo cecidisse animalia possunt,
for neither from heaven to-have-fallen living-creatures can,
nec terrestria de salsis exisse lacunis:
nor land-ones from salt to-have-come-out pools:
linquitur ut merito maternum nomen adepta
it-remains that rightly the-mother's name having-gained
terra sit, e terra quoniam sunt cuncta creata.
the-earth is, from the-earth since are all-things created.

multaque nunc etiam existunt animalia terris,
and-many now even come-forth living-creatures from-the-earth,
imbribus et calido solis concreta vapore;
by-rains and by-hot of-the-sun formed vapor;
quo minus est mirum, si tum sunt plura coorta
whereby the-less is-it wonderful, if then were more risen
et maiora, nova tellure atque aethere adulta.
and greater, with-new earth and ether grown.
principio genus alituum variaeque volucres
first the-race of-winged-things and-varied birds
ova relinquebant exclusae tempore verno,
eggs left hatched at-time spring,
folliculos ut nunc teretis aestate cicadae
the-husks as now smooth in-summer cicadas
lincunt sponte sua victum vitamque petentes.
leave of-accord their-own sustenance and-life seeking.
tum tibi terra dedit primum mortalia saecla.
then for-you the-earth gave first mortal generations.
multus enim calor atque umor superabat in arvis:
much for heat and moisture abounded in the-fields:
hoc ubi quaeque loci regio opportuna dabatur,
by-this when each of-place a-region suitable was-given,
crescebant uteri terram radicibus apti;
grew wombs to-the-earth by-roots fastened;
quos ubi tempore maturo patefecerat aetas
which when at-time ripe had-opened the-age
infantum, fugiens umorem aurasque petessens,
of-infants, fleeing moisture and-the-breezes seeking,
convertebat ibi natura foramina terrae
turned there nature the-passages of-the-earth

et sucum venis cogebat fundere apertis
and juice from-the-veins compelled to-pour opened
consimilem lactis, sicut nunc femina quaeque
very-like milk, as now woman each
cum peperit, dulci repletur lacte, quod omnis
when she-has-borne, with-sweet is-filled milk, because all
impetus in mammas convertitur ille alimenti.
the-rush into the-breasts is-turned that of-nourishment.
terra cibum pueris, vestem vapor, herba cubile
the-earth food to-the-children, clothing the-vapor, grass a-bed
praebebat multa et molli lanugine abundans.
afforded much and with-soft down abounding.
at novitas mundi nec frigora dura ciebat
but the-newness of-the-world neither colds harsh roused
nec nimios aestus nec magnis viribus auras.
nor excessive heats nor with-great forces breezes.
omnia enim pariter crescunt et robora sumunt.
all-things for alike grow and strength take.

V.30 · EARTH CEASES BEARING, AND THE MONSTERS

The earth bore men and every beast, but like a woman worn out by age she has ceased, since time changes the whole nature of the world and nothing stays like itself. She also tried to create monsters, things without feet, hands, mouth, or face, or with limbs grown together, but they could not grow, find food, or breed, since a race needs food, seed, and the mutual joy of male and female to go on.

Quare etiam atque etiam maternum nomen adepta
Wherefore again and again the-mother's name having-gained
terra tenet merito, quoniam genus ipsa creavit
the-earth holds rightly, since the-race herself created

humanum atque animal prope certo tempore fudit
human and every-beast almost at-fixed time poured-forth
omne, quod in magnis bacchatur montibu' passim,
every, which on great revels mountains everywhere,
aëriasque simul volucres variantibu' formis.
and-the-airy at-the-same-time birds with-varying shapes.
sed quia finem aliquam pariendi debet habere,
but because an-end some of-bearing must have,
destitit, ut mulier spatio defessa vetusto.
she-ceased, like a-woman with-length worn-out of-age.
mutat enim mundi naturam totius aetas,
changes for of-the-world the-nature of-the-whole age,
ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet,
from and-one another state to-take-over all-things must,
nec manet ulla sui similis res: omnia migrant,
nor remains any to-itself like thing: all-things migrate,
omnia commutat natura et vertere cogit.
all-things changes nature and to-turn compels.
namque aliud putrescit et aevo debile languet,
for one-thing rots and with-age weak languishes,
porro aliud clarescit et e contemptibus exit.
further another grows-bright and from contempt comes-forth.
sic igitur mundi naturam totius aetas
so therefore of-the-world the-nature of-the-whole age
mutat, et ex alio terram status excipit alter,
changes, and from one the-earth state takes-over another,
quod tulit ut nequeat, possit quod non tulit ante.
what it-bore so-that it-cannot, it-can what not it-bore before.
Multaque tum tellus etiam portenta creare
And-many then the-earth also monsters to-create

conatast mira facie membrisque coorta,
tried with-wondrous face and-limbs risen,
androgynum, interutrasque nec utrum, utrimque remotum,
the-hermaphrodite, between-both nor either, on-both-sides removed,
orba pedum partim, manuum viduata vicissim,
bereft of-feet some, of-hands bereaved in-turn,
muta sine ore etiam, sine voltu caeca reperta,
dumb without mouth also, without face blind found,
vinctaque membrorum per totum corpus adhaesu,
and-bound of-the-limbs through the-whole body by-the-cleaving-together,
nec facere ut possent quicquam nec cedere quoquam
nor to-do that they-could anything nor to-go anywhere
nec vitare malum nec sumere quod foret usus.
nor to-shun evil nor to-take what would-be of-use.
cetera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta creabat,
the-rest of kind this monsters and portents she-created,
nequiquam, quoniam natura absterruit auctum,
in-vain, since nature frightened-off their-growth,
nec potuere cupitum aetatis tangere florem
nor could-they the-desired of-age to-reach flower
nec reperire cibum nec iungi per Veneris res.
nor to-find food nor to-be-joined through of-Venus the-deeds.
multa videmus enim rebus concurrere debere,
many-things we-see for in-things to-concur must,
ut propagando possint procudere saecla;
that by-propagating they-can to-forge-out generations;
pabula primum ut sint, genitalia deinde per artus
food first that there-be, genital then through the-frame
semina, quae possint membris manare remissa,
seeds, which can from-the-limbs to-flow released,

feminaque ut maribus coniungi possit avere,
and-the-female that with-males to-be-joined she-can to-long,
mutua qui mutent inter se gaudia uterque.
mutual whereby they-may-exchange among themselves joys each.

V.31 · WHY SOME RACES SURVIVED

Many races must have perished because they could not breed. Those that remain are kept by courage, cunning, or speed, as lions, foxes, and stags are, or else by their use to us, as dogs, beasts of burden, sheep, and cattle, which fled the wild beasts for peace and food they did not toil for, which we give as the reward of their usefulness. Those with neither gift lay as prey to others, until nature brought them to destruction.

Multaque tum interiisse animantum saecla necessest
And-many then to-have-perished of-living-creatures generations must-needs
nec potuisse propagando procudere prolem.
nor to-have-been-able by-propagating to-forge-out offspring.
nam quaecumque vides vesci vitalibus auris,
for whatsoever you-see to-feed on-the-vital breezes,
aut dolus aut virtus aut denique mobilitas est
either cunning or courage or finally swiftness has
ex ineunte aevo genus id tutata reservans:
from the-beginning time race that guarded preserving:
multaque sunt, nobis ex utilitate sua quae
and-many are, to-us from usefulness their-own which
commendata manent, tutelae tradita nostrae.
commended remain, to-protection handed-over our.
principio genus acre leonum saevaque saecla
first the-race fierce of-lions and-savage breeds
tutatast virtus, volpes dolus, et fuga cervos.
has-guarded courage, foxes cunning, and flight the-stags.

at levisomna canum fido cum pectore corda,
but light-sleeping of-dogs faithful with breast the-hearts,
et genus omne quod est veterino semine partum,
and the-race every which is of-beast-of-burden by-seed born,
lanigeraeque simul pecudes et bucera saecla
and-wool-bearing at-the-same-time flocks and horned breeds
omnia sunt hominum tutelae tradita, Memmi:
all are of-men to-the-protection handed-over, Memmius:
nam cupide fugere feras, pacemque secuta
for eagerly they-fled wild-beasts, and-peace followed
sunt et larga suo sine pabula parta labore,
have and abundant their-own without fodder got toil,
quae damus utilitatis eorum praemia causa.
which we-give of-usefulness their as-prizes for-the-sake.
at quis nil horum tribuit natura, nec ipsa
but to-whom nothing of-these granted nature, nor themselves
sponte sua possent ut vivere nec dare nobis
of-accord their-own they-could that to-live nor to-give to-us
utilitatem aliquam, quare pateremur eorum
usefulness any, why we-should-suffer their
praesidio nostro pasci genus esseque tutum,
under-protection our to-be-fed the-race and-to-be safe,
scilicet, haec aliis praedae lucroque iacebant
surely, these for-others as-prey and-for-gain lay
indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vinclis,
fettered in-their-own fatal all bonds,
donec ad interitum genus id natura redegit.
until to destruction race that nature brought.

There never were centaurs, nor can there be, since a horse is in its prime at three when a boy still seeks the breast, and fails as the boy's beard begins. Nor were there Scyllas, whose discordant parts could not flower, love, or eat alike, nor a Chimaera breathing out the flame that burns a lion's body. Whoever claims the young earth bore such things may as well say rivers ran with gold; for even now plants do not grow intertwined, but each kind keeps its distinctions by nature's fixed covenant.

Sed neque Centauri fuerunt, nec tempore in ullo
But neither Centaurs were-there, nor at-time in any

esse queunt duplici natura et corpore bino
to-be can-they of-double nature and of-body twofold

ex alienigenis membris compacta, potestas
from alien limbs compacted, the-power

hinc illinc partis ut non par esse potissit.
on-this-side on-that of-the-parts that not equal to-be could.

id licet hinc quamvis hebeti cognoscere corde.
that one-may hence however with-dull to-learn heart.

principio circum tribus actis impiger annis
first about three passed brisk years

floret equus, puer haut quaquam: nam saepe etiam nunc
flowers the-horse, the-boy by-no means: for often even now

ubera mammarum in somnis lactantia quaeret:
the-udders of-the-breasts in sleep milky he-will-seek:

post ubi equum validae vires aetate senecta
afterward when the-horse the-strong forces in-age old

membraque deficiunt fugienti languida vita,
and-the-limbs fail with-fleeing languid life,

tum demum pueris aevo florente iuventas
then at-last for-boys with-age flowering youth

occipit et molli vestit lanugine malas;
begins and with-soft clothes down the-cheeks;
ne forte ex homine et veterino semine equorum
lest perchance from man and of-beast-of-burden seed of-horses
confieri credas Centauros posse neque esse,
to-be-made you-believe Centaurs to-be-able nor to-be,
aut rabidis canibus succinctas semimarinis
or with-raging dogs girt half-marine
corporibus Scyllas, et cetera de genere horum,
with-bodies Scyllas, and the-rest of kind these,
inter se quorum discordia membra videmus;
among themselves whose discordant limbs we-see;
quae neque florescunt pariter nec robora sumunt
which neither flower alike nor strength take
corporibus neque proiciunt aetate senecta,
in-bodies nor throw-it-off in-age old,
nec simili Venere ardescunt nec moribus unis
nor with-like Venus burn nor with-habits one
conveniunt, neque sunt eadem iucunda per artus.
agree, nor are the-same-things pleasant through the-frame.
quippe videre licet pinguescere saepe cicuta
for to-see one-may to-grow-fat often on-hemlock
barbigeras pecudes, homini quaest acre venenum.
bearded flocks, for-man which-is sharp poison.
denique flamma quidem cum corpora fulva leonum
finally flame indeed when the-bodies tawny of-lions
tam soleat torrere atque urere quam genus omne
so is-wont to-scorch and to-burn as kind every
visceris in terris quodcumque et sanguinis extet,
of-flesh on earth whatever and of-blood exists,

qui fieri potuit, triplici cum corpore ut una,
how to-happen could-it, triple with body that one,
prima leo, postrema draco, media ipsa Chimaera
in-front a-lion, behind a-dragon, in-the-middle herself the-Chimaera
ore foras acrem flaret de corpore flammam?
from-the-mouth outward a-sharp should-breathe from body flame?
quare etiam tellure nova caeloque recenti
wherefore also with-earth new and-sky fresh
talia qui fingit potuisse animalia gigni,
such who imagines to-have-been-able living-creatures to-be-begotten,
nixus in hoc uno novitatis nomine inani,
leaning on this one of-newness name empty,
multa licet simili ratione effutiat ore,
many-things one-may in-like fashion babble from-the-mouth,
aurea tum dicat per terras flumina vulgo
golden then let-him-say through the-lands rivers commonly
fluxisse, et gemmis florere arbusta suësse,
to-have-flowed, and with-gems to-flower the-trees to-have-been-wont,
aut hominem tanto membrorum esse impete natum,
or a-man with-so-great of-limbs to-be reach born,
trans maria alta pedum nisus ut ponere posset
across seas deep of-feet the-strides that to-set he-could
et manibus totum circum se vertere caelum.
and with-hands the-whole around himself to-turn heaven.
nam quod multa fuere in terris semina rerum
for that many there-were in the-earth seeds of-things
tempore quo primum tellus animalia fudit,
at-time in-which first the-earth living-creatures poured-forth,
nil tamen est signi mixtas potuisse creari
nothing yet is of-sign mixed to-have-been-able to-be-created

inter se pecudes compactaque membra animantum,
among themselves flocks and-compacted the-limbs of-living-creatures,
propterea quia quae de terris nunc quoque abundant
therefore because those-which from the-earth now also abound
herbarum genera ac fruges arbustaque laeta
of-grasses the-kinds and crops and-trees glad
non tamen inter se possunt complexa creari,
not yet among themselves can intertwined to-be-created,
sed res quaeque suo ritu procedit, et omnes
but thing each in-its-own manner proceeds, and all
foedere naturae certo discrimina servant.
by-the-covenant of-nature fixed their-differences keep.

V.33 · THE FIRST HUMAN LIFE

The first men were hardier, built on larger bones, and untroubled by heat, cold, strange food, or sickness. They lived like wild beasts, without plows, iron, or fire, on acorns and arbutus berries, drank from rivers, sheltered in groves and caves, knew neither common good nor law, and mated as mutual desire, force, or a gift of acorns or pears allowed. They hunted with stones and clubs, slept on the ground in leaves, and did not fear the night but the beasts that drove them from their caves.

At genus humanum multo fuit illud in arvis
But the-race human by-much was that in the-fields
durius, ut decuit, tellus quod dura creasset,
harder, as befitted, the-earth because hard had-created-it,
et maioribus et solidis magis ossibus intus
and with-larger and with-solid more bones within
fundatum, validis aptum per viscera nervis,
founded, with-strong fastened through the-flesh sinews,

nec facile ex aestu nec frigore quod caperetur,
nor easily by heat nor by-cold which could-be-taken,
nec novitate cibi nec labi corporis ulla.
nor by-strangeness of-food nor by-flaw of-body any.
multaque per caelum solis volventia lustra
and-many through heaven of-the-sun rolling lustres
volgivago vitam tractabant more ferarum.
in-roving their-life they-led in-the-manner of-wild-beasts.
nec robustus erat curvi moderator aratri
nor sturdy was of-the-curved the-guider plow
quisquam, nec scibat ferro molirier arva
anyone, nor knew-he with-iron to-work the-fields
nec nova defodere in terram virgulta neque altis
nor new to-dig-in into the-earth shoots nor from-high
arboribus veteres decidere falcibu' ramos.
trees old to-cut-down with-sickles branches.
quod sol atque imbres dederant, quod terra crearat
what the-sun and rains had-given, what the-earth had-created
sponte sua, satis id placabat pectora donum.
of-accord its-own, enough that pleased their-breasts gift.
glandiferas inter curabant corpora quercus
acorn-bearing among they-tended their-bodies oaks
plerumque: et quae nunc hiberno tempore cernis
mostly: and which now in-winter time you-see
arbita puniceo fieri matura colore,
arbutus-berries with-scarlet to-become ripe color,
plurima tum tellus etiam maiora ferebat.
most then the-earth even larger bore.
multaque praeterea novitas tum florida mundi
and-many besides the-newness then flowery of-the-world

pabula dura tulit, miseris mortalibus ampla.
food hard bore, for-wretched mortals ample.
at sedare sitim fluvii fontesque vocabant,
but to-allay thirst rivers and-springs called,
ut nunc montibus e magnis decursus aquai
as now mountains from great the-downflow of-water
largu' citat late sitientia saecla ferarum.
abundant summons far-and-wide the-thirsting generations of-wild-beasts.
denique nota vagi silvestria templa petebant
finally known wandering the-woodland precincts they-sought
nympharum, quibus e scibant umori' fluenta
of-the-nymphs, which from they-knew of-water the-streams
lubrica proluvie larga lavere umida saxa,
slippery with-flood abundant to-wash the-wet rocks,
umida saxa, super viridi stillantia musco,
the-wet rocks, above on-green dripping moss,
et partim plano scatere atque erumpere campo.
and partly on-the-level to-gush and to-burst-forth plain.
necdum res igni scibant tractare neque uti
not-yet things with-fire knew-they to-handle nor to-use
pellibus et spoliis corpus vestire ferarum,
skins and with-spoils the-body to-clothe of-wild-beasts,
sed nemora atque cavos montis silvasque colebant,
but groves and hollow mountains and-forests they-inhabited,
et frutices inter condebant squalida membra,
and shrubs among hid their-squalid limbs,
verbera ventorum vitare imbrisque coacti.
the-lashes of-the-winds to-shun and-the-rains compelled.
nec commune bonum poterant spectare, neque ullis
nor common good could-they to-regard, nor any

moribus inter se scibant nec legibus uti.
customs among themselves knew-they nor laws to-use.
quod cuique obtulerat praedae fortuna, ferebat
what to-each had-offered of-prey fortune, he-bore-off
sponte sua sibi quisque valere et vivere doctus.
of-accord his-own for-himself each to-be-strong and to-live taught.
et Venus in silvis iungebat corpora amantum:
and Venus in the-forests joined the-bodies of-lovers:
conciliabat enim vel mutua quamque cupido
won-over for either mutual each-woman desire
vel violenta viri vis atque inpensa libido
or the-violent of-the-man force and lavish lust
vel pretium, glandes atque arbita vel pira lecta.
or a-price, acorns and arbutus-berries or pears picked.
et manuum mira freti virtute pedumque
and of-hands wondrous relying-on the-strength and-of-feet
consectabantur silvestria saecla ferarum,
they-hunted the-woodland generations of-wild-beasts,
missilibus saxis et magno pondere clavae.
with-missile stones and with-great weight of-club.
multaque vincebant, vitabant pauca latebris;
and-many they-conquered, they-shunned few in-biding-places;
saetigerisque pares subus silvestria membra
and-to-bristly like boars their-woodland limbs
nuda dabant terrae, nocturno tempore capti,
naked they-gave to-the-earth, at-night time overtaken,
circum se foliis ac frondibus involventes.
around themselves with-leaves and boughs wrapping.
nec plangore diem magno solemque per agros
nor with-wailing the-day great and-the-sun through the-fields

quaerebant pavidi palantes noctis in umbris,
did-they-seek fearful wandering of-night in the-shadows,
sed taciti respectabant somnoque sepulti,
but silent they-waited and-in-sleep buried,
dum rosea face sol inferret lumina caelo:
until with-rosy torch the-sun should-bring light to-heaven:
a parvis quod enim consuerant cernere semper
from small because for they-had-been-wont to-see always
alterno tenebras et lucem tempore gigni,
in-alternate darkness and light time to-be-born,
non erat ut fieri possent mirarier umquam
not it-was that to-happen could to-wonder ever
nec diffidere, ne terras aeterna teneret
nor to-mistrust, lest the-lands everlasting should-hold
nox in perpetuum detracto lumine solis.
night for ever with-withdrawn the-light of-the-sun.
sed magis illud erat curae, quod saecla ferarum
but more that was for-care, that the-generations of-wild-beasts
infestam miseris faciebant saepe quietem:
dangerous for-the-wretched made often rest:
eiectique domo fugiebant saxea tecta
and-thrown-out from-home they-fled their-rocky roofs
spumigeri suis adventu validique leonis,
of-the-foaming boar at-the-coming and-of-the-strong lion,
atque intempesta cedebant nocte paventes
and at-dead-of they-gave-up night fearing
hospitibus saevis instrata cubilia fronde.
to-guests savage the-strewn beds with-leafage.

Mortals did not leave life much more often then than now. A man caught by a beast was eaten alive and filled the woods with groans, and those who escaped with gnawed bodies called on Orcus until savage pains took their lives. But no single day gave thousands of soldiers to destruction, and no sea wrecked ships, since seafaring was unknown. Then want of food killed them, now plenty drowns us; then men unwittingly poisoned themselves, now they poison others with skill.

Nec nimio tum plus quam nunc mortalia saecla
Nor by-much then more than now mortal generations
dulcia linquebant lamentis lumina vitae.
the-sweet left with-laments lights of-life.
unus enim tum quisque magis deprensus eorum
one for then each more caught of-them
pabula viva feris praebebat, dentibus haustus,
food living to-wild-beasts afforded, by-teeth gulped,
et nemora ac montis gemitu silvasque replebat,
and groves and mountains with-groaning and-forests filled,
viva videns vivo sepeliri viscera busto.
living seeing in-a-living to-be-buried his-flesh tomb.
et quos effugium servarat corpore adeso,
and those-whom escape had-saved with-body gnawed,
posterius tremulas super ulcera tetra tenentes
afterward trembling over sores foul holding
palmas horriferis accibant vocibus Orcum,
their-palms with-horrible called-on voices Orcus,
donique eos vita privarunt vermina saeva,
until them of-life deprived the-gripings savage,
expertis opis, ignaros quid volnera vellent.
bereft of-help, ignorant what the-wounds wanted.

at non multa virum sub signis milia ducta
but not many of-men beneath standards thousands led
una dies dabat exitio, nec turbida ponti
one day gave to-destruction, nor the-turbulent of-the-sea
aequora fligebant navis ad saxa virosque.
the-plains dashed ships onto the-rocks and-men.
hic temere in cassum frustra mare saepe coortum
here at-random in vain in-vain the-sea often risen
saevibat leviterque minas ponebat inanis,
raged and-lightly its-threats laid-down empty,
nec poterat quemquam placidi pellacia ponti
nor could anyone of-the-calm the-enticement sea
subdola pellicere in fraudem ridentibus undis.
treacherous to-entice into the-trap with-smiling waves.
improba navigii ratio tum caeca iacebat.
the-wicked of-seafaring the-art then hidden lay.
tum penuria deinde cibi languentia leto
then the-want next of-food languishing to-death
membra dabat, contra nunc rerum copia mersat.
limbs gave, conversely now of-things the-plenty drowns.
illi inprudentes ipsi sibi saepe venenum
they unwitting themselves for-themselves often poison
vergebant, nunc dant aliis sollertius ipsum.
poured, now they-give to-others more-skillfully itself.

When men had huts, skins, and fire, and a woman joined one man and they saw their own children, the human race began to soften: fire made their bodies less able to bear the cold, Venus sapped their strength, and children's coaxing broke their pride. Neighbors began to make friendships, agreeing neither to harm nor be harmed, and commended the children and the women to one another, signing that all should pity the weak; concord was not complete, but most kept these covenants, or the race would have perished.

Inde casas postquam ac pellis ignemque pararunt,
Then huts after and skins and-fire they-had-provided,
et mulier coniuncta viro concessit in unum
and the-woman joined to-the-man withdrew into one
* * *
(lacuna)
cognita sunt, prolemque ex se videre creatam,
known were, and-offspring from themselves saw created,
tum genus humanum primum mollescere coepit.
then the-race human first to-soften began.
ignis enim curavit ut alsia corpora frigus
fire for took-care that chilly bodies cold
non ita iam possent caeli sub tegmine ferre,
not so now could of-heaven beneath the-covering to-bear,
et Venus inminuit viris, puerique parentum
and Venus diminished their-strength, and-the-children of-their-parents
blanditiis facile ingenium fregere superbum.
by-coaxings easily the-temper broke proud.
tunc et amicitiem coeperunt iungere aventes
then also friendship began to-join longing

finitimi inter se nec laedere nec violari,
neighbors among themselves neither to-harm nor to-be-harmed,
et pueros commendarunt muliebreque saeclum;
and children they-commended and-the-womanly race;
vocibus et gestu cum balbe significarent
with-voices and gesture when stammeringly they-signified
imbecillorum esse aequum misererier omnis.
of-the-weak to-be fair to-pity all.
nec tamen omnimodis poterat concordia gigni,
nor yet in-all-ways could concord to-be-begotten,
sed bona magnaque pars servabat foedera caste:
but a-good and-great part kept the-covenants chastely:
aut genus humanum iam tum foret omne peremptum,
or the-race human already then would-have-been all destroyed,
nec potuisset adhuc perducere saecla propago.
nor could-have hitherto to-prolong the-generations offspring.

V.36 · THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE

Nature made men utter sounds, and need squeezed out the names of things, as children point at what is present, calves butt before their horns are grown, and young birds trust to their wings. No one man can have given names to things and taught the rest, since he could not have conceived their use unless others already spoke, nor forced or persuaded the rest to learn. Even dogs, horses, and birds make different sounds for different feelings, so it is no wonder men did.

At varios linguae sonitus natura subegit
But the-various of-the-tongue sounds nature compelled
mittere, et utilitas expressit nomina rerum,
to-send-out, and use squeezed-out the-names of-things,

non alia longe ratione atque ipsa videtur
not by-other far fashion than itself seems
protrahere ad gestum pueros infantia linguae,
to-draw-forth to gesture children the-speechlessness of-tongue,
cum facit ut digito quae sint praesentia monstrent.
when it-makes that with-a-finger what-things are present they-point-out.
sentit enim vim quisque suam quoad possit abuti.
feels for the-force each his-own how-far he-can to-use.
cornua nata prius vitulo quam frontibus extent,
the-horns born before for-the-calf than from-his-brows they-stand-out,
illis iratus petit atque infestus inurget.
with-them angry he-butts and hostile presses.
at catuli pantherarum scymnique leonum
but the-cubs of-panthers and-the-whelps of-lions
unguibus ac pedibus iam tum morsuque repugnant,
with-claws and feet already then and-bite resist,
vix etiam cum sunt dentes unguesque creati.
scarcely even when are their-teeth and-claws created.
alituum porro genus alis omne videmus
of-winged-things further the-race on-wings all we-see
fidere et a pinnis tremulum petere auxiliatum.
to-rely and from feathers trembling to-seek help.
proinde putare aliquem tum nomina distribuisse
therefore to-think anyone then names to-have-distributed
rebus, et inde homines didicisse vocabula prima,
to-things, and thence men to-have-learned their-words first,
desiperest. nam cur hic posset cuncta notare
is-folly. for why this-one could all-things to-mark
vocibus et varios sonitus emittere linguae,
with-voices and varied sounds to-send-out of-the-tongue,

tempore eodem alii facere id non quisse putentur?
at-time the-same others to-do that not to-have-been-able be-thought?

praeterea si non alii quoque vocibus usi
besides if not others too with-voices used

inter se fuerant, unde insita notities est
among themselves had, whence implanted the-notion is

utilitatis et unde datast huic prima potestas,
of-use and whence was-given to-this-one first the-power,

quid vellet facere ut sciret animoque videret?
what he-wished to-do that he-might-know and-with-the-mind see?

cogere item pluris unus victosque domare
to-compel likewise many one and-conquered to-subdue

non poterat, rerum ut perdiscere nomina vellent.
not could, of-things that to-learn-thoroughly the-names they-should-wish.

nec ratione docere ulla suadereque surdis,
nor by-means to-teach any and-to-persuade the-deaf,

quid sit opus facto, facilest: neque enim paterentur,
what is needful to-be-done, easy-is-it: nor for would-they-suffer,

nec ratione ulla sibi ferrent amplius auris
nor by-means any to-themselves would-they-bear longer the-ears

vocis inauditos sonitus obtundere frustra.
of-voice unheard sounds to-batter in-vain.

postremo quid in hac mirabile tantoperest re,
lastly what in this wonderful so-greatly-is thing,

si genus humanum, cui vox et lingua vigeret,
if the-race human, in-whom voice and tongue was-strong,

pro vario sensu varia res voce notavit?
according-to varying feeling with-varying things voice marked?

cum pecudes mutae, cum denique saecla ferarum
when the-flocks dumb, when finally the-generations of-wild-beasts

dissimilis soleant voces variasque ciere,
unlike are-wont voices and-varied to-rouse,
cum metus aut dolor est et cum iam gaudia gliscunt.
when fear or pain is and when now joys swell.
quippe etenim licet id rebus cognoscere apertis.
for indeed one-may that from-things to-learn plain.
inritata canum cum primum magna Molossum
provoked of-dogs when first the-great of-Molossians
mollia ricta fremunt duros nudantia dentes,
soft jaws snarl hard baring teeth,
longe alio sonitu rabie restricta minantur,
far other with-sound with-rage drawn-back they-threaten,
et cum iam latrant et vocibus omnia complent:
and when now they-bark and with-voices all-things fill:
et catulos blande cum lingua lambere temptant,
and the-puppies coaxingly when with-the-tongue to-lick they-try,
aut ubi eos iactant pedibus morsuque petentes
or when them they-toss with-feet and-with-bite seeking
suspensis veros imitantur dentibus haustus,
with-held-back true they-imitate teeth gulps,
longo alio pacto gannitu vocis adulant,
by-far other in-way with-yelping of-voice they-fawn,
et cum deserti baubantur in aedibus, aut cum
and when left they-bay in the-house, or when
plorantis fugiunt summisso corpore plagas.
whining they-flee with-crouched body the-blows.
denique non hinnitus item differre videtur,
finally not the-neighing likewise to-differ seems,
inter equas ubi equus florenti aetate iuvencus
among the-mares when the-stallion in-flowering age young

pinnigeri saevit calcaribus ictus amoris
of-winged rages with-the-spurs struck love
et fremitum patulis ibi naribus edit ad arma,
and a-snort from-wide there nostrils utters for arms,
et cum sic alias concussis artibus hinnit?
and when so at-other-times with-shaken limbs he-neighs?
postremo genus alituum variaeque volucres,
lastly the-race of-winged-things and-varied birds,
accipitres atque ossifragae mergique marinis
hawks and ospreys and-gulls marine
fluctibus in salso victum vitamque petentes,
waves in the-salt sustenance and-life seeking,
longe alias alio iaciunt in tempore voces,
far other other utter at time cries,
et quom de victu certant praedaque repugnant:
and when for food they-strive and-for-prey struggle:
et partim mutant cum tempestatibus una
and partly they-change with weathers along
raucisonos cantus, cornicum ut saecla vetusta
hoarse-sounding songs, of-crows as the-generations long-lived
corvorumque greges ubi aquam dicuntur et imbris
and-of-ravens the-flocks when water are-said and rains
poscere et interdum ventos aurasque vocare.
to-demand and sometimes winds and-breezes to-call.
ergo si varii sensus animalia cogunt,
therefore if varied feelings living-creatures compel,
muta tamen cum sint, varias emittere voces,
dumb yet though they-be, varied to-send-out voices,

quanto mortalis magis aequumst tum potuisse
by-how-much mortals more fair-is-it then to-have-been-able
dissimilis alia atque alia res voce notare!
unlike with-one and with-another thing voice to-mark!

V.37 · THE ORIGIN OF FIRE AND COOKING

Lightning first brought fire to mortals, since many things are seen to blaze when struck from heaven, or else branches rubbing together in the wind kindled it. The sun then taught men to cook food and soften it with heat, since they saw many things grow mellow under its rays.

Illud in his rebus tacitus ne forte requiras,
That in these things silently lest perchance you-ask,
fulmen detulit in terram mortalibus ignem
the-lightning brought-down to earth for-mortals fire
primitus, inde omnis flammarum diditur ardor:
first, thence all of-flames is-spread the-heat:
multa videmus enim caelestibus inlita flammis
many-things we-see for with-heavenly smeared flames
fulgere, cum caeli donavit plaga vapore.
to-blaze, when of-heaven has-endowed-them the-stroke with-vapor.
et ramosa tamen cum ventis pulsa vacillans
and branching yet when by-winds struck swaying
aestuat in ramos, incumbens arboris arbor,
seethes against the-branches, leaning of-a-tree a-tree,
exprimitur validis extritus viribus ignis
is-squeezed-out by-strong rubbed-out forces fire
et micat interdum flammai fervidus ardor,
and flashes sometimes of-flame the-burning heat,

mutua dum inter se rami stirpesque teruntur.
mutual while among themselves branches and-trunks are-rubbed.
quorum utrumque dedisse potest mortalibus ignem.
of-which either to-have-given can to-mortals fire.
inde cibum coquere ac flammae mollire vapore
then food to-cook and of-flame to-soften by-the-vapor
sol docuit, quoniam mitescere multa videbant
the-sun taught, since to-grow-mellow many-things they-saw
verberibus radiorum atque aestu victa per agros.
by-the-lashes of-the-rays and by-heat subdued through the-fields.

V.38 · KINGS, GOLD, AND AMBITION

The cleverest taught others new ways of life; kings founded cities and divided cattle and land by looks, strength, and wit. Then property and gold were found, and the rich drew followers away from the strong and the handsome. True riches are to live sparingly with a calm mind, but men wanted fame and power, and climbing toward honor they made the road dangerous, while envy strikes the highest as lightning does. Better to obey in quiet than to rule; let those wise by hearsay sweat blood on ambition's narrow road.

Inque dies magis hi victum vitamque priorem
And-from-day-to day more these their-fare and-life former
commutare novis monstrabant rebu' benigni;
to-change for-new showed things kindly;
ingenio qui praestabant et corde vigebant.
in-wit who excelled and in-heart were-strong.
condere coeperunt urbis arcemque locare
to-found began cities and-a-citadel to-place
praesidium reges ipsi sibi perfugiumque,
as-a-defense kings themselves for-themselves and-a-refuge,

et pecus atque agros divisere atque dedere
and cattle and fields divided and gave
pro facie cuiusque et viribus ingenioque:
according-to the-looks of-each and strength and-wit:
nam facies multum valuit viresque vigebant.
for looks much availed and-strength was-strong.
posterius res inventast aurumque repertum,
afterward property was-invented and-gold found,
quod facile et validis et pulchris dempsit honorem:
which easily both from-the-strong and the-beautiful took-away honor:
divitioris enim sectam plerumque secuntur
of-the-richer for the-faction mostly follow
quamlubet et fortes et pulchro corpore creti.
however both strong and of-beautiful body born.
quod siquis vera vitam ratione gubernet,
but if-anyone by-true his-life reasoning should-govern,
divitiae grandes homini sunt vivere parce
riches great to-a-man are to-live sparingly
aequo animo: neque enimst umquam penuria parvi.
with-even mind: nor for-is ever want of-a-little.
at claros homines voluerunt se atque potentes,
but famous men wished themselves and powerful,
ut fundamento stabili fortuna maneret
that on-a-foundation stable their-fortune might-remain
et placidam possent opulenti degere vitam:
and peaceful they-could wealthy to-spend life:
nequiquam, quoniam ad summum succedere honorem
in-vain, since toward the-highest to-climb honor
certantes iter infestum fecere viai,
striving the-path dangerous they-made of-the-way,

et tamen e summo, quasi fulmen, deicit ictos
and yet from the-top, as-it-were lightning, casts-down them-struck
invidia interdum contemptim in Tartara taetra;
envy sometimes contemptuously into Tartarus foul;
invidia quoniam, ceu fulmine, summa vaporant
by-envy since, as by-lightning, the-highest-things are-scorched
plerumque et quae sunt aliis magis edita cumque:
mostly and which are than-others more raised soever:
ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum
so-that better by-much now it-be to-obey quietly
quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere.
than to-rule by-command things to-wish and kingdoms to-hold.
proinde sine in cassum defessi sanguine sudent,
therefore let-them in vain wearied blood sweat,
angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis;
narrow along the-path struggling of-ambition;
quandoquidem sapiunt alieno ex ore petuntque
since-indeed they-are-wise another's from mouth and-seek
res ex auditis potius quam sensibus ipsis;
things from hearsay rather than from-the-senses themselves;
nec magis id nunc est neque erit mox quam fuit ante.
nor more that now is nor will-be soon than it-was before.

When the kings were killed, their thrones and scepters lay overturned and the crown was trampled by the mob, and things sank to dregs and turmoil as each man sought power for himself. Then some taught men to create magistrates and establish laws, since the race was weary of living by violence. Fear of punishment now stains the prizes of life, and the wrongdoer can never be sure his secret will stay hidden, since many have betrayed themselves in sleep or fever.

Ergo regibus occisis subversa iacebat
Therefore the-kings slain overturned lay
pristina maiestas soliorum et sceptra superba,
the-old majesty of-thrones and scepters proud,
et capitis summi praeclarum insigne cruentum
and of-the-head highest the-glorious emblem bloody
sub pedibus vulgi magnum lugebat honorem:
beneath the-feet of-the-mob its-great mourned honor:
nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum.
for eagerly is-trampled too-much before feared.
res itaque ad summam faecem turbasque redibat,
things therefore to the-utmost dregs and-turmoil returned,
imperium sibi cum ac summatum quisque petebat.
the-rule for-himself when and the-supremacy each sought.
inde magistratum partim docuere creare,
then magistrates some taught to-create,
iuraque constituere, ut vellent legibus uti.
and-rights to-establish, that they-might-wish laws to-use.
nam genus humanum, defessum vi colere aevom,
for the-race human, weary by-force to-pass life,
ex inimicitiis languebat; quo magis ipsum
from enmities languished; whereby the-more itself

sponte sua cecidit sub leges artaque iura.
of-accord its-own fell beneath laws and-strict rights.
acrius ex ira quod enim se quisque parabat
more-fiercely from anger because for himself each prepared
ulcisci quam nunc concessumst legibus aequis,
to-avenge than now is-allowed by-laws equal,
hanc ob remst homines pertaesum vi colere aevom.
this on account-is men wearied by-force to-pass life.
inde metus maculat poenarum praemia vitae.
thence fear stains of-punishments the-prizes of-life.
circumretit enim vis atque iniuria quemque,
entangles for violence and wrong each,
atque unde exortast, ad eum plerumque revertit,
and whence it-has-arisen, to him mostly returns,
nec facilest placidam ac pacatam degere vitam
nor easy-is-it peaceful and calm to-spend life
qui violat factis communia foedera pacis.
for-one-who violates by-deeds the-common covenants of-peace.
etsi fallit enim divom genus humanumque,
though he-escapes for of-the-gods the-race and-human,
perpetuo tamen id fore clam diffidere debet;
for-ever yet that will-be secret to-mistrust must;
quippe ubi se multi per somnia saepe loquentes
for when themselves many through dreams often speaking
aut morbo delirantes protraxe ferantur
or in-disease raving to-have-dragged-forth are-said
et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse.
and hidden long into the-midst sins to-have-given.

Men believed in gods because they saw glorious faces waking and in sleep, gave them sense because they seemed to move and speak, immortality because the images were always renewed and their strength seemed invincible, and the highest happiness because they feared no death and in dreams did wonders without toil. Seeing heaven's ordered workings and seasons without knowing the causes, they handed everything to the gods and placed their seats in the sky, where sun, moon, stars, storms, and thunder roll.

Nunc quae causa deum per magnas numina gentis
Now what cause of-the-gods through great the-powers nations
pervulgarit et ararum compleverit urbis
has-spread-abroad and with-altars has-filled the-cities
suscipiendaque curarit sollemnia sacra,
and-to-be-undertaken has-taken-care-of solemn rites,
quae nunc in magnis florent sacra rebu' locisque,
which now in great flourish rites things and-places,
unde etiam nunc est mortalibus insitus horror,
whence even now is in-mortals implanted the-shudder,
qui delubra deum nova toto suscitat orbi
which shrines of-the-gods new in-the-whole raises world
terrarum et festis cogit celebrare diebus,
of-lands and on-festal compels to-throng days,
non ita difficilest rationem reddere verbis.
not so difficult-is the-reason to-render in-words.
quippe etenim iam tum divom mortalia saecla
for indeed already then of-the-gods the-mortal generations
egregias animo facies vigilante videbant,
glorious with-the-mind faces waking saw,

et magis in somnis mirando corporis auctu.
and more in sleep with-wondrous of-body growth.
his igitur sensum tribuebant propterea quod
to-these therefore sense they-granted therefore because
membra movere videbantur vocesque superbas
their-limbs to-move they-seemed and-voices proud
mittere pro facie praeclara et viribus amplis.
to-utter in-keeping-with face glorious and strength ample.
aeternamque dabant vitam, quia semper eorum
and-everlasting they-gave life, because always of-them
subpeditabatur facies et forma manebat,
was-supplied the-face and the-form remained,
et tamen omnino quod tantis viribus auctos
and yet wholly because with-so-great forces endowed
non temere ulla vi convinci posse putabant.
not lightly by-any force to-be-conquered to-be-able they-thought.
fortunisque ideo longe praestare putabant,
and-in-fortunes therefore far to-excel they-thought,
quod mortis timor haut quemquam vexaret eorum,
because of-death the-fear not any harassed of-them,
et simul in somnis quia multa et mira videbant
and at-the-same-time in sleep because many-things and wondrous they-saw
efficere et nullum capere ipsos inde laborem.
them-to-do and no to-take themselves thence toil.
praeterea caeli rationes ordine certo
besides of-heaven the-workings in-order fixed
et varia annorum cernebant tempora verti,
and the-varied of-the-years they-saw seasons to-turn,
nec poterant quibus id fieret cognoscere causis.
nor could-they by-what that happened to-learn causes.

ergo perfugium sibi habebant omnia divis
therefore refuge for-themselves they-had all-things to-the-gods
tradere et illorum nutu facere omnia flecti.
to-hand-over and by-their nod to-make all-things to-be-swayed.
in caeloque deum sedes et templa locarunt,
in and-heaven of-the-gods the-seats and temples they-placed,
per caelum volvi quia sol et luna videtur,
through heaven to-roll because the-sun and the-moon is-seen,
alma dies et nox, et noctis signa severae,
kindly day and night, and of-night the-constellations stern,
noctivagaeque faces caeli, flammaeque volantes,
and-night-wandering torches of-heaven, and-flames flying,
nubila ros imbres nix venti fulmina grando
clouds dew rains snow winds thunderbolts hail
et rapidi fremitus et murmura magna minarum.
and swift roarings and murmurs great of-threats.

V.41 · TRUE PIETY

Unhappy race of men, to give such deeds and angers to the gods! Piety is not being seen veiled before a stone or sprinkling altars with blood, but looking on all things with a tranquil mind. Gazing at the heavens, we fear the gods' power and wonder whether the world had a birth and will end; when thunder shakes the earth, a storm wrecks a fleet, or the ground quakes, men tremble and grant the gods power over all.

O genus infelix humanum, talia divis
O race unhappy human, such-things to-the-gods
cum tribuit facta atque iras adiunxit acerbas!
when it-granted deeds and angers joined bitter!
quantos tum gemitus ipsi sibi, quantaque nobis
how-great then groans themselves for-themselves, and-how-great for-us

volnera, quas lacrimas peperere minoribu' nostris!
wounds, what tears have-they-brought-forth for-descendants our!
nec pietas ullast velatum saepe videri
nor piety any-is veiled often to-be-seen
vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras,
to-turn toward a-stone and all to-approach to the-altars,
nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
nor to-fall-forward on-the-ground prostrate and to-spread the-palms
ante deum delubra, nec aras sanguine multo
before of-the-gods the-shrines, nor the-altars with-blood much
spargere quadrupedum, nec votis nectere vota,
to-sprinkle of-four-footed-beasts, nor to-vows to-link vows,
sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.
but rather with-tranquil to-be-able all-things mind to-behold.
nam cum suspicimus magni caelestia mundi
for when we-gaze-up-at of-the-great the-heavenly world
templa super stellisque micantibus aethera fixum,
precincts above and-with-stars twinkling the-ether fixed,
et venit in mentem solis lunaeque viarum,
and there-comes into the-mind of-the-sun and-of-the-moon of-the-ways,
tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectore cura
then by-other weighed-down evils in the-breast a-care
* * *
(lacuna)
illa quoque expergefactum caput erigere infit,
that too awakened its-head to-raise begins,
ne quae forte deum nobis inmensa potestas
lest some perchance of-the-gods for-us immeasurable power
sit, vario motu quae candida sidera verset:
be, with-varied motion which the-white stars turns:

temptat enim dubiam mentem rationis egestas,
tries for the-doubtful mind of-reasoning the-lack,
ecquaenam fuerit mundi genitalis origo,
whether there-was of-the-world a-generative origin,
et simul ecquae sit finis, quoad moenia mundi
and at-the-same-time whether there-be an-end, how-far the-walls of-the-world
solliciti motus hunc possint ferre laborem,
of-anxious motion this can to-bear toil,
an divinitus aeterna donata salute
or by-divine-will with-everlasting endowed safety
perpetuo possint aevi labentia tractu
for-ever can of-time gliding through-the-course
inmensi validas aevi contemnere viris.
of-immeasurable the-strong of-time to-scorn forces.
praeterea cui non animus formidine divum
besides whose not mind with-dread of-the-gods
contrahitur, cui non correpunt membra pavore,
is-contracted, whose not creep limbs with-fear,
fulminis horribili cum plaga torrida tellus
of-the-thunderbolt by-horrible when the-stroke the-scorched earth
contremit et magnum percurrunt murmura caelum?
trembles and great run-through rumblings heaven?
non populi gentesque tremunt, regesque superbi
do-not peoples and-nations tremble, and-kings proud
corripiunt divum percussi membra timore,
draw-together of-the-gods struck their-limbs with-fear,
nequid ob admissum foede dictumve superbe
lest-anything for crime foully or-word proudly
poenarum grave sit solvendi tempus adultum?
of-punishment heavy be of-paying the-time ripe?

summa etiam cum vis violenti per mare venti
the-utmost also when the-force of-a-violent over the-sea wind
induperatorem classi super aequora verrit
the-commander with-the-fleet over the-plains sweeps
cum validis pariter legionibus atque elephantis,
with strong alike legions and elephants,
non divom pacem votis adit ac prece quaesit
does-he-not of-the-gods the-peace with-vows approach and with-prayer seek
ventorum pavidus paces animasque secundas,
of-the-winds fearful the-calms and-breezes favoring,
nequiquam, quoniam violento turbine saepe
in-vain, since by-violent whirlwind often
correptus nilo fertur minus ad vada leti?
seized by-nothing is-he-borne less to the-shoals of-death?
usque adeo res humanas vis abdita quaedam
right so-far things human a-force hidden some
opterit et pulchros fascis saevasque secures
crushes and the-beautiful rods and-the-cruel axes
proculcare ac ludibrio sibi habere videtur.
to-trample and as-a-mockery for-itself to-have seems.
denique sub pedibus tellus cum tota vacillat
finally beneath the-feet the-earth when whole totters
concussaeque cadunt urbes dubiaeque minantur,
and-shaken fall cities and-doubtful threaten,
quid mirum, si se temnunt mortalia saecla
what wonder, if themselves despise the-mortal generations
atque potestatis magnas mirasque relinquunt
and powers great and-wondrous leave
in rebus viris divum, quae cuncta gubernent?
in the-world strengths of-the-gods, which all-things govern?

Copper, gold, iron, silver, and lead were found when forest fires, lit by lightning, war, clearing, or hunting, melted veins of metal into hollows in the earth. Seeing the shining lumps take the shape of the hollows, men learned to melt and hammer them into tools and weapons. Copper was prized above gold, which was too soft for use; now gold is honored and copper lies scorned, so time changes the value of things.

Quod superest, aes atque aurum ferrumque repertumst
What remains, copper and gold and-iron was-found
et simul argenti pondus plumbique potestas,
and at-the-same-time of-silver the-weight and-of-lead the-power,
ignis ubi ingenti silvas ardore cremarat
fire when with-huge the-forests heat had-burned
montibus in magnis, seu caeli fulmine misso,
mountains on great, whether of-heaven by-lightning sent,
sive quod inter se bellum silvestre gerentes
or because among themselves war woodland waging
hostibus intulerant ignem formidinis ergo,
on-the-enemy they-had-brought fire of-fright for-the-sake,
sive quod inducti terrae bonitate volebant
or because induced of-the-soil by-the-goodness they-wished
pandere agros pinguis et pascua reddere rura,
to-open-up fields rich and pastures to-make the-countryside,
sive feras interficere et ditescere praeda:
or wild-beasts to-kill and to-grow-rich by-plunder:
nam fovea atque igni prius est venarier ortum
for with-the-pit and with-fire earlier is to-hunt arisen
quam saepire plagis saltum canibusque ciere.
than to-fence with-nets a-glade and-with-dogs to-rouse.

quidquid id est, quacumque e causa flammeus ardor
whatever it is, whatever from cause the-flaming heat
horribili sonitu silvas exederat altis
with-horrible sound the-forests had-eaten-away deep
ab radicibus et terram percoxerat igni,
from the-roots and the-earth had-baked with-fire,
manabat venis ferventibus in loca terrae
oozed in-veins seething into the-places of-the-earth
concava conveniens argenti rivus et auri,
hollow gathering of-silver a-stream and of-gold,
aeris item et plumbi. quae cum concreta videbant
of-copper likewise and of-lead. which when hardened they-saw
posterius claro in terra splendere colore,
afterward with-bright on the-earth to-shine color,
tollebant nitido capti levique lepore,
they-picked-them-up by-the-gleaming taken and-smooth charm,
et simili formata videbant esse figura
and with-like formed they-saw to-be shape
atque lacunarum fuerant vestigia cuique.
as of-the-hollows had-been the-print for-each.
tum penetrabat eos posse haec liquefacta calore
then it-pierced them to-be-able these melted by-heat
quamlibet in formam et faciem decurrere rerum,
any into shape and form to-run of-things,
et prorsum quamvis in acuta ac tenvia posse
and outright any into sharp and thin to-be-able
mucronum duci fastigia procudendo,
of-blades to-be-drawn the-points by-hammering,
ut sibi tela darent, silvasque ut caedere possent
that for-themselves weapons they-might-give, and-forests that to-cut they-could

materiemque domo levare ac radere tigna
and-timber at-home to-smooth and to-plane beams
et terebrare etiam ac pertundere perque forare.
and to-bore also and to-pierce and-through to-perforate.
nec minus argento facere haec auroque parabant
and-not less with-silver to-do these-things and-with-gold they-set-about
quam validi primum violentis viribus aeris:
than of-strong at-first with-violent forces copper:
nequiquam, quoniam cedebat victa potestas
in-vain, since gave-way overcome its-power
nec poterat pariter durum sufferre laborem.
nor could-it alike hard to-bear toil.
tum fuit in pretio magis aes, aurumque iacebat
then was in price more copper, and-gold lay
propter inutilitatem hebeti mucrone retusum:
because-of uselessness with-blunt edge dulled:
nunc iacet aes, aurum in summum successit honorem.
now lies copper, gold to the-highest has-climbed honor.
sic volvenda aetas commutat tempora rerum.
so rolling age changes the-times of-things.
quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore;
what was in price, becomes of-no finally honor;
porro aliud succedit et e contemptibus exit,
further another succeeds and from contempt comes-forth,
inque dies magis adpetitur floretque repletum
and-from-day-to day more is-sought-after and-flowers filled
laudibus et mirost mortalis inter honore.
with-praises and wondrous-is mortals among honor.

The first weapons were hands, nails, teeth, stones, branches, and fire, then copper, and last iron, which put the bronze sickle to shame and evened the contests of war. Men rode horses before they drove chariots, and harnessed two horses before four, then the scythed chariot; then the Carthaginians taught the snake-handed Lucanian oxen with towered backs to bear wounds, and so discord added new terrors to war.

Nunc tibi quo pacto ferri natura reperta
Now to-you in-what way of-iron the-nature found
sit facilest ipsi per te cognoscere, Memmi.
was easy-is-it yourself by yourself to-learn, Memmius.
arma antiqua manus ungues dentesque fuerunt,
arms ancient hands nails and-teeth were,
et lapides et item silvarum fragmina rami,
and stones and likewise of-the-forests broken branches,
et flamma atque ignes, postquam sunt cognita primum. 1285
and flame and fires, after they-were known first.
posterius ferri vis est aerisque reperta.
later of-iron the-force was and-of-copper found.
et prior aeris erat quam ferri cognitus usus,
and earlier of-copper was than of-iron known the-use,
quo facilis magis est natura et copia maior.
by-as-much easier more is its-nature and the-supply greater.
aere solum terrae tractabant, aereque belli
with-copper the-soil of-the-earth they-worked, and-with-copper of-war
miscebant fluctus et vulnera vasta serebant 1290
they-mingled the-waves and wounds vast sowed
et pecus atque agros adimebant: nam facile ollis
and cattle and fields took-away: for easily to-them

omnia cedebant armatis nuda et inerma.
all-things gave-way to-the-armed naked and unarmed.
inde minutatim processit ferreus ensis,
thence little-by-little advanced the-iron sword,
versaque in obprobrium species est falcis ahenae,
and-turned into disgrace the-appearance was of-the-sickle bronze,
et ferro coepere solum proscindere terrae
and with-iron they-began the-soil to-cleave of-the-earth
exaequataque sunt creperi certamina belli.
and-made-equal were the-hazardous contests of-war.
et prius est armatum in equi conscendere costas
and earlier is-it armed on of-a-horse to-mount the-ribs
et moderarier hunc frenis dextraque vigere
and to-guide him with-reins and-with-the-right-hand to-be-strong
quam biiugo curru belli temptare pericla.
than with-two-horsed chariot of-war to-try the-dangers.
et biiugos prius est quam bis coniungere binos
and two-horses earlier is-it than twice to-yoke two
et quam falciferos armatum escendere currus.
and than scythe-bearing armed to-mount chariots.
inde boves lucas turrito corpore, tetras,
then the-oxen Lucanian with-towered body, foul,
anguimanus, belli docuerunt volnera Poeni
snake-handed, of-war taught the-wounds the-Carthaginians
sufferre et magnas Martis turbare catervas.
to-bear and the-great of-Mars to-throw-into-confusion troops.
sic alid ex alio peperit discordia tristis,
so one-thing from another brought-forth discord grim,

horribile humanis quod gentibus esset in armis,
horrible for-human which nations was in arms,
inque dies belli terroribus addidit augmen.
and-from-day-to day of-war to-the-terrors added increase.

V.44 · BEASTS IN BATTLE

Men even tried bulls, boars, and lions in war, with armed trainers to control them, but in the slaughter the beasts raged without distinction, threw the troops into confusion, tore down their own side, and gored horses and riders alike. Lucretius doubts that men could not foresee this, and thinks it likelier to have happened somewhere in the many worlds than in one; if they did it, it was less in hope of victory than to make the enemy groan, though they perished themselves.

Temptarunt etiam tauros in moenere belli,
They-tried also bulls in the-service of-war,
expertique sues saevos sunt mittere in hostis.
and-tried boars savage they-have to-send against the-enemy.
et validos partim prae se misere leones
and strong some before themselves sent lions
cum doctoribus armatis saevisque magistris,
with trainers armed and-fierce masters,
qui moderarier his possent vinclisque tenere:
who to-govern them could and-with-chains to-hold:
nequiquam, quoniam permixta caede calentes
in-vain, since in-mingled slaughter hot
turbabant saevi nullo discrime turmas,
they-threw-into-confusion savage with-no distinction the-troops,
terrificas capitum quatientes undique cristas,
terrifying of-their-heads shaking everywhere the-crests,

nec poterant equites fremitu perterrita equorum
nor could the-horsemen by-the-roar terrified of-the-horses
pectora mulcere et frenis convertere in hostis.
the-breasts to-soothe and with-reins to-turn against the-enemy.
inritata leae iaciebant corpora saltu
provoked the-lionesses flung their-bodies with-a-leap
undique, et adversum venientibus ora petebant,
everywhere, and against-them coming the-faces they-sought,
et necopinantis a tergo deripiebant,
and unexpecting-ones from behind they-tore-down,
deplexaeque dabant in terram volnere victos,
and-embracing they-gave to the-earth by-the-wound overcome,
morsibus adfixae validis atque unguibus uncis.
with-bites fastened strong and claws hooked.
iactabantque suos tauri pedibusque terebant,
and-tossed their-own the-bulls and-with-feet trampled,
et latera ac ventres hauribant supter equorum
and the-flanks and bellies gored beneath of-the-horses
cornibus, et terram minitanti fronte ruebant.
with-horns, and the-earth with-threatening brow they-tore.
et validis socios caedebant dentibus apri,
and with-strong their-allies slashed tusks the-boars,
tela infracta suo tinguentes sanguine saevi
the-weapons broken in-their-own dyeing blood savage
in se fracta suo tinguentes sanguine tela,
on themselves broken in-their-own dyeing blood the-weapons,
permixtasque dabant equitum peditumque ruinas:
and-mingled gave of-horsemen and-of-foot ruins:
nam transversa feros exibant dentis adactus
for sideways the-fierce evaded of-the-tusk the-thrusts

iumenta aut pedibus ventos erecta petebant:
the-draft-beasts or with-feet the-winds reared sought:
nequiquam, quoniam ab nervis succisa videres
in-vain, since from the-sinews hamstrung you-would-see-them
concidere atque gravi terram consternere casu.
to-fall-down and with-heavy the-earth to-strew fall.
si quos ante domi domitos satis esse putabant,
if some before at-home tamed enough to-be they-thought,
effervescere cernebant in rebus agundis
to-boil-over they-saw in things to-be-done
volneribus clamore fuga terrore tumultu,
with-wounds shouting flight terror uproar,
nec poterant ullam partem reducere eorum:
nor could-they any part to-lead-back of-them:
diffugiebat enim varium genus omne ferarum,
scattered for the-varied race all of-wild-beasts,
ut nunc saepe boves lucae ferro male mactae
as now often the-oxen Lucanian with-iron badly slaughtered
diffugiunt, fera fata suis cum multa dedere.
scatter, savage fates on-their-own when many they-have-dealt.
si fuit ut facerent. sed vix adducor ut, ante
if it-was that they-did-it. but scarcely am-I-led that, before
quam commune malum fieret foedumque, futurum
than common evil should-happen and-foul, what-was-to-come
non quierint animo praesentire atque videre.
not they-could in-mind to-foresee and to-see.
et magis id possis factum contendere in omni,
and more that you-could done to-maintain in the-whole,
in variis mundis varia ratione creatis,
in various worlds in-various fashion created,

quam certo atque uno terrarum quolibet orbi.
than in-fixed and one of-lands any orb.
sed facere id non tam vincendi spe voluerunt,
but to-do that not so-much of-conquering in-hope they-wished,
quam dare quod gemerent hostes, ipsique perire;
as to-give what might-groan-at the-enemy, and-themselves to-perish;
qui numero diffidebant armisque vacabant.
who in-number mistrusted and-of-arms were-empty.

V.45 · WEAVING

Knotted clothing came before woven, and weaving came after iron, since the loom's smooth parts cannot be made without it. Men worked wool before women, being more skillful, until the stern farmers counted it a fault, left the task to women, and hardened their own limbs in heavier labor.

Nexilis ante fuit vestis quam textile tegmen.
Knotted before was clothing than woven covering.
textile post ferrumst, quia ferro tela paratur,
woven after iron-is, because by-iron the-loom is-prepared,
nec ratione alia possunt tam levia gigni
nor by-means other can so smooth to-be-begotten
insilia ac fusi, radii, scapique sonantes.
treadles and spindles, shuttles, and-yarn-beams resounding.
et facere ante viros lanam natura coëgit
and to-work before the-men wool nature compelled
quam muliebre genus: nam longe praestat in arte
than the-womanly race: for far it-excels in art
et sollertius est multo genus omne virile;
and more-skillful is by-much the-race all male;

agricolae donec vitio vertere severi,
the-farmers until as-a-fault turned-it severe,
ut muliebribus id manibus concedere vellent
so-that to-womanly it hands to-yield they-wished
atque ipsi pariter durum sufferre laborem,
and themselves alike hard to-bear toil,
atque opere in duro durarunt membra manusque.
and work in hard they-hardened their-limbs and-hands.

V.46 · SOWING, GRAFTING, AND THE TILLED LAND

Nature herself first showed men how to sow and graft, since berries and acorns falling from trees put up shoots beneath them. Men then tried one tillage after another, saw wild fruits grow tame, drove the forests up the mountains, and made room for meadows, lakes, crops, and vineyards, with a gray-green belt of olives running over hill and valley, as the countryside is now marked out with charm.

At specimen sationis et insitionis origo
But the-pattern of-sowing and of-grafting the-origin
ipsa fuit rerum primum natura creatrix,
herself was of-things first nature the-creator,
arboribus quoniam bacae glandesque caducae
from-the-trees since berries and-acorns fallen
tempestiva dabant pullorum examina supter;
seasonable gave of-shoots swarms beneath;
unde etiam libitumst stirpis committere ramis
whence also it-pleased stocks to-commit to-branches
et nova defodere in terram virgulta per agros.
and new to-dig-in into the-earth shoots through the-fields.
inde aliam atque aliam culturam dulcis agelli
then one and another tillage of-the-sweet little-field

temptabant fructusque feros mansuescere terram
they-tried and-fruits wild to-grow-tame the-earth
cernebant indulgendo blandeque colendo.
they-saw by-indulging and-gently by-tilling.
inque dies magis in montem succedere silvas
and-from-day-to day more into the-mountain to-retreat the-forests
cogebant infraque locum concedere cultis,
they-compelled and-below the-place to-yield to-tilled-lands,
prata lacus rivos segetes vinetaque laeta
meadows lakes streams crops and-vineyards glad
collibus et campis ut haberent, atque olearum
on-hills and plains that they-might-have, and of-olives
caerula distinguens inter plaga currere posset
the-gray-green marking-off between a-belt to-run might
per tumulos et convallis camposque profusa;
over hillocks and valleys and-plains spread;
ut nunc esse vides vario distincta lepore
as now to-be you-see with-varied set-off charm
omnia, quae pomis intersita dulcibus ornant
all-places, which with-fruits interplanted sweet they-adorn
arbustisque tenent felicibus opsita circum.
and-with-trees hold fruitful planted around.

Men imitated the songs of birds long before they sang verses, and the wind whistling through reeds taught them to blow hemlock stalks; then they learned the pipe's sweet laments in the lonely places of shepherds. Lying on the soft grass by a stream after a meal, they laughed and joked, wreathed themselves with flowers, and danced clumsily; nor do we, for all our skill in measure, take more pleasure than the earth-born did, since what is at hand pleases most until something better is found and spoils our taste for the old.

At liquidas avium voces imitarier ore
But the-clear of-birds voices to-imitate with-the-mouth
ante fuit multo quam levia carmina cantu
before it-was by-much than smooth songs in-singing
concelebrare homines possent aurisque iuvare.
to-celebrate men could and-the-ears to-delight.
et zephyri, cava per calamorum, sibila primum
and of-the-west-wind, the-hollow through of-the-reeds, the-whistlings first
agrestis docuere cavas inflare cicutas.
the-countrymen taught hollow to-blow-into hemlock-stalks.
inde minutatim dulcis didicere querellas,
then little-by-little sweet they-learned laments,
tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,
the-pipe which pours by-the-fingers struck of-players,
avia per nemora ac silvas saltusque repertas,
pathless through groves and forests and-glades found,
per loca pastorum deserta atque otia dia.
through the-places of-shepherds lonely and leisures divine.
haec animos ollis mulcebant atque iuvabant
these the-minds for-them soothed and delighted

cum satiate cibi: nam tum sunt carmina cordi.
when with-satiety of-food: for then are songs dear.
saepe itaque inter se prostrati in gramine molli
often therefore among themselves stretched on the-grass soft
propter aquae rivom sub ramis arboris altae
near of-water a-stream beneath the-branches of-a-tree high
non magnis opibus iucunde corpora habebant,
not with-great means pleasantly their-bodies they-kept,
praesertim cum tempestas ridebat et anni
especially when the-weather smiled and of-the-year
tempora pingebant viridantis floribus herbas.
the-seasons painted the-green with-flowers grasses.
tum ioca, tum sermo, tum dulces esse cachinni
then jests, then talk, then sweet to-be laughs
consuerant; agrestis enim tum musa vigebat:
were-wont; the-rustic for then muse flourished:
tum caput atque umeros plexis redimire coronis
then the-head and shoulders with-plaited to-wreathe garlands
floribus et foliis lascivia laeta monebat,
of-flowers and leaves playfulness glad prompted,
atque extra numerum procedere membra moventes
and outside the-measure to-advance the-limbs moving
duriter et duro terram pede pellere matrem;
roughly and with-rough the-earth foot to-strike the-mother;
unde oriebantur risus dulcesque cachinni,
whence arose laughter and-sweet laughs,
omnia quod nova tum magis haec et mira vigebant.
all because new then more these and wondrous flourished.
et vigilantibus hinc aderant solacia somni,
and for-the-wakeful hence were-at-hand the-solaces of-sleep,

ducere multimodis voces et flectere cantus
to-draw-out in-many-ways voices and to-bend songs
et supera calamos unco percurrere labro;
and over the-reeds with-curved to-run lip;
unde etiam vigiles nunc haec accepta tuentur
whence also the-watchmen now these received keep
* * *
(lacuna)
et numerum servare genus didicere, neque hilo
and the-measure to-keep the-kind have-learned, nor a-whit
maiorem interea capiunt dulcedini' fructum
greater meanwhile do-they-take of-sweetness fruit
quam silvestre genus capiebat terrigenarum.
than the-woodland race took of-the-earth-born.
nam quod adest praesto, nisi quid cognovimus ante
for what is-present at-hand, unless something we-have-known before
suavius, in primis placet et pollere videtur,
sweeter, in the-first-place pleases and to-prevail seems,
posteriorque fere melior res illa reperta
and-the-later nearly better thing that found
perdit et immutat sensus ad pristina quaeque.
destroys and changes the-feelings toward the-old each.

So acorns, beds of leaves, and the skins of beasts fell out of favor, though the first skin, Lucretius thinks, roused such envy that the man who first wore it was ambushed and killed, and it was torn apart in blood and lost. Then it was skins, now gold and purple that harass life with cares and wear it out with war, and the fault is more ours, since we can do without purple if plain clothes keep us warm. Men toil in vain because they do not know the limit of having or of true pleasure, and this has carried life out into the deep and stirred up the great tides of war.

sic odium coepit glandis, sic illa relicta
so loathing began of-the-acorn, so those abandoned
strata cubilia sunt herbis et frondibus aucta.
strewn beds are with-grasses and leaves heaped.
pellis item cecidit vestis contempta ferinae;
of-a-skin likewise fell the-clothing scorned of-a-beast;
quam reor invidia tali tunc esse repertam,
which I-think with-envy such then to-have-been found,
ut letum insidiis qui gessit primus obiret,
that death by-ambush he-who wore-it first should-meet,
et tamen inter eos distractam sanguine multo
and yet among them torn-apart with-blood much
disperiisse neque in fructum convertere quisse.
to-have-perished nor into use to-turn to-have-been-able.
tunc igitur pelles, nunc aurum et purpura curis
then therefore skins, now gold and purple with-cares
exercent hominum vitam belloque fatigant;
harass of-men the-life and-with-war weary;
quo magis in nobis, ut opinor, culpa resedit.
whereby the-more in us, as I-think, the-fault has-settled.

frigus enim nudos sine pellibus excruciabat
cold for the-naked without skins tortured
terrigenas: at nos nil laedit veste carere
the-earth-born: but us nothing hurts clothing to-lack
purpurea atque auro signisque ingentibus apta,
purple and with-gold and-figures huge fitted,
dum plebeia tamen sit, quae defendere possit.
provided-that plebeian yet it-be, which to-protect can.
ergo hominum genus in cassum frustraque laborat
therefore of-men the-race in vain and-to-no-purpose toils
semper et in curis consumit inanibus aevom,
always and in cares spends empty its-life,
nimirum, quia non cognovit quae sit habendi
doubtless, because not it-has-known what be of-having
finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas:
the-limit and at-all how-far grows true pleasure:
idque minutatim vitam provexit in altum
and-that little-by-little life has-carried-forward into the-deep
et belli magnos commovit funditus aestus.
and of-war the-great has-stirred from-the-bottom tides.

Sun and moon taught men the order of the seasons. Cities were walled and land divided, the sea flowered with ships, allies were bound by treaties, and poets began to record deeds soon after letters were found, so what came before can be traced only by reasoning. Ships, farming, walls, laws, arms, roads, clothes, songs, pictures, and statues were all taught by use and experience step by step, until the arts reached their peak.

At vigiles mundi magnum versatile templum
But the-watchmen of-the-world the-great revolving temple
sol et luna suo lustrantes lumine circum
sun and moon with-their traversing light around
perdocuere homines annorum tempora verti
taught men of-the-years the-seasons to-turn
et certa ratione geri rem atque ordine certo.
and by-fixed fashion to-be-carried-on the-thing and in-order fixed.
Iam validis saepti degebant turribus aevom,
Now with-strong fenced they-spent towers their-life,
et divisa colebatur discretaque tellus,
and divided was-tilled and-parceled-out the-earth,
iam mare velivolis florebat navibus …
now the-sea with-sail-winged flowered ships (lacuna)
auxilia ac socios iam pacto foedere habebant,
help and allies now by-pact covenant they-had,
carminibus cum res gestas coepere poëtae
in-songs when the-deeds done began poets
tradere: nec multo priu' sunt elementa reperta.
to-hand-down: nor by-much before were the-letters found.
propterea quid sit prius actum respicere aetas
therefore what was before done to-look-back-on the-age

nostra nequit, nisi qua ratio vestigia monstrat.
our cannot, except where reasoning the-traces shows.

Navigia atque agri culturas moenia leges
Ships and of-the-field the-tillings walls laws

arma vias vestes et cetera de genere horum
arms roads clothes and the-rest of kind of-these

praemia, delicias quoque vitae funditus omnis,
rewards, the-delights too of-life from-the-bottom all,

carmina, picturas, et daedala signa polire,
songs, pictures, and cunningly-wrought statues to-polish,

usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis
use and of-the-tireless at-the-same-time the-experience mind

paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis.
little-by-little taught step-by-step advancing.

sic unum quicquid paulatim protrahit aetas
so each thing little-by-little draws-forth age

in medium ratioque in luminis erigit oras:
into the-midst and-reasoning into of-light raises the-shores:

namque alid ex alio clarescere cordi' videbant
for one-thing from another to-grow-bright in-the-mind they-saw

artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen.
in-the-arts to the-highest until they-came peak.

BOOK VI

VI.1 · ATHENS AND EPICURUS

Athens first gave crops, laws, and the sweet solaces of life to suffering mortals, and gave birth to the man whose truthful words still win him glory. He saw that men had everything they needed and still lived anxious, and understood that the fault lay in the vessel itself, leaky and fouled, which spoiled whatever was poured into it. He set a limit to desire and fear and showed the straight path to the highest good, since only the aspect and reasoning of nature can scatter the mind's darkness.

Primae frugiparos fetus mortalibus aegris
First fruit-bearing crops for-mortals sick
dididerunt quondam praeclaro nomine Athenae
spread-abroad once of-glorious name Athens
et recreaverunt vitam legesque rogarunt,
and renewed life and-laws proposed,
et primae dederunt solacia dulcia vitae,
and first gave solaces sweet of-life,
cum genuere virum tali cum corde repertum;
when they-begot a-man such with a-heart found;
omnia veridico qui quondam ex ore profudit;
all-things truth-telling who once from mouth poured-forth;
cuius, et extincti, propter divina reperta
whose, even extinguished, because-of his-divine discoveries
divolgata vetus iam ad caelum gloria fertur.
spread-abroad ancient now to heaven glory is-borne.
nam cum vidit hic ad victum quae flagitat usus
for when he-saw this-man for living what-things demands need
omnia iam ferme mortalibus esse parata,
all now nearly for-mortals to-be prepared,

et, proquam posset, vitam consistere tutam,
and, as-far-as could-be, life to-stand safe,
divitiis homines et honore et laude potentis
in-riches men and in-honor and in-praise powerful
affluere atque bona gnatorum excellere fama,
to-abound and in-the-good of-their-children to-excel name,
nec minus esse domi cuiquam tamen anxia corda,
and-not less to-be at-home for-any yet anxious hearts,
atque animi ingratis vitam vexare sine ulla
and of-mind against-its-will life to-harass without any
pausa atque infestis cogi saevire querellis,
pause and in-hostile to-be-compelled to-rage complaints,
intellegit ibi vitium vas efficere ipsum,
he-understands there the-fault the-vessel to-cause itself,
omniaque illius vitio corrumpier intus,
and-all-things by-its fault to-be-spoiled within,
quae conlata foris, et commoda, cumque venirent;
which brought-together from-outside, even good-things, soever came;
partim quod fluxum pertusumque esse videbat,
partly because leaky and-pierced to-be he-saw-it,
ut nulla posset ratione explerier umquam,
so-that by-no it-could means to-be-filled ever,
partim quod taetro quasi conspurcare sapore
partly because with-foul as-it-were to-befoul flavor
omnia cernebat, quaecumque receperat, intus.
all-things he-saw, whatsoever it-had-received, within.
veridicis igitur purgavit pectora dictis
with-truth-telling therefore he-purged the-breasts words
et finem statuit cuppedinis atque timoris,
and a-limit set of-desire and of-fear,

exposuitque bonum summum, quo tendimus omnes,
and-set-forth the-good highest, toward-which we-strive all,
quid foret, atque viam monstravit, tramite parvo
what it-would-be, and the-way showed, by-a-path narrow
qua possemus ad id recto contendere cursu,
whereby we-might toward it on-a-straight to-strive course,
quidve mali foret in rebus mortalibu' passim,
or-what of-evil there-would-be in things mortal everywhere,
quod fieret naturali varieque volaret
which happened naturally and-variously flew
seu casu seu vi, quod sic natura parasset,
whether by-chance or by-force, because so nature had-prepared,
et quibus e portis occurri cuique deceret,
and what from gates to-be-met each befitted,
et genus humanum frustra plerumque probavit
and the-race human in-vain mostly proved
volvere curarum tristis in pectore fluctus.
to-roll of-cares gloomy in the-breast the-waves.
nam veluti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
for as children tremble and all-things blind
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
in darkness fear, so we in light fear
interdum, nilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
sometimes, by-nothing which are to-be-feared more than
quae pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
what children in the-darkness quake-at and-imagine to-come.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
this therefore terror of-mind and-darkness must-needs
non radii solis nec lucida tela diei
not the-rays of-the-sun nor the-shining shafts of-day

discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.
scatter, but of-nature the-aspect and-reasoning.
quo magis inceptum pergam pertexere dictis.
whereby the-more my-undertaking I-will-go-on to-weave-through in-words.

VI.2 · WHY THE HEAVENS MUST BE EXPLAINED

Lucretius has shown that the world is mortal, and now must explain the storms and thunderbolts of the sky. Men who do not know the causes of these things hand them over to the gods, and even those who have learned that the gods live untroubled fall back into old religions when they wonder at the heavens; the holy powers then harm them, not because the gods can be angered, but because men can no longer approach the shrines with a calm breast. He asks Calliope, the muse, to show him the course to the finish.

Et quoniam docui mundi mortalia templa
And since I-have-taught of-the-world mortal the-precincts
esse et nativo consistere corpore caelum,
to-be and of-born to-consist body heaven,
et quaecumque in eo fiunt fierique necessest
and whatsoever in it happen and-to-happen must-needs
* * *
(lacuna)
pleraque dissolui, quae restant percipe porro
the-most I-have-resolved, what-things remain learn further
quandoquidem semel insignem conscendere currum
since-indeed once the-glorious to-mount chariot
* * *
(lacuna)
ventorum existant, placentur ut omnia rursum
of-the-winds arise, are-appeased that all-things again

quae fuerint, sint placato conversa furore.
which were, be with-appeased turned fury.

* * *

(lacuna)

cetera quae fieri in terris caeloque tuentur
the-rest which to-happen on earth and-in-heaven behold

mortales, pavidis cum pendent mentibu' saepe,
mortals, with-fearful when they-hang minds often,

haec faciunt animos humilis formidine divom
these make the-minds humble with-dread of-the-gods

depressosque premunt ad terram propterea quod
and-pressed-down crush to the-earth therefore because

ignorantia causarum conferre deorum
ignorance of-causes to-assign of-the-gods

cogit ad imperium res et concedere regnum.
compels to the-sovereignty things and to-concede the-kingdom.

nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere aevom,
for well who have-learned the-gods untroubled to-spend time,

si tamen interea mirantur qua ratione
if yet meanwhile they-wonder by-what reasoning

quaeque geri possint, praesertim rebus in illis
each-thing to-be-done can, especially things in those

quae supera caput aetheriis cernuntur in oris,
which above the-head the-ethereal are-seen in shores,

rursus in antiquas referuntur religionis
back into ancient are-carried religions

et dominos acris adsciscunt, omnia posse
and masters harsh take-on, all-things to-be-able

quos miseri credunt, ignari quid queat esse,
whom wretched they-believe, ignorant what can to-be,

quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
what cannot, limited the-power finally to-each
quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens;
in-what is reasoning and deeply boundary-mark fixed;
quo magis errantes caeca ratione feruntur.
whereby the-more straying by-blind reasoning they-are-borne.
quae nisi respuis ex animo longeque remittis
which unless you-spit-out from the-mind and-far put-away
dis indigna putare alienaque pacis eorum,
for-the-gods unworthy to-think and-alien to-the-peace of-them,
delibata deum per te tibi numina sancta
impaired of-the-gods by yourself for-you the-powers holy
saepe oberunt; non quo violari summa deum vis
often will-harm; not that to-be-violated the-highest of-the-gods power
possit, ut ex ira poenas petere inbibat acris,
can, so-that from anger penalties to-seek it-should-resolve harsh,
sed quia tute tibi placida cum pace quietos
but because you-yourself for-yourself placid with peace calm-ones
constitues magnos irarum volvere fluctus,
you-will-suppose great of-wrath to-roll waves,
nec delubra deum placido cum pectore adibis,
nor the-sbrines of-the-gods placid with breast will-you-approach,
nec de corpore quae sancto simulacra feruntur
nor from body which holy images are-borne
in mentes hominum divinae nuntia formae,
into the-minds of-men of-the-divine messengers form,
suscipere haec animi tranquilla pace valebis.
to-receive these of-mind in-tranquil peace will-you-be-strong.
inde videre licet qualis iam vita sequatur.
thence to-see one-may of-what-sort now life follows.

quam quidem ut a nobis ratio verissima longe
which indeed that from us reasoning most-true far
reiciat, quamquam sunt a me multa profecta,
may-throw-back, although are by me many-things set-forth,
multa tamen restant et sunt ornanda politis
many-things yet remain and are to-be-adorned with-polished
versibus: est ratio caeli nubisque ponenda;
verses: there-is the-working of-heaven and-of-cloud to-be-set-out;
sunt tempestates et fulmina clara canenda,
are storms and thunderbolts bright to-be-sung,
qui fiant et qua de causa cumque ferantur;
how they-happen and what from cause soever they-are-borne;
ne trepides caeli divisis partibus amens,
lest you-tremble of-heaven in-divided parts frantic,
unde volans ignis pervenerit aut in utram se
whence flying the-fire has-come or into which itself
verterit hinc partim, quo pacto per loca septa
has-turned hence partly, in-what way through places enclosed
insinuarit, et hinc dominatus ut extulerit se.
it-has-wound-in, and hence having-mastered how it-has-carried-out itself.
quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
of-which works the-causes by-no means to-see
possunt ac fieri divino numine rentur.
they-can and to-happen by-divine power think.
tu mihi supremae praescripta ad candida calcis
you to-me of-the-final marked-out to the-white chalk-line
currenti spatium praemonstra, callida musa
running the-course show-beforehand, cunning muse

Calliope, requies hominum divomque voluptas,
Calliope, rest of-men and-of-gods delight,
te duce ut insigni capiam cum laude coronam.
you being-leader that glorious I-may-take with praise the-crown.

VI.3 · THUNDER

Thunder shakes the sky when clouds clash, driven by winds fighting against each other; none comes from a clear sky. Clouds must be neither as dense as stones nor as thin as smoke. They make a sound like an awning stretched over a theater cracking between the masts or tearing in the wind, like paper flapping, or like clothes beaten by the wind; or they graze each other side to side with a long dry sound.

Principio tonitru quatiuntur caerula caeli
First by-thunder are-shaken the-blue-reaches of-heaven
propterea quia concurrunt sublime volantes
therefore because clash on-high flying
aetheriae nubes contra pugnantibu' ventis.
ethereal clouds against with-fighting winds.
nec fit enim sonitus caeli de parte serena,
nor arises for a-sound of-heaven from part serene,
verum ubicumque magis denso sunt agmine nubes,
but wherever more in-dense are column the-clouds,
tam magis hinc magno fremitus fit murmure saepe.
the more hence with-great a-roar arises rumble often.
praeterea neque tam condenso corpore nubes
besides neither so of-dense body the-clouds
esse queunt quam sunt lapides ac ligna, neque autem
to-be can as are stones and wood, nor again
tam tenues quam sunt nebulae fumique volantes:
so thin as are mists and-smokes flying:

nam cadere aut bruto deberent pondere pressae
for to-fall either with-brute they-would-have-to weight pressed
ut lapides, aut ut fumus constare nequirent
like stones, or like smoke to-hold-together they-could-not
nec cohibere nives gelidas et grandinis imbris.
nor to-hold-in snows chill and of-hail showers.
dant etiam sonitum patuli super aequora mundi,
they-give also a-sound of-the-spread over the-plains world,
carbasus ut quondam magnis intenta theatris
canvas as sometimes over-great stretched theaters
dat crepitum malos inter iactata trabesque,
gives a-crack the-masts among tossed and-the-beams,
interdum perscissa furit petulantibus auris
sometimes torn-apart it-rages by-wanton breezes
et fragilis sonitus chartarum commeditatur:
and brittle the-sounds of-papers imitates:
id quoque enim genus in tonitru cognoscere possis,
that also for kind in the-thunder to-recognize you-could,
aut ubi suspensam vestem chartasque volantis
or when hung clothing and-papers flying
verberibus venti versant planguntque per auras.
with-the-lashes of-the-wind turn and-beat through the-breezes.
fit quoque enim interdum ut non tam concurrere nubes
it-comes-about also for sometimes that not so to-clash the-clouds
frontibus adversis possint quam de latere ire
with-fronts opposed can as from the-side to-go
diverso motu radentes corpora tractim,
with-diverse motion grazing their-bodies lingeringly,

aridus unde auris terget sonus ille diuque
dry whence the-ears grazes sound that and-long
ducitur, exierunt donec regionibus artis.
is-drawn-out, they-have-gone-out until from-regions close.

VI.4 · MORE CAUSES OF THUNDER

A gust of wind may gather inside a cloud and hollow it out, then burst it with a crash, as a small bladder full of air bursts. Winds blowing through branching clouds rustle like a forest; wind may tear a cloud apart; waves may break in the clouds; and lightning falling into a wet cloud hisses like hot iron plunged in water, while in a dry one it crackles like a laurel burning. Hail crashes in the clouds as well.

Hoc etiam pacto tonitru concussa videntur
In-this also way by-thunder shaken seem
omnia saepe gravi tremere et divolsa repente
all-things often heavily to-tremble and torn-apart suddenly
maxima dissiluisse capacis moenia mundi,
the-greatest to-have-burst-apart of-the-capacious walls world,
cum subito validi venti conlecta procella
when suddenly of-strong wind gathered a-squall
nubibus intorsit sese conclusaque ibidem
into-the-clouds has-twisted itself and-shut-in there
turbine versanti magis ac magis undique nubem
with-whirlwind turning more and more everywhere the-cloud
cogit uti fiat spisso cava corpore circum,
compels that it-become with-thick hollow body around,
post ubi convaluit vis eius et impetus acer,
afterward when has-grown-strong the-force of-it and the-onrush keen,
tum perterricrepo sonitu dat scissa fragorem.
then with-terrifying-crashing sound it-gives torn a-crash.

nec mirum, cum plena animae vesicula parva
nor wonder, when full of-air a-bladder small
saepe ita det torvum sonitum displosa repente.
often so gives a-grim sound burst suddenly.
Est etiam ratio, cum venti nubila perflant,
There-is also a-way, when winds the-clouds blow-through,
ut sonitus faciant: etenim ramosa videmus
that sounds they-make: for branching we-see
nubila saepe modis multis atque aspera ferri;
clouds often in-ways many and rough to-be-borne;
scilicet, ut, crebram silvam cum flamina cauri
surely, as, a-dense forest when the-blasts of-the-northwest-wind
perflant, dant sonitum frondes ramique fragorem.
blow-through, give a-sound the-leaves and-branches a-crash.
fit quoque ut interdum validi vis incita venti
it-comes-about also that sometimes of-strong the-force roused of-wind
perscindat nubem perfringens impete recto:
rends the-cloud breaking-through with-onrush straight:
nam quid possit ibi flatus manifesta docet res,
for what can there the-blast plain teaches the-fact,
hic, ubi lenior est, in terra cum tamen alta
here, where gentler it-is, on earth when yet high
arbusta evolvens radicibus haurit ab imis.
trees rolling-out roots it-drains from the-lowest.
sunt etiam fluctus per nubila, qui quasi murmur
there-are also waves through the-clouds, which as-it-were a-murmur
dant in frangendo graviter; quod item fit in altis
give in breaking heavily; which likewise happens in deep
fluminibus magnoque mari, cum frangitur aestus.
rivers and-in-the-great sea, when breaks the-tide.

fit quoque, ubi e nubi in nubem vis incidit ardens
it-comes-about also, when from cloud into cloud the-force falls burning
fulminis, haec multo si forte umore recepit
of-the-thunderbolt, this with-much if perchance moisture has-received
ignem, continuo ut magno clamore trucidet;
the-fire, straightway that with-great outcry it-kills;
ut calidis candens ferrum e fornacibus olim
as hot glowing iron from the-furnaces at-times
stridit, ubi in gelidum propere demersimus imbrem.
hisses, when into chill quickly we-have-plunged water.
aridior porro si nubes accipit ignem,
drier further if the-cloud receives the-fire,
uritur ingenti sonitu succensa repente;
it-is-burned with-huge sound kindled suddenly;
lauricomos ut si per montis flamma vagetur
laurel-tressed as if through mountains a-flame should-roam
turbine ventorum comburens impete magno:
with-the-whirlwind of-winds burning with-onrush great:
nec res ulla magis quam Phoebi Delphica laurus
nor thing any more than of-Phoebus the-Delphic laurel
terribili sonitu flamma crepitante crematur.
with-terrible sound with-flame crackling is-burned.
denique saepe geli multus fragor atque ruina
finally often of-ice much crash and ruin
grandinis in magnis sonitum dat nubibus alte:
of-hail in great sound gives clouds aloft:
ventus enim cum confercit, franguntur in artum
the-wind for when packs-together, are-broken in a-narrow-space
concreti montes nimborum et grandine mixti.
the-condensed mountains of-storm-clouds and with-hail mixed.

Lightning flashes when clouds strike out seeds of fire by their clash, as stone struck on stone or iron gives sparks. We see it before we hear the thunder because what stirs the ears arrives more slowly than what moves the sight, as one sees the axe fall on a tree before hearing the blow.

Fulgit item, nubes ignis cum semina multa
It-lightens likewise, the-clouds of-fire when seeds many
excussere suo concursu; ceu lapidem si
have-struck-out by-their-own clash; as a-stone if
percutiat lapis aut ferrum: nam tum quoque lumen
should-strike a-stone or iron: for then also light
exilit et claras scintillas dissipat ignis.
leaps-out and bright sparks scatters of-fire.
sed tonitrum fit uti post auribus accipiamus,
but the-thunder it-comes-about that afterward with-the-ears we-receive,
fulgere quam cernant oculi, quia semper ad auris
the-lightning than see the-eyes, because always to the-ears
tardius adveniunt quam visum quae moveant res.
more-slowly arrive than to-the-sight which move the-things.
id licet hinc etiam cognoscere. caedere si quem
that one-may hence also learn. to-fell if someone
ancipiti videas ferro procul arboris auctum,
with-double you-see iron afar of-a-tree the-trunk,
ante fit ut cernas ictum quam plaga per auris
before it-comes-about that you-see the-stroke than the-blow through the-ears
det sonitum: sic fulgorem quoque cernimus ante
gives a-sound: so the-lightning also we-see before

quam tonitrum accipimus, pariter qui mittitur igni
than the-thunder we-receive, alike which is-sent with-the-fire
e simili causa, concursu natus eodem.
from like cause, by-clash born the-same.

VI.6 · LIGHTNING FROM WIND AND PILED CLOUDS

Wind trapped in a hollow cloud grows hot by its own motion, as a lead bullet melts in its long flight, and when it tears the black cloud, it scatters seeds of heat that make the flash. This happens in clouds piled high on one another, as one sees when clouds like mountains are carried across the sky and their caverns are filled by winds that roar like caged beasts until the fire flashes out.

Hoc etiam pacto volucri loca lumine tingunt
In-this also way with-winged the-places light dye
nubes et tremulo tempestas impete fulgit.
the-clouds and with-trembling the-storm onrush lightens.
ventus ubi invasit nubem et versatus ibidem
the-wind when has-invaded a-cloud and turned there
fecit ut ante cavam docui spissescere nubem,
has-made as before hollow I-taught to-grow-thick the-cloud,
mobilitate sua fervescit; ut omnia motu
with-nimbleness its-own it-grows-hot; as all-things by-motion
percalefacta vides ardescere, plumbea vero
heated-through you-see to-take-fire, of-lead indeed
glans etiam longo cursu volvenda liquescit.
a-bullet even in-long course rolling melts.
ergo fervidus hic nubem cum perscidit atram,
therefore hot this the-cloud when it-has-rent black,
dissipat ardoris quasi per vim expressa repente
it-scatters of-heat as-it-were by force squeezed-out suddenly

semina, quae faciunt nictantia fulgura flammae:
the-seeds, which make the-winking lightnings of-flame:
inde sonus sequitur, qui tardius adficit auris
then sound follows, which more-slowly affects the-ears
quam quae perveniunt oculorum ad lumina nostra.
than things-which reach of-the-eyes to the-lights our.
scilicet, hoc densis fit nubibus et simul alte
surely, this with-dense happens clouds and at-the-same-time high
extructis aliis alias super impete miro.
piled on-others others above with-onrush wondrous.
ne tibi sit fraudi quod nos inferne videmus
lest for-you it-be a-deception that we from-below see
quam sint lata magis quam sursum extructa quid extent
how they-are broad more than upward piled-up how-much they-stand-out
contemplator enim, cum montibus adsimulata
contemplate for, when to-mountains likened
nubila portabunt venti transversa per auras,
clouds shall-carry the-winds athwart through the-breezes,
aut ubi per magnos montis cumulata videbis
or when along great mountains heaped you-shall-see
insuper esse aliis alia atque urguere superne
above to-be on-others others and to-press from-above
in statione locata sepultis undique ventis;
at rest set with-buried everywhere winds;
tum poteris magnas moles cognoscere eorum
then you-will-be-able great masses to-recognize of-them
speluncasque velut saxis pendentibu' structas
and-caverns as-it-were of-rocks hanging built
cernere, quas venti cum tempestate coorta
to-see, which the-winds when with-the-storm risen

conplerunt, magno indignantur murmure clausi
have-filled, with-great they-chafe with-murmur shut-in
nubibus, in caveisque ferarum more minantur,
in-clouds, in and-cages of-wild-beasts in-the-manner they-threaten,
nunc hinc nunc illinc fremitus per nubila mittunt,
now hence now thence roars through the-clouds they-send,
quaerentesque viam circumversantur, et ignis
and-seeking a-way they-roll-around, and of-fire
semina convolvunt e nubibus atque ita cogunt
the-seeds they-roll-together from the-clouds and so compel
multa, rotantque cavis flammam fornacibus intus,
many, and-whirl in-hollow the-flame furnaces within,
donec divolsa fulserunt nube corusci.
until with-torn they-have-flashed cloud gleaming.

VI.7 · WHY LIGHTNING IS GOLDEN

The liquid golden color of lightning comes from the many seeds of fire that clouds hold, taken from the sun's light; when wind presses them together they pour out the colors of flame. Clouds also flash when they thin out and the wind parts them, letting the seeds of lightning fall without terror, sound, or uproar.

Hac etiam fit uti de causa mobilis ille
This also it-comes-about that for cause nimble that
devolet in terram liquidi color aureus ignis,
flies-down to earth of-liquid the-color golden fire,
semina quod nubes ipsas permulta necessust
seeds because the-clouds themselves very-many must-needs
ignis habere: etenim cum sunt umore sine ullo,
of-fire have: for when they-are moisture without any,

flammeus est plerumque colos et splendidus ollis.
flame-colored is mostly the-color and bright for-them.
quippe etenim solis de lumine multa necessest
for indeed of-the-sun from light many-seeds must-needs
concipere, ut merito rubeant ignesque profundant.
to-take, so-that rightly they-redden and-fires pour-forth.
hasce igitur cum ventus agens contrusit in unum
these therefore when the-wind driving has-thrust into one
compressitque locum cogens, expressa profundunt
and-pressed the-place compelling, squeezed-out they-pour
semina, quae faciunt flammae fulgere colores.
the-seeds, which make of-flame to-flash the-colors.
fulget item, cum rarescunt quoque nubila caeli.
it-lightens likewise, when grow-loose also the-clouds of-heaven.
nam cum ventus eas leviter diducit euntis
for when the-wind them lightly draws-apart going
dissoluitque, cadant ingratis illa necessest
and-loosens, fall against-their-will those must-needs
semina quae faciunt fulgorem: tum sine taetro
the-seeds which make the-lightning: then without foul
terrore et sonitu fulget nulloque tumultu.
terror and sound it-lightens and-with-no uproar.

The thunderbolt's nature is shown by the marks of heat it burns in and the smell of sulfur: it is fire, not wind or rain. It is made of the finest and swiftest bodies, which pass through walls, rocks, and bronze, melt copper and gold in an instant, and empty jars of wine while leaving them whole. Lucretius now promises to explain how thunderbolts are made and given force to split towers and kill men and cattle.

Quod superest, quali natura praedita constent
What remains, with-what nature endowed consist
fulmina, declarant ictu eius inusta vaporis
thunderbolts, declare by-the-stroke of-its burnt-in vapor
signa, notaeque gravis halantis sulpuris auras:
the-marks, and-the-traces heavy exhaling of-sulfur the-breezes:
ignis enim sunt haec non venti signa neque imbris.
of-fire for are these not of-wind the-marks nor of-rain.
praeterea saepe accendunt quoque tecta domorum
besides often they-kindle also the-roofs of-houses
et celeri flamma dominantur in aedibus ipsis.
and with-swift flame lord-it in the-houses themselves.
hunc tibi subtilem cum primis ignibus ignem
this for-you fine among the-first fires fire
constituit natura minutis mobilibusque
has-established nature from-minute and-nimble
corporibus, cui nil omnino obsistere possit.
bodies, which nothing at-all to-withstand can.
transit enim validum fulmen per septa domorum
passes-through for the-strong thunderbolt through the-walls of-houses
clamor ut ac voces, transit per saxa, per aera,
a-shout as and voices, passes-through through rocks, through bronze,

et liquidum puncto facit aes in tempore et aurum,
and liquid a-point makes copper in time and gold,
curat item ut vasis integris vina repente
takes-care likewise that with-vessels whole the-wines suddenly
diffugiant, quia, nimirum, facile omnia circum
scatter, because, doubtless, easily all-things around
conlaxat rareque facit lateramina vasis
loosens and-loose makes the-sides of-the-vessel
adveniens calor eius, et insinuatus in ipsum
arriving the-heat of-it, and having-wound-in into itself
mobiliter soluens differt primordia vini.
nimbly loosening disperses the-first-beginnings of-the-wine.
quod solis vapor aetatem non posse videtur
which of-the-sun the-vapor in-an-age not to-be-able seems
efficere usque adeo pollens fervore corusco.
to-bring-about right so-far mighty with-heat flashing.
tanto mobilior vis et dominantior haec est.
by-so-much more-nimble the-force and more-masterful this is.

Nunc ea quo pacto gignantur et impete tanto
Now these in-what way are-begotten and with-onrush so-great
fiant ut possint ictu discludere turris,
are-made that they-can with-a-stroke to-split towers,
disturbare domos, avellere tigna trabesque,
to-overthrow houses, to-tear-off rafters and-beams,
et monumenta virum demoliri atque † ciere,
and the-monuments of-men to-demolish and (corrupt) to-stir,
exanimare homines, pecudes prosternere passim,
to-take-the-life-from men, cattle to-lay-low everywhere,

cetera de genere hoc qua vi facere omnia possint,
the-rest of kind this by-what force to-do all can,
expediam, neque te in promissis plura morabor.
I-will-explain, nor you in promises more will-I-delay.

VI.9 · HOW THUNDERBOLTS ARE MADE

Thunderbolts come from thick clouds piled high, never from a clear sky; a darkness so great as to make one think all Acheron has risen shows how deep they are. The clouds hold many seeds of heat, and when wind drives them into one place, it mixes with the fire, whirls in the hollow, and sharpens the bolt as in a furnace; then the ripe bolt bursts the cloud, thunder follows, and rain pours down.

Fulmina gignier e crassis alteque putandumst
Thunderbolts to-be-begotten from thick and-high it-must-be-thought
nubibus extructis: nam caelo nulla sereno
clouds piled: for from-a-heaven no serene
nec leviter densis mittuntur nubibus umquam.
nor lightly from-dense are-they-sent clouds ever.
nam dubio procul hoc fieri manifesta docet res,
for doubt far-from this to-happen plain teaches the-fact,
quod tum per totum concrescunt aëra nubes,
that then through the-whole thicken the-air clouds,
undique uti tenebras omnis Acherunta reamur
everywhere that the-darkness all Acheron we-would-think
liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cavernas,
to-have-left and the-great of-heaven to-have-filled caverns,
cum commoliri tempestas fulmina coeptat.
when to-work-up the-storm thunderbolts begins.
praeterea persaepe niger quoque per mare nimbus,
besides very-often black too over the-sea a-storm-cloud,

ut picis e caelo demissum flumen, in undas
like of-pitch from heaven let-down a-river, into the-waves
sic cadit effertus tenebris procul et trahit atram
so falls stuffed with-darkness afar and draws a-black
fulminibus gravidam tempestatem atque procellis,
with-thunderbolts heavy storm and with-squalls,
ignibus ac ventis cum primis ipse repletus,
with-fires and winds among the-first itself filled,
in terra quoque ut horrescant ac tecta requirant.
on earth also so-that they-shudder and roofs seek.
sic igitur supera nostrum caput esse putandumst
so therefore above our head to-be it-must-be-thought
tempestatem altam. neque enim caligine tanta
the-storm high. nor for with-murk so-great
obruerent terras, nisi inaedificata superne
would-they-overwhelm the-lands, unless built-on from-above
multa forent multis exempto nubila sole:
many were on-many with-removed clouds the-sun:
nec tanto possent venientes opprimere imbri,
nor with-so-great could-they coming to-overwhelm rain,
flumina abundare ut facerent camposque natare,
the-rivers to-overflow that they-should-make and-the-plains to-float,
si non extructus foret alte nubibus aether.
if not piled were high with-clouds the-ether.
hic igitur ventis atque ignibus omnia plena
here therefore with-winds and with-fires all-things full
sunt: ideo passim fremitus et fulgura fiunt.
are: therefore everywhere roars and lightnings arise.
quippe etenim supra docui permulta vaporis
for indeed above I-have-taught very-many of-vapor

semina habere cavas nubes, et multa necessest
seeds to-have the-hollow clouds, and many-seeds must-needs
concipere ex solis radiis ardoreque eorum.
to-take from of-the-sun the-rays and-the-heat of-them.
hoc ubi ventus eas idem qui cogit in unum
this when the-wind them the-same which drives into one
forte locum quemvis, expressit multa vaporis
perchance place any, has-squeezed-out many of-vapor
semina seque simul cum eo commiscuit igni,
seeds and-itself at-the-same-time with that has-mingled fire,
insinuatus ibi vortex versatur in arto
having-wound-in there the-eddy turns in a-narrow-space
et calidis acuit fulmen fornacibus intus:
and with-hot sharpens the-thunderbolt furnaces within:
nam duplici ratione accenditur, ipse sua cum
for in-double fashion it-is-kindled, itself its-own with
mobilitate calescit, et e contagibus ignis.
nimbleness it-grows-hot, and from contacts of-fire.
inde ubi percaluit venti vis et gravis ignis
then when has-grown-hot of-the-wind the-force and the-heavy of-fire
impetus incessit, maturum tum quasi fulmen
onrush has-set-in, ripe then as-it-were the-thunderbolt
perscindit subito nubem, ferturque coruscis
rends suddenly the-cloud, and-is-borne with-flashing
omnia luminibus lustrans loca percitus ardor.
all with-lights traversing places the-roused heat.
quem gravis insequitur sonitus, displosa repente
which heavy follows sound, burst suddenly
obruere ut caeli videantur templa superne.
to-overwhelm that of-heaven seem the-precincts from-above.

inde tremor terras graviter pertemptat, et altum
then a-trembling the-lands heavily assails, and the-high
murmura percurrunt caelum: nam tota fere tum
rumblings run-through heaven: for whole nearly then
tempestas concussa tremit fremitusque moventur.
the-storm shaken trembles and-roars are-set-moving.
quo de concussu sequitur gravis imber et uber, 290
which from shock follows heavy a-rain and abundant,
omnis uti videatur in imbrem vertier aether
whole so-that seems into rain to-be-turned the-ether
atque ita praecipitans ad diluviem revocare
and so rushing-headlong to a-flood to-recall
tantus discidio nubis ventique procella
so-great by-the-rending of-the-cloud and-of-the-wind by-the-squall
mittitur, ardenti sonitus cum provolat ictu.
is-sent, with-burning the-sound when flies-forth stroke.

VI.10 · WIND TURNED TO FIRE

A wind from outside may fall on a cloud already holding a ripe thunderbolt and loose it, or a wind sent without fire may catch fire on its long journey, as a lead bullet grows hot in flight. The force of the blow itself may also strike out fire, as iron striking stone does, from both the wind and the thing it hits. And a wind sent down with such force can hardly stay cold: if it is not kindled on its way, it arrives at least warm.

est etiam cum vis extrinsecus incita venti 295
it-is also when the-force from-outside roused of-wind
incidit in calidam maturo fulmine nubem;
falls on a-hot with-ripe thunderbolt cloud;

quam cum perscidit, extemplo cadit igneus ille
which when it-has-rent, forthwith falls fiery that
vertex, quem patrio vocitamus nomine fulmen.
eddy, which in-our-fathers' we-call name thunderbolt.
hoc fit idem in partis alias, quocumque tulit vis.
this happens the-same into parts other, wherever has-carried the-force.
fit quoque ut interdum venti vis missa sine igni
it-comes-about also that sometimes of-wind the-force sent without fire
igniscat tamen in spatio longoque meatu,
takes-fire yet in space and-long course,
dum venit amittens in cursu corpora quaedam
while it-comes losing in its-course bodies certain
grandia, quae nequeunt pariter penetrare per auras,
large, which cannot alike to-pierce through the-breezes,
atque alia ex ipso conradens aëre portat
and other from the-very scraping-together air it-carries
parvola, quae faciunt ignem commixta volando;
tiny, which make fire mingled by-flying;
non alia longe ratione ac plumbea saepe
not by-other far fashion than of-lead often
fervida fit glans in cursu, cum multa rigoris
hot becomes a-bullet in course, when many of-stiffness
corpora dimittens ignem concepit in auris.
bodies letting-go fire it-has-caught in the-breezes.
fit quoque ut ipsius plagae vis excitet ignem,
it-comes-about also that of-the-very blow the-force rouses fire,
frigida cum venti pepulit vis missa sine igni,
cold when of-wind has-struck the-force sent without fire,
nimirum, quia, cum vementi perculit ictu,
doubtless, because, when with-violent it-has-struck blow,

confluere ex ipso possunt elementa vaporis,
to-flow-together from itself can the-elements of-vapor,
et simul ex illa quae tum res excipit ictum;
and at-the-same-time from that which then thing receives the-blow;
ut, lapidem ferro cum caedimus, evolat ignis,
as, a-stone with-iron when we-strike, flies-out fire,
nec, quod frigida vis ferrist, hoc setius illi
nor, because cold the-force of-iron-is, this the-less to-it
semina concurrunt calidi fulgoris ad ictum.
the-seeds run-together of-hot flash at the-blow.
sic igitur quoque res accendi fulmine debet,
so therefore also a-thing to-be-kindled by-the-thunderbolt must,
opportuna fuit si forte et idonea flammis.
suitable it-was if perchance and fit for-flames.
nec temere omnino plane vis frigida venti
nor lightly at-all quite the-force cold of-the-wind
esse potest, ea quae tanta vi missa supernest,
to-be can, that which with-so-great force sent from-above-is,
quin, prius in cursu si non accenditur igni,
but-that, before in its-course if not it-is-kindled with-fire,
at tepefacta tamen veniat commixta calore.
yet warmed nevertheless it-comes mingled with-heat.

The thunderbolt is swift because its force gathers inside the cloud and is squeezed out like what is hurled from strong engines; because it is made of small smooth elements that slip through the gaps in things; because its weight adds to the blow; and because its long course gives it speed. It passes through some things unharmed, breaks others where their bodies meet, and melts copper and gold.

Mobilitas autem fit fulminis et gravis ictus,
The-nimbleness but arises of-the-thunderbolt and heavy blow,
at celeri ferme percurrunt fulmina lapsu,
but with-swift nearly run-through thunderbolts gliding,
nubibus ipsa quod omnino prius incita se vis
in-the-clouds itself because wholly first roused itself the-force
colligit et magnum conamen sumit eundi,
gathers and great effort takes of-going,
inde ubi non potuit nubes capere inpetis auctum,
then when not could the-cloud to-contain of-the-onrush the-growth,
exprimitur vis atque ideo volat impete miro,
is-squeezed-out the-force and therefore flies with-onrush wondrous,
ut validis quae de tormentis missa feruntur.
as strong which from engines hurled are-borne.
adde quod e parvis et levibus est elementis,
add that from small and smooth it-is elements,
nec facilest tali naturae obsistere quicquam:
nor easy-is-it to-such a-nature to-withstand anything:
inter enim fugit ac penetrat per rara viarum,
in-between for it-flees and pierces through the-loose-places of-the-ways,
non igitur multis offensibus in remorando
not therefore with-many collisions in delaying

haesitat, hanc ob rem celeri volat impete labens,
it-falters, this on account with-swift it-flies onrush gliding,
deinde, quod omnino natura pondera deorsum
next, because wholly by-nature weights downward
omnia nituntur, cum plagast addita vero,
all strive, when a-blow-is added indeed,
mobilitas duplicatur et impetus ille gravescit,
the-nimbleness is-doubled and the-onrush that grows-heavy,
ut vementius et citius quaecumque morantur
so-that more-violently and more-swiftly whatever-things delay
obvia discutiat plagis itinerque sequatur.
in-its-way it-may-shatter with-blows and-its-journey follow.
denique quod longo venit impete, sumere debet
finally because with-long it-comes onrush, to-take it-must
mobilitatem etiam atque etiam, quae crescit eundo
nimbleness again and again, which grows by-going
et validas auget viris et roborat ictum:
and strong increases the-forces and strengthens the-blow:
nam facit ut quae sint illius semina cumque
for it-makes that what-things are of-it the-seeds soever
e regione locum quasi in unum cuncta ferantur,
from direction a-place as-it-were into one all be-borne,
omnia coniciens in eum volventia cursum.
all throwing into that rolling course.
forsitan ex ipso veniens trahat aëre quaedam
perhaps from the-very coming it-draws air certain
corpora, quae plagis incendunt mobilitatem.
bodies, which by-blows kindle the-nimbleness.
incolumisque venit per res atque integra transit
and-unharmed it-comes through things and whole passes-through

multa, foraminibus liquidus quia transvolat ignis.
many, through-the-passages liquid because flies-through the-fire.
multaque perfringit, cum corpora fulminis ipsis
and-many-things it-breaks-through, when the-bodies of-the-thunderbolt on-the-very
corporibus rerum inciderunt, qua texta tenentur.
bodies of-things have-fallen, where the-textures are-held.
dissoluit porro facile aes aurumque repente
it-dissolves further easily copper and-gold suddenly
confervefacit, e parvis quia facta minute
makes-boil, from small because made minutely
corporibus vis est et levibus ex elementis,
bodies the-force is and smooth from elements,
quae facile insinuantur et insinuata repente
which easily wind-in and having-wound-in suddenly
dissoluont nodos omnis et vincla relaxant.
dissolve the-knots all and the-bonds relax.

VI.12 · WHY THUNDERBOLTS COME IN SPRING AND AUTUMN

Thunderbolts shake the sky most in autumn and spring, since cold lacks fire and heat lacks wind and dense clouds. At these two straits of the year, when heat and cold meet and mingle, all the causes of the thunderbolt come together, and the heavens are disturbed by a two-edged war of flames, winds, and moisture.

autumnoque magis stellis fulgentibus apta
and-in-autumn more with-stars shining studded
concutitur caeli domus undique totaque tellus,
is-shaken of-heaven the-house everywhere and-the-whole earth,
et cum tempora se veris florentia pandunt.
and when the-seasons themselves of-spring flowering spread.

frigore enim desunt ignes, ventique calore
in-cold for are-lacking fires, and-the-winds in-heat
deficiunt neque sunt tam denso corpore nubes.
fail nor are of-so dense body the-clouds.
interutrasque igitur cum caeli tempora constant,
between-both therefore when of-heaven the-seasons stand,
tum variae causae concurrunt fulminis omnes:
then the-various causes concur of-the-thunderbolt all:
nam fretus ipse anni permiscet frigus et aestum,
for the-strait itself of-the-year mingles cold and heat,
ut discordia sit rerum magnoque tumultu
so-that discord there-be of-things and-with-great uproar
ignibus et ventis furibundus fluctuet aër,
with-fires and winds raging should-surge the-air,
quorum utrumque opus est fabricanda ad fulmina nubi.
of-which each need is to-be-fashioned for thunderbolts to-the-cloud.
prima caloris enim pars et postrema rigoris
the-first of-heat for part and the-last of-stiffness
tempus id est vernum; quare pugnare necessest
time that is spring; wherefore to-fight must-needs
dissimilis inter se res turbareque mixtas:
unlike among themselves things and-to-riot mixed:
et calor extremus primo cum frigore mixtus
and the-heat last first with cold mixed
volvitur, autumni quod fertur nomine tempus,
rolls, of-autumn which is-called by-the-name the-season,
hic quoque confligunt hiemes aestatibus acres.
here also clash winters with-summers fierce.
propterea freta sunt haec anni nominitanda;
therefore straits are these of-the-year to-be-called;

nec mirumst, in eo si tempore plurima fiunt
nor wonderful-is-it, in that if time most arise
fulmina tempestasque cietur turbida caelo,
thunderbolts and-storm is-roused turbulent in-heaven,
ancipiti quoniam bello turbatur utrimque,
in-two-edged since war it-is-disturbed on-both-sides,
hinc flammis, illinc ventis, umoreque mixto.
on-this-side by-flames, on-that by-winds, and-with-moisture mixed.

VI.13 · NOT JUPITER'S WEAPON

This is how to understand the thunderbolt, not by unrolling Etruscan scrolls to read the gods' mind. If Jupiter hurls it, why does it spare the guilty and burn the innocent, waste itself on deserts and the sea, never fall from a clear sky, and warn us with thunder before it strikes? Why does it hit many places at once, shatter the gods' own temples and statues, and strike the mountaintops most?

Hoc est igniferi naturam fulminis ipsam
This is of-the-fire-bearing the-nature thunderbolt itself
perspicere et qua vi faciat rem quamque videre,
to-see-through and by-what force it-does thing each to-see,
non Tyrrhena retro volventem carmina frustra
not Etruscan backward unrolling scrolls in-vain
indicia occultae divum perquirere mentis,
the-tokens of-the-hidden of-the-gods to-search-out mind,
quidve monere queat de caelo fulminis ictus.
or-what to-warn can from heaven of-the-thunderbolt the-stroke.
quod si Iuppiter atque alii fulgentia divi
but if Jupiter and other shining gods
terrifico quatiunt sonitu caelestia templa
with-terrifying shake sound the-heavenly precincts

et iaciunt ignem quo quoiquest cumque voluptas,
and hurl fire whither to-each-is soever the-pleasure,
cur quibus incautum scelus aversabile cumquest
why to-whom heedless a-crime abominable soever-is
non faciunt icti flammas ut fulguris halent
not do-they-make struck flames that of-lightning they-should-breathe
pectore perfixo, documen mortalibus acre,
with-breast pierced, a-lesson for-mortals sharp,
et potius nulla sibi turpi conscius in re
and rather no to-himself foul guilty in thing
volvitur in flammis innoxius inque peditur
is-rolled in flames harmless and-in is-entangled
turbine caelesti subito correptus et igni?
by-a-whirlwind heavenly suddenly seized and by-fire?
cur etiam loca sola petunt frustraque laborant?
why also places lonely do-they-aim-at and-in-vain toil?
an tum bracchia consuescunt firmantque lacertos?
or then the-arms do-they-practice and-strengthen the-upper-arms?
in terraque patris cur telum perpetiuntur
on and-the-earth of-the-father why the-weapon do-they-suffer
optundi? cur ipse sinit, neque parcit in hostis?
to-be-blunted? why himself does-he-allow, nor spares-it for the-enemies?
in mare qua porro mittit ratione? quid undas
into the-sea by-what further does-he-send-it reason? why the-waves
arguit et liquidam molem camposque natantis?
does-he-accuse and the-liquid mass and-the-plains floating?
denique cur numquam caelo iacit undique puro
finally why never from-heaven does-he-hurl everywhere clear
Iuppiter in terras fulmen sonitusque profundit?
Jupiter on the-earth the-thunderbolt and-sounds pours-forth?

an simul ac nubes successere, ipse in eas tum
or as-soon as the-clouds have-come-up, himself into them then
descendit, prope ut hinc teli determinet ictus?
descends, near that hence of-the-weapon he-may-aim the-blow?
praeterea si vult caveamus fulminis ictum,
besides if he-wishes we-should-beware of-the-thunderbolt the-stroke,
cur dubitat facere ut possimus cernere missum?
why does-he-hesitate to-make that we-can to-see it-sent?
si necopinantis autem volt opprimere igni,
if unexpecting-ones but he-wishes to-overwhelm with-fire,
cur tonat ex illa parte, ut vitare queamus,
why does-he-thunder from that part, so-that to-shun we-can,
cur tenebras ante et fremitus et murmura concit?
why darkness before and roars and rumblings does-he-stir?
et simul in multas partis qui credere possis
and at-the-same-time into many parts how to-believe could-you
mittere? an hoc ausis numquam contendere factum,
him-to-hurl? or this would-you-dare never to-maintain done,
ut fierent ictus uno sub tempore plures?
that there-were strokes one at time several?
at saepest numero factum fierique necessest,
but often-it-is in-number done and-to-happen must-needs,
ut pluere in multis regionibus et cadere imbris,
as to-rain in many regions and to-fall showers,
fulmina sic uno fieri sub tempore multa.
thunderbolts so one to-happen at time many.
postremo cur sancta deum delubra suasque
lastly why the-holy of-the-gods shrines and-his-own
discutit infesto praeclaras fulmine sedes
does-he-shatter with-hostile glorious thunderbolt seats

et bene facta deum frangit simulacra suisque
and well wrought of-the-gods breaks images and-his-own
demit imaginibus violento volnere honorem?
takes-from images with-violent wound the-honor?
altaque cur plerumque petit loca, plurimaque eius
and-high why mostly does-he-seek places, and-most its
montibus in summis vestigia cernimus ignis?
mountains on the-highest traces do-we-see of-fire?

VI.14 · WATERSPOUTS

Lucretius explains what the Greeks call presters, which come down from the sky into the sea like a column, while the waters around boil and ships are in great danger. Wind that cannot burst a cloud presses it down like a fist, and when it splits, the whirl plunges into the sea and makes it seethe with a huge sound.

Quod superest, facilest ex his cognoscere rebus,
What remains, easy-is-it from these to-learn things,
presteras Grai quos ab re nominitarunt,
waterspouts the-Greeks which from the-thing have-named,
in mare qua missi veniant ratione superne.
into the-sea in-what sent they-come way from-above.
nam fit ut interdum tamquam demissa columna
for it-comes-about that sometimes as-it-were let-down a-column
in mare de caelo descendat, quam freta circum
into the-sea from heaven descends, which the-straits around
fervescunt graviter spirantibus incita flabris,
boil heavily by-breathing roused blasts,
et quaecumque in eo tum sint deprensa tumultu
and whatever in that then be caught the-turmoil

navigia in summum veniant vexata periclum.
ships into the-utmost come harried danger.
hoc fit ubi interdum non quit vis incita venti
this happens when sometimes not can the-force roused of-wind
rumpere quam coepit nubem, sed deprimit, ut sit
to-burst which it-has-begun the-cloud, but presses-it-down, so-that it-is
in mare de caelo tamquam demissa columna,
into the-sea from heaven as-it-were let-down a-column,
paulatim, quasi quid pugno bracchique superne
little-by-little, as-it-were something by-the-fist and-of-the-arm from-above
coniectu trudatur et extendatur in undas;
by-the-thrust were-pushed and stretched into the-waves;
quam cum discidit, hinc prorumpitur in mare venti
which when it-has-split, hence bursts-forth into the-sea of-the-wind
vis et fervorem mirum concinnat in undis:
the-force and a-seething wondrous fashions in the-waves:
versabundus enim turbo descendit et illam
whirling for the-eddy descends and that
deducit pariter lento cum corpore nubem;
draws-down alike pliant with body cloud;
quam simul ac gravidam detrusit ad aequora ponti,
which as-soon as heavy it-has-thrust-down to the-plains of-the-sea,
ille in aquam subito totum se inmittit et omne
it into the-water suddenly whole itself plunges and all
excitat ingenti sonitu mare fervere cogens.
rouses with-huge sound the-sea to-boil compelling.

An eddy of wind may wrap itself in clouds and come down like a prester on land, vomiting out a whirlwind; this is rarer on land because the mountains block it. Clouds form when rough bodies meet high in the air and hold together, gather into small clouds, and grow until a storm arises. Mountain peaks smoke with cloud because winds drive the thin beginnings of clouds up to them.

fit quoque ut involvat venti se nubibus ipse
it-comes-about also that wraps of-wind itself in-clouds itself
vertex, conradens ex aëre semina nubis,
the-eddy, scraping-together from the-air the-seeds of-cloud,
et quasi demissum caelo prestera imitetur:
and as-it-were let-down from-heaven a-waterspout imitates:
hic ubi se in terras demisit dissoluitque,
this when itself onto the-lands has-let-down and-dissolved,
turbinis immanem vim provomit atque procellae.
of-whirlwind monstrous force vomits-forth and of-squall.
sed quia fit raro omnino montisque necessest
but because it-happens rarely at-all and-mountains must-needs
officere in terris, apparet crebrius idem
to-obstruct on the-lands, appears more-often the-same
prospectu maris in magno caeloque patenti.
the-view of-the-sea in great and-heaven open.
Nubila concrescunt, ubi corpora multa volando
Clouds condense, when bodies many flying
hoc supero in caeli spatio coiere repente
this upper in of-heaven space have-met suddenly
asperiora, modis quae possint indupedita
rougher, in-ways which can entangled

exiguis tamen inter se comprensa teneri.
slight yet among themselves seized to-be-held.
haec faciunt primum parvas consistere nubes:
these make first small to-form clouds:
inde ea comprendunt inter se conque gregantur
then they seize among themselves and-together flock
et coniungendo crescunt ventisque feruntur
and by-joining grow and-by-winds are-borne
usque adeo donec tempestas saeva coortast.
right so-far until a-storm savage has-arisen.
fit quoque uti montis vicina cacumina caelo
it-comes-about also that of-mountains the-neighboring peaks to-heaven
quam sint quaeque magis, tanto magis edita fument
how they-are each more, by-so-much the-more raised smoke
adsidue furvae nubis caligine crassa
constantly of-dark cloud with-murk thick
propterea quia, cum consistunt nubila primum,
therefore because, when form clouds first,
ante videre oculi quam possint tenvia, venti
before to-see the-eyes than they-can thin, the-winds
portantes cogunt ad summa cacumina montis:
carrying compel-them to the-highest peaks of-the-mountain:
hic demum fit uti turba maiore coorta
here at-last it-comes-about that with-the-crowd greater risen
et condensa queant apparere et simul ipso
and condensed they-can to-appear and at-the-same-time the-very
vertice de montis videantur surgere in aethram.
summit from of-the-mountain they-seem to-rise into the-sky.

nam loca declarat sursum ventosa patere
for the-places declares upward windy to-lie-open
res ipsa et sensus, montis cum ascendimus altos.
the-thing itself and the-sense, mountains when we-climb high.

VI.16 · WHERE CLOUDS COME FROM

Clothes hung on the shore grow damp, so the sea gives off many bodies that swell the clouds; mists and heat rise from rivers and the earth like breath; and bodies also come into the sky from outside, since matter is infinite and moves at great speed. So it is no wonder that storms cover seas and lands so quickly, with exits and entrances open everywhere for the elements.

praeterea permulta mari quoque tollere toto
besides very-many from-the-sea also to-lift whole
corpora naturam declarant litore vestes
bodies nature declare on-the-shore clothes
suspensae, cum concipiunt umoris adhaesum.
hung, when they-take of-moisture a-clinging.
quo magis ad nubis augendas multa videntur
whereby the-more toward clouds increasing many(-bodies) seem
posse quoque e salso consurgere momine ponti:
to-be-able also from the-salt to-rise movement of-the-sea:
nam ratio consanguineast umoribus ollis.
for the-law akin-is to-moistures those.
praeterea fluviis ex omnibus et simul ipsa
besides rivers from all and at-the-same-time itself
surgere de terra nebulas aestumque videmus,
to-rise from the-earth mists and-heat we-see,
quae velut halitus hinc ita sursum expressa feruntur
which like breath hence so upward squeezed are-borne

suffunduntque sua caelum caligine et altas
and-suffuse with-their heaven murk and high
sufficiunt nubis paulatim conveniundo:
supply clouds little-by-little by-coming-together:
urget enim quoque signiferi super aetheris aestus
presses for also of-the-sign-bearing above ether the-heat
et quasi densendo subtexit caerula nimbis.
and as-it-were by-thickening weaves-beneath the-blue with-storm-clouds.
fit quoque ut huc veniant in caelum extrinsecus illa
it-comes-about also that hither come into heaven from-outside those
corpora quae faciunt nubis nimbosque volantis:
bodies which make clouds and-storm-clouds flying:
innumerabilem enim numerum summamque profundi
innumerable for the-number and-the-sum of-the-deep
esse infinitam docui, quantaque volarent
to-be infinite I-have-taught, and-with-how-great fly
corpora mobilitate ostendi quamque repente
bodies nimbleness I-have-shown and-how suddenly
immemorabile per spatium transire solerent.
an-untold through space to-pass they-are-wont.
haut igitur mirumst, si parvo tempore saepe
not therefore wonderful-is-it, if in-small time often
tam magnis nimbis tempestas atque tenebrae
so great with-storm-clouds the-storm and darkness
coperiunt maria ac terras inpensa superne,
cover seas and lands brooding from-above,
undique quandoquidem per caulas aetheris omnis
everywhere since-indeed through the-pores of-the-ether all

et quasi per magni circum spiracula mundi
and as-it-were through of-the-great around the-breathing-holes world
exitus introitusque elementis redditus extat.
exit and-entrance to-the-elements given stands.

VI.17 · RAIN, THE RAINBOW, AND THE REST

Seeds of water rise with the clouds from everything, as sweat grows with the body, and clouds soak up seawater like hanging fleeces. When the clouds are crowded, the wind and their own weight press out the rain, or the sun melts them like wax; rain lasts long when seeds of water keep coming. The rainbow appears when the sun shines on the spray of the storm. Snow, hail, frost, and ice are easy to explain once the elements are understood.

Nunc age, quo pacto pluvius concrescat in altis
Now come, in-what way the-rainy condenses in high
nubibus umor, et in terras demissus ut imber
clouds moisture, and onto the-lands let-down how the-rain
decidat, expediam. primum iam semina aquai
falls, I-will-explain. first now the-seeds of-water
multa simul vincam consurgere nubibus ipsis
many at-the-same-time I-will-prove to-rise-up with-the-clouds themselves
omnibus ex rebus, pariterque ita crescere utrumque,
all from things, and-equally so to-grow each,
et nubis, et aquam, quaecumque in nubibus extat,
both the-clouds, and the-water, whatever in the-clouds exists,
ut pariter nobis corpus cum sanguine crescit,
as alike for-us the-body with the-blood grows,
sudor item, atque umor quicumquest denique membris.
the-sweat likewise, and the-moisture whatever-is finally in-the-limbs.

concipiunt etiam multum quoque saepe marinum
they-take-in also much too often of-the-sea
umorem, veluti pendentia vellera lanae
moisture, like hanging fleeces of-wool
cum supera magnum mare venti nubila portant.
when above the-great sea the-winds the-clouds carry.
consimili ratione ex omnibus amnibus umor
in-like fashion from all rivers moisture
tollitur in nubis. quo cum bene semina aquarum
is-lifted into the-clouds. whither when well the-seeds of-waters
multa modis multis convenere undique adaucta,
many in-ways many have-come-together from-everywhere increased,
confertae nubes imbris demittere certant
the-crowded clouds rains to-let-down strive
dupliciter: nam vis venti contrudit, et ipsa
in-two-ways: for the-force of-the-wind thrusts, and itself
copia nimborum turba maiore coacta
the-abundance of-storm-clouds with-crowd greater driven
urget, de supero premit, ac facit effluere imbris.
presses, from above weighs, and makes to-flow-out the-rains.
praeterea cum rarescunt quoque nubila ventis
besides when grow-loose also the-clouds by-winds
aut dissolvuntur, solis super icta calore,
or are-dissolved, of-the-sun from-above struck by-the-heat,
mittunt umorem pluvium, stillantque, quasi igni
they-send moisture rainy, and-drip, as-it-were fire
cera super calido tabescens multa liquescat.
wax over hot wasting much should-melt.
sed vemens imber fit, ubi vementer utraque
but violent rain arises, when violently both

nubila vi cumulata premuntur et impete venti.
the-clouds by-force heaped are-pressed and by-onrush of-wind.
atque tenere diu pluviae longumque morari
and to-hold long rains and-long to-linger
consuerunt, ubi multa cientur semina aquarum,
are-wont, when many are-roused seeds of-waters,
atque aliis aliae nubes nimbique rigantes
and on-others other clouds and-storm-clouds watering
insuper atque omni vulgo de parte feruntur,
above and every commonly from part are-borne,
terraque cum fumans umorem tota redhalat.
and-the-earth when smoking moisture whole breathes-back.
hic ubi sol radiis, tempestatem inter opacam,
here when the-sun with-rays, the-storm among dark,
adversa fulgit nimborum aspargine contra,
opposite shines of-the-storm-clouds the-spray against,
tum color in nigris existit nubibus arqui.
then the-color in black stands-out clouds of-the-rainbow.
Cetera quae sursum crescunt sursumque creantur,
The-rest which upward grow and-upward are-created,
et quae concrescunt in nubibus, omnia, prorsum
and which condense in the-clouds, all-things, outright
omnia, nix venti grando gelidaeque pruinae
all-things, snow winds hail and-chill frosts
et vis magna geli, magnum duramen aquarum,
and the-force great of-ice, the-great hardening of-waters,
et mora quae fluvios passim refrenat euntis,
and the-check which the-rivers everywhere reins-in going,
perfacilest tamen haec reperire animoque videre
very-easy-is-it yet these to-find and-with-the-mind to-see

omnia quo pacto fiant qua reve creentur,
all in-what way they-happen by-what or-thing they-are-created,
cum bene cognoris elementis reddita quae sint.
when well you-have-learned to-the-elements given what-they are.
* * *
(lacuna)

VI.18 · WHY THE SEA DOES NOT GROW

People wonder that the sea does not grow with all the rivers, rains, and springs that flow into it, but all of them are hardly a drop to its sum. The sun takes off a great part, as it dries wet clothes; the winds sweep away more, as roads dry in a night; the clouds lift more; and since the earth is porous, the sea seeps back through it, loses its salt, and returns to the springs.

Principio mare mirantur non reddere maius
First the-sea they-wonder not to-make greater
naturam, quo sit tantus decursus aquarum,
nature, whither there-is so-great a-downflow of-waters,
omnia quo veniant ex omni flumina parte.
all whither come from every rivers part.
adde vagos imbris tempestatesque volantes,
add wandering rains and-storms flying,
omnia quae maria ac terras sparguntque rigantque;
all which seas and lands both-sprinkle and-water;
adde suos fontis: tamen ad maris omnia summam
add its-own springs: yet to of-the-sea all sum
guttai vix instar erunt unius adaugmen;
of-a-drop scarcely the-like will-be one the-increase;
quo minus est mirum mare non augescere magnum.
whereby the-less it-is wonderful the-sea not to-grow great.

praeterea magnam sol partem detrahit aestu.
besides great the-sun a-part draws-off with-heat.
quippe videmus enim vestis umore madentis
for we-see for clothes with-moisture dripping
exsiccare suis radiis ardentibu' solem:
to-dry-out with-its rays burning the-sun:
at pelage multa et late substrata videmus.
but seas many and widely spread-beneath we-see.
proinde licet quamvis ex uno quoque loco sol
therefore granted however from one each place the-sun
umoris parvam delibet ab aequore partem:
of-moisture a-small should-sip from the-surface part:
largiter in tanto spatio tamen auferet undis.
abundantly in so-great space yet he-will-take-away from-the-waves.
tum porro venti quoque magnam tollere partem
then further the-winds also great to-lift a-part
umoris possunt verrentes aequora, ventis
of-moisture can sweeping the-plains, by-winds
una nocte vias quoniam persaepe videmus
in-one night roads since very-often we-see
siccari mollisque luti concrescere crustas.
to-be-dried and-of-soft mud to-harden crusts.
praeterea docui multum quoque tollere nubes
besides I-have-taught much also to-lift the-clouds
umorem magno conceptum ex aequore ponti,
moisture the-great taken-up from surface of-the-sea,
et passim toto terrarum spargere in orbi,
and everywhere whole of-lands to-scatter on circle,
cum pluit in terris et venti nubila portant.
when it-rains on the-lands and the-winds the-clouds carry.

postremo quoniam raro cum corpore tellus
lastly since loose with body the-earth
est, et coniunctast oris maris, undique cingens,
is, and joined-it-is to-the-shores of-the-sea, everywhere girding,
debet, ut in mare de terris venit umor aquai,
it-must, as into the-sea from the-lands comes the-moisture of-water,
in terras itidem manare ex aequore salso:
onto the-lands likewise to-trickle from the-surface salt:
percolatur enim virus, retroque remanat
is-strained for the-brine, and-back flows
materies umoris et ad caput amnibus omnis
the-matter of-moisture and to the-source for-rivers all
confluit, inde super terras redit agmine dulci
flows-together, thence over the-lands returns in-column sweet
qua via secta semel liquido pede detulit undas.
where the-path cut once with-liquid foot has-brought the-waves.

VI.19 · EARTHQUAKES FROM COLLAPSING CAVERNS

The earth beneath is like the earth above, full of windy caverns, lakes, pools, cliffs, and rivers. When age undermines a great cavern, whole mountains fall and tremors spread, as houses shake when a wagon passes. A clod falling into a lake may set the earth rocking like a vessel of water. Wind gathering underground may also press the earth so that houses lean and threaten to fall, but because the winds breathe in and out, the earth springs back.

Nunc age, quae ratio terrai motibus extet
Now come, what reason for-the-earth's quakes exists
percipe. et in primis terram fac ut esse rearis
learn. and in the-first-place the-earth make that to-be you-think

supter item ut supera ventosis undique plenam
beneath likewise as above with-windy everywhere full
speluncis, multosque lacus, multasque lacunas
caverns, and-many lakes, and-many pools
in gremio gerere et rupes deruptaque saxa:
in her-bosom to-bear and cliffs and-sheer rocks:
multaque sub tergo terrai flumina tecta
and-many under the-back of-the-earth rivers hidden
volvere vi fluctus summersaque saxa putandumst:
to-roll with-force waves and-submerged rocks it-must-be-thought:
undique enim similem esse sui res postulat ipsa.
everywhere for like to-be to-itself the-thing demands itself.
his igitur rebus subiunctis suppositisque
with-these therefore things joined-beneath and-placed-beneath
terra superne tremit magnis concussa ruinis,
the-earth above trembles by-great shaken collapses,
subter ubi ingentis speluncas subruit aetas:
beneath when huge caverns has-undermined age:
quippe cadunt toti montes, magnoque repente
for fall whole mountains, and-with-great suddenly
concussu late disserpunt inde tremores;
shock widely creep-abroad thence tremors;
et merito, quoniam plaustri concussa tremescunt
and rightly, since of-a-wagon shaken tremble
tecta, viam propter, non magno pondere tota,
the-houses, the-road beside, by-no great weight whole,
nec minus exultant res, ut lapi' cumque viai
and-not less jump the-things, when a-stone soever of-the-road
ferratos utrimque rotarum succutit orbes.
the-iron-shod on-either-side of-the-wheels jolts rims.

fit quoque, ubi in magnas acuae vastasque lacunas
it-comes-about also, when into great of-water and-vast pools
gleba vetustate e terra provolvitur ingens,
a-clod by-age from the-earth rolls-forth huge,
ut iactetur aquae fluctu quoque terra vacillans;
that is-tossed by-the-water's wave also the-earth tottering;
ut vas interdum non quit constare, nisi umor
as a-vessel sometimes not can to-stand-still, unless the-liquid
destitit in dubio fluctu iactarier intus.
has-ceased in unsteady wave to-be-tossed within.
Praeterea ventus cum per loca subcava terrae
Besides the-wind when through the-places hollow of-the-earth
collectus parte ex una procumbit et urget
gathered part from one leans-forward and presses
obnixus magnis speluncas viribus altas,
straining with-great the-caverns forces deep,
incumbit tellus quo venti prona premit vis:
leans the-earth whither of-the-wind headlong presses the-force:
tum supera terram quae sunt extructa domorum,
then above the-earth what-things are built of-houses,
ad caelumque magis quanto sunt edita quaeque,
toward and-heaven the-more by-how-much are raised each,
inclinata minantur eandem in prodita partem,
leaning threaten the-same into thrust-forth part,
protractaeque trabes inpendent ire paratae.
and-pulled-forward the-beams overhang to-go ready.
et metuunt magni naturam credere mundi
and they-fear of-the-great the-nature to-believe world
exitiale aliquod tempus clademque manere,
destructive some time and-ruin to-await,

cum videant tantam terrarum incumbere molem!
when they-see so-great of-earth to-lean a-mass!
quod nisi respirent venti, vis nulla refrenet
but unless should-breathe-again the-winds, force no would-rein-in
res neque ab exitio possit reprehendere euntis:
things nor from destruction could to-hold-back going:
nunc quia respirant alternis inque gravescunt
now because they-breathe-again by-turns and-in they-grow-heavy
et quasi collecti redeunt ceduntque repulsi,
and as-it-were gathered they-return and-withdraw repelled,
saepius hanc ob rem minitatur terra ruinas
more-often this on account threatens the-earth ruin
quam facit: inclinatur enim retroque recellit,
than it-makes-it: it-leans for and-back springs,
et recipit prolapsa suas in pondera sedes.
and recovers having-slipped-forth its into weights seats.
hac igitur ratione vacillant omnia tecta,
in-this therefore way totter all houses,
summa magis mediis, media imis, ima perhilum.
the-tops more than-the-middles, the-middles than-the-lowest, the-lowest a-very-little.

Another cause is wind hurled into the earth's caverns, which roars there and then bursts out, splitting the ground, as happened at Sidon and Aegium; many walls have fallen in great quakes, and cities have sunk into the sea. If it does not burst out, it spreads through the earth's passages like a shiver of cold, and men fear both the roofs above and the caverns below; however firmly they think heaven and earth imperishable, the danger goads them to fear the world's sudden ruin.

Est haec eiusdem quoque magni causa tremoris,
There-is this of-the-same also great the-cause of-the-trembling,
ventus ubi atque animae subito vis maxima quaedam
the-wind when and of-air suddenly a-force greatest some
aut extrinsecus aut ipsa tellure coorta
either from-outside or from-the-very earth arisen
in loca se cava terrai coniecit, ibique
into the-places itself hollow of-the-earth has-hurled, and-there
speluncas inter magnas fremit ante tumultu
the-caverns among great roars first with-uproar
versabundaque portatur, post incita cum vis
and-whirling is-borne, afterward roused when the-force
exagitata foras erumpitur et simul altam
driven outward bursts and at-the-same-time deep
diffindens terram magnum concinnat hiatum.
splitting the-earth great fashions a-chasm.
in Syria Sidone quod accidit et fuit Aegi
in Syria Sidon which happened and was at-Aegium
in Peloponneso, quas exitus hic animai
in the-Peloponnese, which the-going-out this of-air
disturbat urbes et terrae motus obortus:
overthrows cities and of-the-earth the-quake risen:

multaque praeterea ceciderunt moenia magnis
and-many besides have-fallen walls by-great
motibus in terris, et multae per mare pessum
quakes on earth, and many through the-sea to-the-bottom
subsedere suis pariter cum civibus urbes.
have-sunk their-own alike with citizens cities.
quod nisi porumpit, tamen impetus ipse animai
but unless it-bursts-forth, yet the-onrush itself of-air
et fera vis venti per crebra foramina terrae
and fierce the-force of-the-wind through frequent passages of-the-earth
dispertitur ut horror et incutit inde tremorem;
is-distributed like a-shudder and strikes-in thence a-trembling;
frigus uti nostros penitus cum venit in artus,
cold as our deeply when it-comes into limbs,
concutit invitos cogens tremere atque movere.
shakes(-them) unwilling compelling to-tremble and to-move.
ancipiti trepidant igitur terrore per urbis,
with-two-edged they-tremble therefore terror through the-cities,
tecta superne timent, metuunt inferne cavernas
the-roofs above they-fear, they-dread beneath the-caverns
terrai ne dissoluat natura repente,
of-the-earth lest dissolve the-nature suddenly,
neu distracta suum late dispandat hiatum
or-lest torn-apart its widely it-spread-open chasm
atque suis confusa velit complere ruinis.
and with-its confused wish to-fill ruins.
proinde licet quamvis caelum terramque reantur
therefore granted however-much heaven and-earth they-think
incorrupta fore aeternae mandata saluti:
incorruptible to-be to-everlasting entrusted safety:

et tamen interdum praesens vis ipsa pericli
and yet sometimes present the-force itself of-danger
subdit et hunc stimulum quadam de parte timoris,
applies also this goad some from part of-fear,
ne pedibus raptim tellus subtracta feratur
lest from-the-feet swiftly the-earth withdrawn be-borne
in barathrum, rerumque sequatur prodita summa
into the-abyss, and-of-things follow betrayed the-sum
funditus, et fiat mundi confusa ruina.
utterly, and come-about of-the-world confused a-ruin.

VI.21 · ETNA, AND THE MEASURE OF THE UNIVERSE

Before explaining how Etna breathes out fire, Lucretius reminds Memmius how deep the sum of things is and what a tiny part of it one heaven is. No one wonders when a man catches a fever, a swollen foot, toothache, or the holy fire, since there are seeds of many ills; so the infinite can supply earth and sky with enough to cause earthquakes, eruptions, and storms. The fire seems huge only as the greatest river one has seen seems greatest, though heaven, earth, and sea are nothing to the whole sum.

Nunc ratio quae sit, per fauces montis ut Aetnae
Now the-reason what is, through the-jaws of-the-mountain how of-Etna
expirent ignes interdum turbine tanto,
breathe-out fires sometimes with-whirlwind so-great,
expediam: neque enim mediocri clade coorta
I-will-explain: nor for with-moderate disaster arisen
flammea tempestas Siculum dominata per agros
the-flaming storm of-the-Sicilians lording-it through the-fields
finitimis ad se convertit gentibus ora,
of-the-neighboring to itself turned of-the-nations the-faces,

fumida cum caeli scintillare omnia templa
smoky when of-heaven to-sparkle all the-precincts
cernentes pavida complebant pectora cura,
seeing with-fearful they-filled their-breasts care,
quid moliretur rerum natura novarum.
what was-working-at of-things nature new.
Hisce tibi in rebus latest alteque videndum
These for-you in things widely-it-is and-deeply to-be-looked-into
et longe cunctas in partis dispiciendum,
and far all in parts to-be-discerned,
ut reminiscaris summam rerum esse profundam
that you-remember the-sum of-things to-be deep
et videas caelum summai totius unum
and see the-heaven of-the-sum of-the-whole one
quam sit parvula pars et quam multesima constet,
how is tiny a-part and how small-a-fraction it-stands,
nec tota pars, homo terrai quota totius unus.
nor whole a-part, a-man of-the-earth what-fraction of-the-whole one.
quod bene propositum si plane contueare
which well set-forth if plainly you-should-regard
ac videas plane, mirari multa relinquas.
and see plainly, to-wonder many-things you-would-leave-off.
numquis enim nostrum miratur, siquis in artus
does-anyone for of-us wonder, if-anyone in his-limbs
accepit calido febrim fervore coortam
has-received with-hot a-fever heat arisen
aut alium quemvis morbi per membra dolorem?
or other any of-disease through the-limbs pain?
opturgescit enim subito pes, arripit acer
swells-up for suddenly the-foot, seizes sharp

saepe dolor dentes, oculos invadit in ipsos,
often pain the-teeth, the-eyes invades into themselves,
existit sacer ignis et urit corpore serpens
comes-forth the-holy fire and burns in-the-body creeping
quamcumque arripuit partim repitque per artus,
whatever it-has-seized part and-creeps through the-frame,
nimirum, quia sunt multarum semina rerum,
doubtless, because there-are of-many seeds things,
et satis haec tellus nobis caelumque mali fert,
and enough this earth for-us and-heaven of-ill bears,
unde queat vis immensi procrescere morbi.
whence could the-force of-immeasurable to-grow-forth disease.
sic igitur toti caelo terraeque putandumst
so therefore for-the-whole heaven and-earth it-must-be-thought
ex infinito satis omnia suppeditare,
from infinite enough all-things to-supply,
unde repente queat tellus concussa moveri
whence suddenly could the-earth shaken to-be-moved
perque mare ac terras rapidus percurrere turbo,
and-through sea and lands swift to-run-through a-whirlwind,
ignis abundare Aetnaeus, flammescere caelum:
fire to-abound of-Etna, to-flame heaven:
id quoque enim fit, et ardescunt caelestia templa;
that also for happens, and burn the-heavenly precincts;
et tempestates pluviae graviore coortu
and storms of-rain with-heavier rising
sunt, ubi forte ita se tetulerunt semina aquarum.
are, when perchance so themselves have-borne the-seeds of-waters.
'at nimis est ingens incendi turbidus ardor.'
'but too-much is huge of-the-fire the-turbulent heat.'

scilicet, et fluvius qui visus maximu' cuiquest
surely, both a-river which seemed greatest to-anyone-is
qui non ante aliquem maiorem vidit, et ingens
who not before any greater has-seen, and huge
arbor homoque videtur, et omnia de genere omni
a-tree and-a-man seems, and all-things of kind every
maxima quae vidit quisque, haec ingentia fingit,
the-greatest which has-seen each, these huge he-imagines,
cum tamen omnia cum caelo terraque marique
when yet all-things with heaven and-earth and-sea
nil sint ad summam summai totius omnem.
nothing are to the-sum of-the-sum of-the-whole whole.

VI.22 · HOW ETNA ERUPTS

Etna is hollow beneath and full of caverns, which hold wind and air. Wind heated by its own motion heats the rocks around it, strikes out fire, and drives it up through the mountain's throat, flinging ash, smoke, and rocks. The sea breaks at the mountain's roots, and caverns reach from it to the summit, so something passes in that way from the sea (a line is lost) and blows out, raising flame, rocks, and clouds of sand from the craters, as the Sicilians call them.

Nunc tamen illa modis quibus inritata repente
Now yet that in-ways what provoked suddenly
flamma foras vastis Aetnae fornacibus efflet,
the-flame outward from-vast of-Etna furnaces blows,
expediam. primum totius subcava montis
I-will-explain. first of-the-whole hollow-beneath mountain
est natura, fere silicum suffulta cavernis.
is the-nature, nearly of-flints propped on-caverns.

omnibus est porro in speluncis ventus et aër.
all is further in caverns wind and air.
ventus enim fit, ubist agitando percitus aër:
wind for arises, when-is by-agitating roused air:
hic ubi percaluit calefecitque omnia circum
this when it-has-grown-hot and-has-heated all around
saxa furens, qua contingit, terramque, et ab ollis
the-rocks raging, where it-touches, and-the-earth, and from them
excussit calidum flammis velocibus ignem,
has-struck-out hot with-flames swift fire,
tollit se ac rectis ita faucibus eicit alte.
lifts itself and with-straight so through-the-jaws casts-out on-high.
fert itaque ardorem longe, longeque favillam
it-bears therefore the-heat far, and-far ash
differt, et crassa volvit caligine fumum,
scatters, and with-thick rolls murk smoke,
extruditque simul mirando pondere saxa;
and-thrusts-out at-the-same-time of-wondrous weight rocks;
ne dubites quin haec animai turbida sit vis.
lest you-doubt that this of-air turbulent is the-force.
praeterea magna ex parti mare montis ad eius
besides great in part the-sea of-the-mountain at its
radices frangit fluctus aestumque resorbet.
roots breaks waves and-the-surge sucks-back.
ex hoc usque mari speluncae montis ad altas
from this right sea caverns of-the-mountain to the-high
perveniunt subter fauces. hac ire fatendumst
reach beneath jaws. this-way to-go it-must-be-confessed

* * *

(lacuna)

et penetrare maris penitus res cogit aperta
and to-pierce of-the-sea from-deep-within the-fact compels plain
atque efflare foras, ideoque extollere flammam
and to-blow outward, and-therefore to-raise flame
saxaque subiectare et arenae tollere nimbos.
and-rocks to-toss-up and of-sand to-raise clouds.
in summo sunt vertice enim crateres, ut ipsi
on the-highest are summit for craters, as themselves
nominitant; nos quod fauces perhibemus et ora.
they-name; we what jaws call and mouths.

VI.23 · SEVERAL CAUSES, AND THE NILE

For some things several causes must be named, though only one is true, as for a corpse whose cause of death is unknown. So with the Nile, which floods in summer: the etesian north winds may blow against its mouths and hold back its waters; the sea may heap sand against them; rains may fall at its source in summer when the winds drive clouds south; or the sun may melt the snows on the mountains of Ethiopia.

Sunt aliquot quoque res quarum unam dicere causam
There-are several also things of-which one to-name cause
non satis est, verum pluris, unde una tamen sit;
not enough is, but several, of-which one yet is;
corpus ut exanimum siquod procul ipse iacere
a-body as lifeless if-any afar yourself to-lie
conspicias hominis, fit ut omnis dicere causas
you-should-see of-a-man, it-comes-about that all to-name the-causes
conveniat leti, dicatur ut illius una:
befits of-death, be-named that of-it the-one:

nam neque eum ferro nec frigore vincere possis
for neither him by-iron nor by-cold to-prove you-could
interiisse neque a morbo neque forte veneno,
to-have-perished nor from disease nor perchance by-poison,
verum aliquid genere esse ex hoc quod contigit ei
but something of-kind to-be from this which has-befallen him
scimus. item in multis hoc rebus dicere habemus.
we-know. likewise in many this things to-say we-have.
Nilus in aestatem crescit campisque redundat
The-Nile in summer rises and-the-plains floods
unicus in terris, Aegypti totius amnis.
alone on earth, of-Egypt of-the-whole the-river.
is rigat Aegyptum medium per saepe calorem,
it waters Egypt middle through often the-heat,
aut quia sunt aestate aquilones ostia contra,
either because there-are in-summer north-winds the-mouths against,
anni tempore eo qui etesiae esse feruntur,
of-the-year at-season that which etesian to-be are-said,
et contra fluvium flantes remorantur et undas
and against the-stream blowing they-delay and the-waves
cogentes sursus replent coguntque manere.
driving upward they-fill and-compel to-stay.
nam dubio procul haec adverso flabra feruntur
for doubt far-from these against blasts are-borne
flumine, quae gelidis ab stellis axis aguntur:
the-stream, which the-chill from stars of-the-pole are-driven:
ille ex aestifera parti venit amnis ab austro,
that from heat-bearing part comes the-river from the-south,
inter nigra virum percocto saecla colore
among the-black of-men with-thoroughly-baked generations color

exoriens penitus media ab regione diei.
rising deeply the-middle from the-region of-day.
est quoque uti possit magnus congestus arenae
it-is also that can a-great heap of-sand
fluctibus adversis oppilare ostia contra,
by-the-waves opposed to-block the-mouths against,
cum mare permotum ventis ruit intus arenam;
when the-sea stirred-up by-winds rushes within the-sand;
quo fit uti pacto liber minus exitus amni
by-which it-comes-about that means free less the-exit for-the-river
et proclivis item fiat minus impetus undis.
and downhill likewise becomes less the-onrush for-the-waves.
fit quoque uti pluviae, forsan, magis ad caput ei
it-comes-about also that rains, perhaps, more at the-source for-it
tempore eo fiant, quod etesia flabra aquilonum
at-season that happen, because the-etesian blasts of-the-north-winds
nubila coniciunt in eas tunc omnia partis:
the-clouds throw into those then all parts:
scilicet, ad mediam regionem eiecta diei
surely, to the-middle region cast-out of-day
cum convenerunt, ibi ad altos denique montis
when they-have-met, there against the-high finally mountains
contrusae nubes coguntur vique premuntur.
thrust-together the-clouds are-compressed and-by-force pressed.
forsitan Aethiopum penitus de montibus altis
perhaps of-the-Ethiopians deeply from mountains high
crescat, ubi in campos albas descendere ningues
it-grows, where onto the-plains white to-come-down the-snows
tabificis subigit radiis sol omnia lustrans.
with-melting compels rays the-sun all-things traversing.

Avernian places are so called because birds flying over them forget to row with their wings and fall to the ground or into the water. There is one at Cumae, where mountains smoke with sulfur, and another on the Athenian citadel, where crows never fly, not from Pallas' anger as the Greek poets sing, but from the place's own nature; in Syria animals fall there as if sacrificed. These are not the doors of Orcus.

Nunc age, Averna tibi quae sunt loca cumque lacusque,
Now come, Avernian for-you which are places soever and-lakes,
expediam, quali natura praedita constent.
I-will-explain, with-what nature endowed they-consist.
principio, quo Averna vocantur nomine, id ab re
first, by-which Avernian they-are-called name, it from the-thing
inpositumst, quia sunt avibus contraria cunctis,
has-been-imposed, because they-are to-birds hostile all,
e regione ea quod loca cum venere volantes,
from direction those because places when they-have-come flying,
remigi oblitae pennarum vela remittunt,
of-oarage forgetting of-their-wings the-sails they-slacken,
praecipitesque cadunt molli cervice profusae
and-headlong fall with-soft neck stretched-out
in terram, si forte ita fert natura locorum,
to the-earth, if perchance so bears the-nature of-the-places,
aut in aquam, si forte lacus substratus Avernist.
or into water, if perchance a-lake spread-beneath of-Avernus-is.
is locus est Cumas apud, acri sulpure montes
that place is Cumae near, with-sharp sulfur mountains
oppleti calidis ubi fumant fontibus aucti;
filled with-hot where they-smoke springs increased;

est et Athenaeis in moenibus, arcis in ipso
there-is also Athenian in the-walls, of-the-citadel on very
vertice, Palladis ad templum Tritonidis almae,
the-top, of-Pallas at the-temple Tritonian kindly,
quo numquam pennis appellunt corpora raucae
whither never on-wings drive their-bodies hoarse
cornices, non cum fumant altaria donis:
crows, not when smoke the-altars with-gifts:
usque adeo fugitant non iras Palladis acris
right so-far they-flee not the-wrath of-Pallas sharp
pervigili causa, Graium ut cecinere poëtae,
for-a-watchful cause, of-the-Greeks as have-sung the-poets,
sed natura loci opus efficit ipsa suapte.
but the-nature of-the-place the-work brings-about itself by-its-own.
in Syria quoque fertur item locus esse videri,
in Syria also is-said likewise a-place to-be to-be-seen,
quadripedes quoque quo simul ac vestigia primum
four-footed-beasts also where as-soon as their-footsteps first
intulerint, graviter vis cogat concidere ipsa,
they-have-brought, heavily the-force compels to-collapse itself,
manibus ut si sint divis mactata repente.
to-the-shades as if they-were divine sacrificed suddenly.
omnia quae naturali ratione geruntur,
all which by-natural law are-carried-on,
et quibus e fiant causis apparet origo:
and what from they-arise causes appears the-origin:
ianua ne forte his Orci regionibus esse
the-door lest perchance in-these of-Orcus regions to-be
credatur, post hinc animas Acheruntis in oras
be-believed, afterward hence the-souls of-Acheron into the-shores

ducere forte deos manis inferne reamur,
to-lead perchance the-gods of-the-dead from-below we-should-think,
naribus alipedes ut cervi saepe putantur
with-their-nostrils wing-footed as stags often are-thought
ducere de latebris serpentia saecla ferarum.
to-draw from their-lairs the-creeping generations of-wild-beasts.
quod procul a vera quam sit ratione repulsum
which far from true how it-is reasoning thrust-away
percipe: nam de re nunc ipsa dicere conor.
learn: for about the-thing now itself to-speak I-try.

VI.25 · BODIES HOSTILE TO LIFE

The earth holds shapes of every kind, some vital and others able to bring disease and death, and different things suit different creatures. Some trees give such heavy shade that men lying under them get headaches; a tree on Helicon kills by its scent; a smoldering lamp brings on fits; castor puts women to sleep; hot baths and the fumes of coal make men faint, and to a fevered man the smell of wine is a deadly blow; and the mines at Scaptensula breathe out vapors that soon kill the miners.

Principio hoc dico, quod dixi saepe quoque ante,
First this I-say, what I-have-said often also before,
in terra cuiusque modi rerum esse figuras;
in the-earth of-every kind of-things to-be the-shapes;
multa, cibo quae sunt, vitalia, multaque, morbos
many, for-food which are, vital, and-many, diseases
incutere et mortem quae possint adcelerare.
to-strike-in and death which can to-hasten.
et magis esse aliis alias animantibus aptas
and more to-be for-some some living-creatures fit

res ad vitai rationem ostendimus ante
things for of-life the-way we-have-shown before
propter dissimilem naturam dissimilisque
because-of unlike nature and-unlike
texturas inter sese primasque figuras.
textures among themselves and-first shapes.
Deinde videre licet quam multae sint homini res
Next to-see one-may how many be for-man things
acriter infestae sensu spurcaeque gravesque;
sharply hostile to-sense and-foul and-heavy;
multa meant inimica per auris, multa per ipsas
many-things pass hostile through the-ears, many-things through the-very
insinuant naris infesta atque aspera sese,
wind-into the-nostrils hostile and rough themselves,
nec sunt multa parum tactu vitanda neque autem
nor are many-things little by-touch to-be-shunned nor again
aspectu fugienda saporeque tristia quae sint.
by-sight to-be-fled and-in-flavor bitter which are.
arboribus primum certis gravis umbra tributa
for-trees first fixed heavy a-shade allotted
usque adeo, capitis faciant ut saepe dolores,
right so-far, of-the-head that they-cause often pains,
siquis eas supter iacuit prostratus in herbis.
if-anyone them beneath has-lain stretched-out on the-grass.
est etiam magnis Heliconis montibus arbos
there-is also on-great of-Helicon mountains a-tree
floris odore hominem taetro consueta necare.
of-its-flower by-the-smell a-man foul wont to-kill.
scilicet, haec ideo terris ex omnia surgunt
surely, these therefore the-earth from all rise

multa modis multis multarum semina rerum,
many in-ways many of-many seeds things,
quod permixta gerit tellus discretaque tradit.
because mingled holds the-earth and-separated hands-over.
nocturnumque recens extinctum lumen ubi acri
and-nightly newly extinguished a-light when with-sharp
nidore offendit nares, consopit ibidem
fume has-struck the-nostrils, it-puts-to-sleep there
concidere et spumas qui morbo mittere suevit.
to-fall-down and foam one-who in-disease to-send-out is-wont.
castoreoque gravi mulier sopita recumbit,
and-with-castor heavy a-woman lulled sinks-back,
et manibus nitidum teneris opus effluit ei,
and from-the-hands bright tender the-work slips for-her,
tempore eo si odoratast quo menstrua solvit.
at-time that if she-has-smelled-it when her-menses she-releases.
multaque praeterea languentia membra per artus
and-many besides languishing the-limbs through the-frame
solvunt atque animam labefactant sedibus intus.
loosen and the-spirit make-totter in-its-seats within.
denique si calidis etiam cunctere lavabris
finally if in-hot also you-should-linger baths
plenior et fueris, solio ferventis aquai
fuller and you-have-been, in-the-tub of-boiling water
quam facile in medio fit uti des saepe ruinas!
how easily in the-middle it-comes-about that you-give often a-fall!
carbonumque gravis vis atque odor insinuatur
and-of-coals heavy the-force and smell winds-in
quam facile in cerebrum, nisi aquam praecepimus ante!
how easily into the-brain, unless water we-have-taken before!

at cum membra hominis percepit fervidior vis,
but when the-limbs of-a-man has-seized hotter force,

* * *
(lacuna)

tum fit odor vini plagae mactabilis instar.
then becomes the-smell of-wine of-a-blow deadly the-like.

nonne vides etiam terra quoque sulpur in ipsa
do-you-not see also the-earth too sulfur in itself

gignier et taetro concrescere odore bitumen;
to-be-begotten and with-foul to-condense smell bitumen;

denique ubi argenti venas aurique secuntur,
finally when of-silver the-veins and-of-gold they-follow,

terrai penitus scrutantes abdita ferro,
of-the-earth deeply searching the-hidden-things with-iron,

qualis expiret Scaptensula subter odores?
what-kind breathes-out Scaptensula beneath smells?

quidve mali fit ut exhalent aurata metalla!
or-what of-evil comes-about that they-exhale gold-bearing mines!

quas hominum reddunt facies qualisque colores!
what of-men they-render faces and-what colors!

nonne vides audisve perire in tempore parvo
do-you-not see or-hear to-perish in time small

quam soleant, et quam vitai copia desit,
how they-are-wont, and how of-life the-store fails,

quos opere in tali cohibet vis magna necessis?
whom work in such confines the-force great of-necessity?

hos igitur tellus omnis exaestuat aestus
these therefore the-earth all seethes-out heats

expiratque foras in apertum promptaque caeli.
and-breathes-out outward into the-open and-the-exposed-places of-heaven.

The Avernian places send up a deadly force that poisons a stretch of the sky, so that a bird flying into it is hindered by the hidden poison and falls, and the same force then takes the rest of its life. Or the heat of Avernus may drive out the air between birds and earth, so that the place is left nearly empty, the wings beat on nothing, and the bird falls and breathes out its life through every pore.

Sic et Averna loca alitibus summittere debent
So also Avernian places to-birds to-send-up must
mortiferam vim, de terra quae surgit in auras,
a-death-bearing force, from the-earth which rises into the-breezes,
ut spatium caeli quadam de parte venenet;
that the-space of-heaven some from part it-may-poison;
quo simul ac primum pennis delata sit ales,
whither as-soon as first on-wings borne has-been the-bird,
impediatur ibi caeco correpta veneno,
it-is-hindered there by-hidden seized poison,
ut cadat e regione loci, qua derigit aestus.
so-that it-falls from direction of-the-place, where directs the-heat.
quo cum conruit, hic eadem vis illius aestus
whither when it-has-fallen, here the-same force of-that heat
reliquias vitae membris ex omnibus aufert.
the-remnants of-life the-limbs from all takes-away.
quippe etenim primo quasi quendam conciet aestum:
for indeed at-first as-it-were a-certain it-rouses heat:
posterius fit uti, cum iam cecidere veneni
afterward it-comes-about that, when now they-have-fallen of-the-poison
in fontis ipsos, ibi sit quoque vita vomenda
into the-springs themselves, there is also life to-be-vomited

propterea quod magna mali fit copia circum.
therefore because great of-evil arises a-store around.

Fit quoque ut interdum vis haec atque aestus Averni
It-happens also that sometimes the-force this and heat of-Avernus

aëra, qui inter avis cumquest terramque locatus,
the-air, which between the-birds whichever-is and-the-earth placed,

discutiat, prope uti locus hic linquatur inanis.
shatters, nearly that the-place here is-left empty.

cuius ubi e regione loci venere volantes,
of-which when from direction of-the-place they-have-come flying,

claudicat extemplo pinnarum nisus inanis,
limps forthwith of-their-wings the-effort empty,

et conamen utrimque alarum proditur omne.
and the-striving on-both-sides of-the-wings is-betrayed all.

hic ubi nixari nequeunt insistereque alis,
here when to-lean-on they-cannot and-to-rest-on their-wings,

scilicet, in terram delabi pondere cogit
surely, to the-earth to-glide-down by-weight compels

natura, et vacuum prope iam per inane iacentes
nature, and empty nearly now through the-void lying

dispergunt animas per caulas corporis omnis.
they-scatter their-spirits through the-pores of-the-body all.

* * *
(lacuna)

Wells are colder in summer because the earth, loosened by heat, gives off its heat, and in winter the earth contracts and presses heat into them. The spring at Ammon's shrine, cold by day and warm by night, is not heated by the sun under the earth. At night the cold ground contracts around it and squeezes seeds of fire into the water; by day the sun loosens the ground and the fire returns to it, and its rays also loosen the water, which lets its fire go as it lets go its frost.

frigidior porro in puteis aestate fit umor,
colder further in wells in-summer becomes the-moisture,
rarescit quia terra calore, et semina si quae
grows-loose because the-earth with-heat, and seeds if any
forte vaporis habet proprii, dimittit in auras.
perchance of-vapor it-has its-own, it-lets-go into the-breezes.
quo magis est igitur tellus effeta calore,
whereby the-more is therefore the-earth exhausted by-heat,
fit quoque frigidior qui in terrast abditus umor.
becomes also colder what in the-earth-is hidden moisture.
frigore cum premitur porro omnis terra coitque
by-cold when is-pressed further all the-earth and-comes-together
et quasi concrescit, fit, scilicet, ut coëundo
and as-it-were congeals, it-comes-about, surely, that by-coming-together
exprimat in puteos si quem gerit ipsa calorem.
it-squeezes into the-wells if any it-bears itself heat.
Esse apud Hammonis fanum fons luce diurna
To-be near of-Ammon the-shrine a-spring in-light of-day
frigidus et calidus nocturno tempore fertur.
cold and hot at-night time is-said.
hunc homines fontem nimis admirantur et acri
this men spring too-much wonder-at and by-sharp

sole putant supter terras fervescere raptim,
sun they-think beneath the-earth to-boil swiftly,
nox ubi terribili terras caligine texit.
night when with-terrible the-lands murk has-covered.
quod nimis a verast longe ratione remotum:
which too-much from true-is far reasoning removed:
quippe, ubi sol nudum contractans corpus aquai
for, when the-sun the-naked handling body of-water
non quierit calidum supera de reddere parte,
not has-been-able hot the-upper from to-make part,
cum superum lumen tanto fervore fruatur,
when of-the-upper light with-so-great heat it-enjoys,
qui queat hic supter tam crasso corpore terram
how could it beneath with-so thick body earth
percoquere umorem et calido satiare vapore?
to-cook-through the-moisture and with-hot to-sate vapor?
praesertim cum vix possit per septa domorum
especially when scarcely it-can through the-walls of-houses
insinuare suum radiis ardentibus aestum.
to-wind-in its with-rays burning heat.
quae ratiost igitur? nimirum, terra magis quod
what the-reason-is therefore? doubtless, the-earth more because
rara tepet circum fontem quam cetera tellus,
loose is-warm around the-spring than the-rest earth,
multaque sunt ignis prope semina corpus aquai.
and-many are of-fire near seeds the-body of-water.
hoc ubi roriferis terram nox obruit umbris,
this when with-dew-bearing the-earth night overwhelms shadows,
extemplo subtus frigescit terra coitque:
forthwith beneath grows-cold the-earth and-comes-together:

hac ratione fit ut, tamquam compressa manu sit,
in-this way it-comes-about that, as-it-were pressed by-the-hand it-were,
exprimat in fontem quae semina cumque habet ignis,
it-squeezes into the-spring what seeds soever it-has of-fire,
quae calidum faciunt laticis tactum atque saporem.
which hot make of-the-water the-touch and taste.
inde ubi sol radiis terram dimovit obortus
then when the-sun with-rays the-earth has-loosened risen
et rarefecit calido gliscente vapore,
and has-rarefied with-hot swelling vapor,
rursus in antiquas redeunt primordia sedes
again into ancient return the-first-beginnings seats
ignis, et in terram cedit calor omnis aquai.
of-fire, and into the-earth withdraws the-heat all of-the-water.
frigidus hanc ob rem fit fons in luce diurna.
cold this on account becomes the-spring in light of-day.
praeterea solis radiis iactatur aquai
besides by-the-sun's rays is-tossed of-the-water
umor et in lucem tremulo rarescit ab aestu:
the-moisture and in light trembling grows-loose from heat:
propterea fit uti quae semina cumque habet ignis
therefore it-comes-about that what seeds soever it-has of-fire
dimittat; quasi saepe gelum, quod continet in se,
it-lets-go; as-it-were often the-frost, which it-holds in itself,
mittit et exsolvit glaciem nodosque relaxat.
lets-go and dissolves the-ice and-the-knots relaxes.

There is a cold spring above which tow and torches catch fire, because many seeds of heat rise through the water from deep in the earth, not enough to warm the spring but enough to kindle what floats on it, as fresh water gushes up through the sea at Aradus. So a lamp's wick just put out catches fire again before the flame touches it.

Frigidus est etiam fons, supra quem sita saepe
Cold is also a-spring, above which placed often
stuppa iacit flammam concepto protinus igni,
tow throws-up flame with-caught forthwith fire,
taedaque consimili ratione accensa per undas
and-a-torch in-like fashion kindled over the-waves
conlucet, quocumque natans impellitur auris.
shines, wherever floating it-is-driven by-the-breezes.
nimirum, quia sunt in aqua permulta vaporis
doubtless, because there-are in the-water very-many of-vapor
semina, de terraque necessest funditus ipsa
seeds, from and-earth must-needs from-the-bottom itself
ignis corpora per totum consurgere fontem
of-fire bodies through the-whole to-rise-up spring
et simul exspirare foras exireque in auras,
and at-the-same-time to-breathe-out outward and-to-go-out into the-breezes,
non ita multa tamen, calidus queat ut fieri fons,
not so many yet, hot could that to-become the-spring,
propterea dispersa foras erumpere cogit
therefore scattered outward to-burst-forth compels-them
vis per aquam subito sursumque ea conciliari.
a-force through the-water suddenly and-upward they to-be-gathered.
quod genus endo marist Aradi fons, dulcis aquai
which kind in the-sea-is of-Aradus a-spring, sweet of-water

qui scatit et salsas circum se dimovet undas:
which gushes and the-salt around itself moves-apart waves:
et multis aliis praebet regionibus aequor
and in-many other affords regions the-sea
utilitatem opportunam sitientibu' nautis,
usefulness timely to-thirsty sailors,
quod dulcis inter salsas intervomit undas.
because sweet among salt it-spews-out waves.
sic igitur per eum possunt erumpere fontem
so therefore through that can to-burst-forth spring
et scatere illa foras in stuppam semina; quo cum
and to-gush those outward onto the-tow seeds; whither when
conveniunt aut in taedai corpore adhaerent,
they-meet or in of-the-torch the-body cling,
ardescunt facile extemplo, quia multa quoque in se
they-take-fire easily forthwith, because many also in themselves
semina habent ignis stuppae taedaeque latentis.
seeds have of-fire of-the-tow and-of-the-torch lurking.
nonne vides etiam, nocturna ad lumina linum
do-you-not see also, the-nightly to lights linen
nuper ubi extinctum admoveas, accendier ante
lately when quenched you-move-it, to-be-kindled before
quam tetigit flammam, taedamque pari ratione?
than it-has-touched the-flame, and-a-torch in-equal measure?
multaque praeterea prius ipso tacta vapore
and-many besides before by-the-very touched vapor
eminus ardescunt quam comminus imbuat ignis.
from-afar take-fire than near-at-hand should-soak-them fire.
hoc igitur fieri quoque in illo fonte putandumst.
this therefore to-happen also in that spring it-must-be-thought.

Lucretius turns to the stone the Greeks call the magnet, from the land of the Magnetes, which draws iron and holds a chain of rings, each hanging from the one above as if each learned the stone's force. Many things must be set out first and approached by a long road. Bodies flow continually from all things, making us see, smell, hear, taste, and feel, so we sense every kind of thing at every moment.

Quod superest, agere incipiam quo foedere fiat
What remains, to-treat I-will-begin by-what covenant it-comes-about
naturae, lapis hic ut ferrum ducere possit,
of-nature, stone this that iron to-draw can,
quem Magneta vocant patrio de nomine Grai,
which Magnet they-call ancestral from name the-Greeks,
Magnetum quia sit patriis in finibus ortus.
of-the-Magnetes because it-is ancestral in bounds sprung.
hunc homines lapidem mirantur: quippe catenam
this men stone wonder-at: for a-chain
saepe ex anellis reddit pendentibus ex se.
often from rings it-makes hanging from itself.
quinque etenim licet interdum pluresque videre
five for one-may sometimes and-more to-see
ordine demissos levibus iactarier auris,
in-order let-down by-light to-be-tossed breezes,
unus ubi ex uno dependet supter adhaerens,
one when from one hangs beneath clinging,
ex alioque alius lapidis vim vinclaque noscit:
from and-another another of-the-stone the-force and-bonds learns:
usque adeo permananter vis pervalet eius.
right so-far permeatingly the-force prevails its.

Hoc genus in rebus firmandumst multa prius quam
This kind in things must-be-established many-things before than
ipsius rei rationem reddere possis,
of-the-very thing the-account to-render you-can,
et nimium longis ambagibus est adeundum;
and by-too-much long roundabouts it-is to-be-approached;
quo magis attentas auris animumque reposco.
whereby the-more attentive ears and-mind I-demand.
Principio omnibus ab rebus, quascumque videmus,
First all from things, whatsoever we-see,
perpetuo fluere ac mitti spargique necessest
continually to-flow and to-be-sent and-to-be-scattered must-needs
corpora quae feriant oculos visumque lacessant:
bodies which strike the-eyes and-the-vision provoke:
perpetuoque fluunt certis ab rebus odores;
and-continually flow fixed from things smells;
frigus it a fluviis, calor ab sole, aestus ab undis
cold goes from the-rivers, heat from the-sun, surge from the-waves
aequoris, exesor moerorum, litora propter:
of-the-sea, the-eater of-walls, the-shores near:
nec varii cessant sonitus manare per auras:
nor varied cease sounds to-trickle through the-breezes:
denique in os salsi venit umor saepe saporis,
finally into the-mouth of-salt comes a-moisture often of-flavor,
cum mare versamur propter, dilutaque contra
when the-sea we-move near, and-diluted opposite
cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror.
when we-behold to-be-mixed wormwood, touches-us bitterness.
usque adeo omnibus ab rebus res quaeque fluenter
right so-far all from things thing each in-a-flow

fertur et in cunctas dimittitur undique partis,
is-borne and into all is-sent-off everywhere parts,
nec mora nec requies interdatur ulla fluendi,
nor delay nor rest is-given-between any of-flowing,
perpetuo quoniam sentimus et omnibu' semper
continually since we-feel and for-all always
cernere odorari licet et sentire sonare.
to-see to-smell it-is-allowed and to-perceive to-sound.

VI.30 · ALL THINGS ARE POROUS

All things are of loose body, as the first book showed. Rocks in caves sweat water, our bodies sweat, beards and hair grow, and food spreads to the nails; cold and heat pass through bronze, gold, and silver, voices fly through stone walls, and smell and cold and the heat of fire pass through, which can pierce even iron; disease, too, steals in from outside. Nothing is solid without void mixed in.

Nunc omnis repetam quam raro corpore sint res
Now all I-will-repeat how loose of-body are things
commemorare; quod in primo quoque carmine claret.
to-recount; which in the-first also song is-clear.
quippe etenim, quamquam multas hoc pertinet ad res
for indeed, although many this pertains to things
noscere, cum primis hanc ad rem protinus ipsam,
to-know, among the-first this to thing forthwith itself,
qua de disserere adgredior, firmare necessest
which about to-discourse I-approach, to-establish must-needs
nil esse in promptu nisi mixtum corpus inani.
nothing to-be in sight except mixed body with-void.
principio fit ut in speluncis saxa superne
first it-comes-about that in caves the-rocks above

sudent umore et guttis manantibu' stillent.
sweat with-moisture and with-drops trickling drip.
manat item nobis e toto corpore sudor,
trickles likewise for-us from whole body sweat,
crescit barba, pilique per omnia membra, per artus.
grows the-beard, and-the-hairs through all the-limbs, through the-frame.
diditur in venas cibus omnis, auget alitque
is-spread into the-veins food all, increases and-feeds
corporis extremas quoque partis unguiculosque.
of-the-body the-outermost also parts and-the-little-nails.
frigus item transire per aes, calidumque vaporem,
cold likewise to-pass through bronze, and-hot vapor,
sentimus, sentimus item transire per aurum
we-feel, we-feel likewise to-pass through gold
atque per argentum, cum pocula plena tenemus.
and through silver, when cups full we-hold.
denique per dissepta domorum saxea voces
finally through the-partitions of-houses stony voices
pervolitant, permanat odor frigusque vaposque
fly-through, permeates smell and-cold and-vapor
ignis, qui ferri quoque vim penetrare suëvit.
of-fire, which of-iron also the-force to-pierce is-wont.
denique qua circum caeli lorica coërcet
finally where around of-heaven the-cuirass confines
* * *
(lacuna)
morbida visque simul, cum extrinsecus insinuatur;
diseased and-the-force at-the-same-time, when from-outside it-winds-in;
e tempestate in terra caeloque coortast,
from the-storm on earth and-heaven has-arisen,

in caelum terrasque remotas iure facessunt;
into heaven and-lands remote rightly they-withdraw;
quandoquidem nil est nisi rarum corpore nexum.
since-indeed nothing is except loose in-body woven.

VI.31 · THE SAME THING AFFECTS THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Not all bodies thrown off from things have the same effect on all. The sun bakes earth but melts ice and wax; fire melts bronze but shrinks hides and flesh; water hardens hot iron but softens hides. The wild olive delights goats as if it were ambrosia but is bitter to us; marjoram is poison to pigs but refreshes us; and mud that is foul to us is delightful to pigs.

Huc accedit uti non omnia, quae iaciuntur
To-this is-added that not all, which are-thrown
corpora cumque ab rebus, eodem praedita sensu
bodies soever from things, with-the-same endowed sense
atque eodem pacto rebus sint omnibus apta.
and in-the-same way to-things are all fit.
principio terram sol excoquit et facit are,
first the-earth the-sun bakes and makes to-be-dry,
at glaciem dissolvit et altis montibus altas
but the-ice it-dissolves and on-high mountains high
extructasque nives radiis tabescere cogit:
and-piled snows with-rays to-melt compels:
denique cera liquefit in eius posta vapore.
finally wax melts in its set vapor.
ignis item liquidum facit aes aurumque resolvit,
fire likewise liquid makes bronze and-gold dissolves,
at coria et carnem trahit et conducit in unum.
but hides and flesh it-draws and contracts into one.

umor aquae porro ferrum condurat ab igni,
moisture of-water further iron hardens from fire,
at coria et carnem mollit durata calore.
but hides and flesh softens hardened by-heat.
barbigeras oleaster eo iuvat usque capellas,
bearded the-wild-olive so delights far she-goats,
affluat ambrosia quasi vero, et nectare tinctus;
should-flow with-ambrosia as-if indeed, and with-nectar dyed;
qua nil est homini quod amariu' frondeat esca.
than-which nothing is for-man which more-bitter leafs as-food.
denique amaracinum fugitat sus et timet omne
finally marjoram flees the-pig and fears all
ungentum: nam saetigeris subus acre venenumst;
ointment: for to-bristly pigs sharp a-poison-it-is;
quod nos interdum tamquam recreare videtur.
which us sometimes as-it-were to-refresh seems.
at contra nobis caenum taeterrima cum sit
but conversely for-us mud most-foul though it-be
spurcities, eadem subus haec iucunda videtur,
filth, the-same for-pigs this pleasant seems,
insatiabiliter toti ut volvantur ibidem.
insatiably whole that they-roll there.

Since things have many passages of different natures, each sense perceives its own object, sound entering one way and taste another. One thing passes through rocks, another through wood, gold, silver, or glass; images flow one way and heat another. Once this is established, the cause that draws iron will be easy to explain.

Hoc etiam superest, ipsa quam dicere de re
This also remains, the-very before to-speak about thing
adgredior quod dicendum prius esse videtur.
I-approach which must-be-spoken first to-be seems.
multa foramina cum variis sint reddita rebus,
many passages since to-various are given things,
dissimili inter se natura praedita debent
with-unlike among themselves nature endowed they-ought
esse et habere suam naturam quaeque viasque.
to-be and to-have its-own nature each and-ways.
quippe etenim varii sensus animantibus insunt,
for indeed varied senses in-living-creatures are,
quorum quisque suam proprie rem percipit in se:
of-which each its-own properly thing perceives in itself:
nam penetrare alio sonitus alioque saporem
for to-pierce in-one-way sounds and-in-another taste
cernimus e sucis, alio nidoris odores.
we-see from juices, in-another of-scent smells.
praeterea manare aliud per saxa videtur,
besides to-trickle one-thing through rocks seems,
atque aliud lignis, aliud transire per aurum,
and another through-wood, another to-pass through gold,
argentoque foras aliud vitroque meare:
and-through-silver outward another and-through-glass to-pass:

nam fluere hac species, illac calor ire videtur,
for to-flow this-way the-image, that-way heat to-go seems,
atque aliis aliud citius transmittere eadem.
and through-others one-thing more-swiftly to-pass-through the-same.
scilicet, id fieri cogit natura viarum
surely, that to-happen compels the-nature of-the-ways
multimodis varians, ut paulo ostendimus ante,
in-many-ways varying, as a-little we-have-shown before,
propter dissimilem naturam textaque rerum.
because-of unlike nature and-textures of-things.

Quapropter, bene ubi haec confirmata atque locata
Wherefore, well when these established and placed
omnia constiterint nobis praeposta parata,
all have-stood for-us set-before prepared,
quod superest, facile hinc ratio reddetur, et omnis
what remains, easily hence the-account will-be-rendered, and all
causa patefiet, quae ferri pelliciat vim.
the-cause will-be-laid-open, which of-iron entices the-force.

VI.33 · HOW THE MAGNET DRAWS IRON

Many seeds flow from the stone and drive away the air between it and the iron, and when the space is emptied the first-beginnings of the iron fall forward into it, so that the whole ring follows; no substance coheres more tightly than iron. The air behind the ring also pushes it forward, as wind drives a ship, and the air hidden within the iron, always restless, pushes the ring the way it has begun to move.

principio fluere e lapide hoc permulta necessest
first to-flow from stone this very-many must-needs
semina, sive aestum, qui discutit aëra plagis,
seeds, or a-current, which shatters the-air with-blows,

inter qui lapidem ferrumquest cumque locatus.
between which the-stone and-the-iron-is soever placed.
hoc ubi inanitur spatium multusque vacefit
this when is-emptied the-space and-much becomes-vacant
in medio locus, extemplo primordia ferri
in the-middle place, forthwith the-first-beginnings of-the-iron
in vacuum prolapsa cadunt coniuncta, fit utque
into the-void slipped-forward fall joined, it-comes-about and-that
anulus ipse sequatur eatque ita corpore toto.
the-ring itself follows and-goes so with-body whole.
nec res ulla magis primoribus ex elementis
nor thing any more first from elements
indupedita suis arte conexa cohaeret
entangled its-own closely connected coheres
quam validi ferri natura et frigidus horror.
than of-strong iron the-nature and cold stiffness.
quo minus est mirum, quod ducitur ex elementis,
whereby the-less is-it wonderful, what is-drawn from the-elements,
corpora si nequeunt e ferro plura coorta
bodies if cannot from the-iron more risen
in vacuum ferri, quin anulus ipse sequatur;
into the-void to-be-borne, but-that the-ring itself follows;
quod facit, et sequitur, donec pervenit ad ipsum
which it-does, and follows, until it-reaches to the-very
iam lapidem caecisque in eo compagibus haesit.
now stone and-hidden in it joinings has-clung.
hoc fit idem cunctas in partis; unde vacefit
this happens the-same all into parts; whence becomes-vacant
cumque locus, sive e transverso sive superne
soever a-place, whether from across or from-above

corpora continuo in vacuum vicina feruntur:
bodies straightway into the-void neighboring are-borne:
quippe agitantur enim plagis aliunde, nec ipsa
for they-are-driven for by-blows from-elsewhere, nor themselves
sponte sua sursum possunt consurgere in auras.
of-accord their-own upward can to-rise into the-breezes.
huc accedit item, quare queat id magis esse,
to-this is-added likewise, why could that more to-be,
haec quoque res adiumento, motusque iuvatur,
this also thing as-a-help, and-the-motion is-helped,
quod, simul a frontest anelli rarior aër
that, as-soon-as in front-is of-the-ring looser the-air
factus inanitusque locus magis ac vacuatus,
made and-emptied the-place more and vacated,
continuo fit uti qui post est cumque locatus
straightway it-comes-about that which behind is soever placed
aër a tergo quasi provehat atque propellat.
air from behind as-it-were carries-forward and drives-on.
semper enim circumpositus res verberat aër:
always for set-around the-things lashes the-air:
sed tali fit uti propellat tempore ferrum,
but at-such it-comes-about that it-drives-on time the-iron,
parte quod ex una spatium vacat et capit in se.
part because from one the-space is-vacant and takes in itself.
hic, tibi quem memoro, per crebra foramina ferri
this, to-you which I-mention, through the-frequent passages of-the-iron
parvas ad partis subtiliter insinuatus,
the-small to parts subtly having-wound-in,
trudit et inpellit, quasi navem velaque ventus.
thrusts and drives-on, as a-ship and-sails the-wind.

denique res omnes debent in corpore habere
finally things all must in body have
aëra, quandoquidem raro sunt corpore et aër
air, since-indeed of-loose they-are body and air
omnibus est rebus circumdatus adpositusque.
to-all is things set-around and-placed-near.
hic igitur, penitus qui in ferrost abditus aër,
this therefore, deeply which in the-iron-is hidden air,
sollicito motu semper iactatur eoque
with-troubled motion always is-tossed and-therefore
verberat anellum dubio procul et ciet intus,
lashes the-ring doubt far-from and stirs within,
scilicet: ille eodem fertur, quo praecipitavit
surely: that the-same-way is-borne, whither it-has-plunged
iam semel et partem in vacuam conamina sumpsit.
now once and part into empty its-efforts has-taken.

VI.34 · WHY IRON SOMETIMES FLEES THE MAGNET

Iron sometimes flees the magnet: Lucretius has seen Samothracian rings leap and iron filings rage in bronze bowls when the stone was placed beneath them, because the current from the bronze fills the iron's passages first, and the stone's current then beats against it. Other things the current cannot drive, because they are too heavy, like gold, or too loose, like wood, so that it passes through them; iron lies between, and once it has taken in particles of bronze the magnet's streams drive it.

Fit quoque ut a lapide hoc ferri natura recedat
It-comes-about also that from stone this of-iron the-nature withdraws
interdum, fugere atque sequi consueta vicissim.
sometimes, to-flee and to-follow wont in-turn.

exultare etiam Samothracia ferrea vidi
to-leap also Samothracian iron-rings I-have-seen
et ramenta simul ferri furere intus ahenis
and filings at-the-same-time of-iron to-rage within bronze
in scaphiis, lapis hic Magnes cum subditus esset:
in bowls, stone this Magnesian when placed-beneath was:
usque adeo fugere ab saxo gestire videtur.
right so-far to-flee from the-rock to-long it-seems.
aere interposito discordia tanta creatur
with-bronze set-between discord so-great is-created
proptera quia, nimirum, prius aestus ubi aeris
therefore because, doubtless, before the-current when of-the-bronze
praecepit ferrique vias possedit apertas,
has-taken-first and-of-the-iron the-ways has-seized open,
posterior lapidis venit aestus et omnia plena
later of-the-stone comes the-current and all-things full
invenit in ferro, neque habet qua tranet ut ante:
finds in the-iron, nor has-it where it-may-swim-through as before:
cogitur offensare igitur pulsareque fluctu
it-is-compelled to-dash therefore and-to-beat with-wave
ferrea texta suo; quo pacto respuit ab se
iron textures its; in-which way it-spurns from itself
atque per aes agitat, sine eo quod saepe resorbet.
and through the-bronze drives, without that which often it-sucks-back.
Illud in his rebus mirari mitte, quod aestus
That in these things to-wonder-at forbear, that the-current
non valet e lapide hoc alias impellere item res.
not avails from stone this other to-drive likewise things.
pondere enim fretae partim stant, quod genus aurum,
by-weight for relying some stand, which kind gold,

et partim raro quia sunt cum corpore, ut aestus
and some loose because they-are with body, so-that the-current
pervolet intactas, nequeunt inpellier usquam;
flies-through untouched, cannot to-be-driven anywhere;
lignea materies in quo genere esse videtur.
wooden timber in which kind to-be seems.
interutrasque igitur ferri natura locata
between-both therefore of-iron the-nature placed
aeris ubi accepit quaedam corpuscula, tum fit,
of-bronze when it-has-received certain little-bodies, then it-comes-about,
inpellant ut eam Magnesi flumina saxi.
should-drive that it of-the-Magnesian the-streams stone.

VI.35 · THINGS THAT BOND ONLY WITH CERTAIN THINGS

Many things bond only with certain others: rocks with lime, wood with bull's glue, wine with water while heavy pitch and light oil will not, purple dye with wool so firmly that no sea could wash it out, gold with gold, and bronze with bronze through tin. Lucretius need not take a long road: such things join because their textures fit hollow to full, or hook to ring, and the magnet and iron are joined in this way.

nec tamen haec ita sunt aliarum rerum aliena,
nor yet these so are from-other things foreign,
ut mihi multa parum genere ex hoc suppeditentur,
that to-me many-things little kind from this be-supplied,
quae memorare queam inter se simul uniter apta.
which to-mention I-could among themselves at-once as-one fitted.
saxa vides primum sola colescere calce.
rocks you-see first alone to-cohere with-lime.
glutine materies taurino iungitur uno,
with-glue timber of-bulls is-joined alone,

ut vitio venae tabularum saepius hiscant
so-that by-a-flaw the-veins of-the-boards more-often gape
quam laxare queant compages taurea vincla.
than to-loosen could the-joinings bull's bonds.
vitigeni latices acuai fontibus audent
vine-born juices of-water with-springs dare
misceri, cum pix nequeat gravis et leve olivom.
to-be-mixed, when pitch cannot heavy and light olive-oil.
purpureusque colos conchyli iungitur uno
and-purple the-color of-the-shellfish is-joined one
corpore cum lanae, dirimi qui non queat usquam;
body with of-the-wool, to-be-parted which not can anywhere;
non si Neptuni fluctu renovare operam des,
not if of-Neptune with-the-wave to-renew pains you-give,
non, mare si totum velit eluere omnibus undis.
not, the-sea if whole should-wish to-wash-out with-all waves.
denique non auro res aurum copulat una,
finally does-not with-gold thing gold join one,
aerique aes plumbo fit uti iungatur ab albo?
and-to-bronze bronze lead does-it-come-about that be-joined by white?
cetera iam quam multa licet reperire! quid ergo?
the-other-things now how many one-may to-find! what then?
nec tibi tam longis opus est ambagibus usquam,
nor for-you so of-long need is roundabouts anywhere,
nec me tam multam hic operam consumere par est,
nor me so much here pains to-spend fitting is,
sed breviter paucis praestat comprendere multa.
but briefly in-few-words it-is-better to-comprise many-things.
quorum ita texturae ceciderunt mutua contra,
of-which so the-textures have-fallen mutually opposite,

ut cava conveniant plenis haec illius illa
that hollows match with-fulls these of-that those
huiusque inter se, iunctura haec optima constat.
and-of-this among themselves, the-joining this best stands.
est etiam, quasi ut anellis hamisque plicata
there-is also, as-if like by-rings and-hooks folded
inter se quaedam possint coplata teneri;
among themselves some can coupled to-be-held;
quod magis in lapide hoc fieri ferroque videtur.
which more in stone this to-happen and-iron seems.

VI.36 · THE CAUSES OF PLAGUES

Some seeds are vital and others bring disease and death, and when these rise by chance and disturb the sky, the air becomes diseased, coming from outside like clouds or rising from rotting earth. Travelers suffer in strange climates, since the skies of Britain, Egypt, Pontus, Gades, and the sun-blackened peoples differ, each with its diseases: elephantiasis by the Nile, sore feet in Attica, sore eyes in Achaea. A foreign air creeps in like a mist, corrupts ours, and settles on water, crops, and fodder or hangs in the air we breathe, and cattle sicken likewise; it matters not whether we go to it or it comes to us.

Nunc ratio quae sit morbis, aut unde repente
Now the-reason what be for-diseases, or whence suddenly
mortiferam possit cladem conflare coorta
death-bearing can destruction to-blow-up risen
morbida vis hominum generi pecudumque catervis
the-diseased force for-men's race and-for-cattle's flocks
expediam. primum multarum semina rerum
I-will-explain. first of-many seeds things

esse supra docui quae sint vitalia nobis,
to-be above I-have-taught which are vital to-us,
et contra quae sint morbo mortique necessest
and conversely which are for-disease and-death must-needs
multa volare: ea cum casu sunt forte coorta
many to-fly: these when by-chance have perchance risen
et perturbarunt caelum, fit morbidus aër.
and disturbed heaven, becomes diseased the-air.
atque ea vis omnis morborum pestilitasque
and that force all of-diseases and-pestilence
aut extrinsecus ut nubes nebulaeque superne
either from-outside like clouds and-mists from-above
per caelum veniunt, aut ipsa saepe coortae
through heaven come, or themselves often risen
de terra surgunt, ubi putorem umida nactast
from the-earth rise, when rot moist has-gained
intempestivis pluviisque et solibus icta.
by-unseasonable and-rains and suns struck.
nonne vides etiam caeli novitate et aquarum
do-you-not see also of-heaven by-the-strangeness and of-waters
temptari procul a patria quicumque domoque
to-be-tried far from fatherland whosoever and-home
adveniunt ideo quia longe discrepitant res?
arrive therefore because far differ things?
nam quid Brittannis caelum differre putamus,
for how of-the-Britons heaven to-differ do-we-think,
et quod in Aegyptost, qua mundi claudicat axis,
and what in Egypt-is, where of-the-world limps the-axis,
quidve quod in Pontost differre, et Gadibus atque
or-what that in Pontus-is to-differ, and from-Gades and

usque ad nigra virum percocto saecla colore?
right to the-black of-men with-thoroughly-baked generations color?
quae cum quattuor inter se diversa videmus
which when four among themselves diverse we-see
quattuor a ventis et caeli partibus esse,
four by winds and of-heaven regions to-be,
tum color et facies hominum distare videntur
then the-color and face of-men to-differ seem
largiter et morbi generatim saecla tenere.
widely and diseases by-kind generations to-hold.
est elephas morbus qui propter flumina Nili
there-is the-elephant disease which near the-streams of-the-Nile
gignitur Aegypto in media, neque praeterea usquam.
is-begotten Egypt in mid, nor besides anywhere.
Atthide temptantur gressus, oculique in Achaeis
in-Attica are-tried the-steps, and-the-eyes in Achaean
finibus. inde aliis alius locus est inimicus
bounds. thence for-other other place is hostile
partibus ac membris: varius concinnat id aër.
parts and limbs: varied fashions that the-air.
proinde ubi se caelum quod nobis forte alienum
therefore when itself a-heaven which to-us perchance foreign
commovet atque aër inimicus serpere coepit,
moves and air hostile to-creep has-begun,
ut nebula ac nubes paulatim repit et omne
as mist and cloud little-by-little creeps and all
qua graditur conturbat et immutare coactat,
where it-steps confounds and to-change compels,
fit quoque ut, in nostrum cum venit denique caelum,
it-comes-about also that, into our when it-comes finally heaven,

corrumpat reddatque sui simile atque alienum.
it-corrupts and-makes to-itself like and foreign.
haec igitur subito clades nova pestilitasque
this therefore suddenly destruction new and-pestilence
aut in aquas cadit aut fruges persidit in ipsas
either into the-waters falls or the-crops settles on themselves
aut alios hominum pastus pecudumque cibatus,
or other of-men pastures and-of-cattle fodder,
aut etiam suspensa manet vis aëre in ipso,
or also suspended remains the-force air in itself,
et, cum spirantes mixtas hinc ducimus auras,
and, when breathing mixed hence we-draw breezes,
illa quoque in corpus pariter sorbere necessest.
those also into the-body alike to-suck-in must-needs.
consimili ratione venit bubus quoque saepe
in-like fashion comes to-oxen also often
pestilitas et lanigeris balantibus aegror.
pestilence and to-wool-bearing bleating-ones sickness.
nec refert utrum nos in loca deveniamus
nor does-it-matter whether we into places come
nobis adversa et caeli mutemus amictum,
to-us adverse and of-heaven change the-mantle,
an caelum nobis natura ultro corruptum
or heaven to-us nature of-its-own-accord corrupted
deferat aut aliquid quo non consuevimus uti,
brings or something which not we-are-wont to-use,
quod nos adventu possit temptare recenti.
which us by-arrival can to-try fresh.

Such a deadly heat once laid waste the land of Cecrops and emptied its city. It came from deep in Egypt and fell on the people of Pandion. Their heads burned and their eyes reddened, their throats sweated black blood, the tongue oozed gore, and the breath stank of corpses; mind and body languished, and anguish and hiccups wore them out. The skin felt only lukewarm and red with sores, but within they burned to the bones, could bear nothing on their limbs but wind and cold, and some threw their naked bodies into cold rivers.

Haec ratio quondam morborum et mortifer aestus
This cause once of-diseases and death-bearing heat
finibus in Cecropis funestos reddidit agros
the-bounds in Cecropian deadly made the-fields
vastavitque vias, exhausit civibus urbem.
and-laid-waste the-roads, emptied of-citizens the-city.
nam penitus veniens Aegypti finibus ortus,
for from-deep-within coming of-Egypt from-the-bounds sprung,
aëra permensus multum camposque natantis,
air having-traversed much and-plains floating,
incubuit tandem populo Pandionis omni.
it-fell-upon at-length the-people of-Pandion all.
inde catervatim morbo mortique dabantur.
then in-troops to-disease and-to-death they-were-given.
principio caput incensum fervore gerebant
first the-head kindled with-heat they-bore
et duplicis oculos suffusa luce rubentes.
and double eyes with-suffused light reddening.
sudabant etiam fauces intrinsecus atrae
sweated also the-throats within black

sanguine, et ulceribus vocis via saepta coibat,
with-blood, and with-sores of-the-voice the-path fenced closed,
atque animi interpres manabat lingua cruore,
and of-the-mind the-interpreter oozed the-tongue with-gore,
debilitata malis, motu gravis, aspera tactu.
weakened by-ills, in-motion heavy, rough to-touch.
inde ubi per fauces pectus complerat et ipsum
then when through the-throat the-breast it-had-filled and the-very
morbida vis in cor maestum confluxerat aegris,
diseased force into the-heart sad had-flowed-together for-the-sick,
omnia tum vero vitai claustra labant.
all then indeed of-life the-bars tottered.
spiritus ore foras taetrum volvebat odorem,
the-breath from-the-mouth outward a-foul rolled smell,
rancida quo perolent proiecta cadavera ritu.
rancid in-which stink thrown-out corpses manner.
atque animi prorsum vires totius et omne
and of-mind outright the-forces of-the-whole and all
languebat corpus, leti iam limine in ipso.
languished the-body, of-death now the-threshold on very.
intolerabilibusque malis erat anxius angor
and-to-unbearable ills was anxious anguish
adsidue comes et gemitu commixta querella.
constantly companion and with-groaning mingled complaint.
singultusque frequens noctem per saepe diemque
and-hiccups frequent night through often and-day
corripere adsidue nervos et membra coactans
to-seize constantly the-sinews and limbs compelling
dissoluebat eos, defessos ante, fatigans.
loosened them, wearied before, tiring.

nec nimio cuiquam posses ardore tueri
nor with-too-great for-anyone could-you heat to-see
corporis in summo summam fervescere partem,
of-the-body on the-top the-surface to-glow the-part,
sed potius tepidum manibus proponere tactum
but rather lukewarm to-the-hands to-present the-touch
et simul ulceribus quasi inustis omne rubere
and at-the-same-time with-sores as-if burnt-in all to-redden
corpus, ut est per membra sacer cum diditur ignis.
the-body, as it-is through the-limbs the-holy when is-spread fire.
intima pars hominum vero flagrabat ad ossa,
the-inmost part of-men but blazed to the-bones,
flagrabat stomacho flamma ut fornacibus intus.
blazed in-the-stomach a-flame as in-furnaces within.
nil adeo posses cuiquam leve tenveque membris
nothing so-far you-could for-anyone light and-thin for-the-limbs
vertere in utilitatem, at ventum et frigora semper.
to-turn to use, but wind and cold always.
in fluvios partim gelidos ardentia morbo
into rivers some chill burning with-disease
membra dabant, nudum iacientes corpus in undas.
their-limbs gave, the-naked throwing body into the-waves.

Many plunged headlong into wells; thirst could not be quenched; medicine muttered in silent fear. The signs of death were a disordered mind, a frenzied face, ringing ears, rapid or rare breathing, sweat on the neck, salty spittle, twitching hands, creeping cold, a pinched nose, hollow eyes, cold hard skin, and a strained brow. They died on the eighth or ninth day, and any who escaped wasted and died later with foul sores and black flux, or bled from the nose.

multi praecipites lymphis putealibus alte
many headlong into-the-waters of-wells from-on-high
inciderunt, ipso venientes ore patente:
fell, with-the-very coming mouth open:
insedabiliter sitis arida, corpora torrens,
unquenchably thirst dry, their-bodies parching,
aequabat multum parvis umoribus imbrem.
made-equal much with-small drinks the-rain.
nec requies erat ulla mali: defessa iacebant
nor rest was any of-the-evil: wearied lay
corpora. mussabat tacito medicina timore,
the-bodies. muttered with-silent medicine fear,
quippe patentia cum totiens ac nuntia mortis
for open when so-often and messengers of-death
lumina versarent oculorum expertia somno.
the-lights they-rolled of-the-eyes bereft of-sleep.
multaque praeterea mortis tum signa dabantur:
and-many besides of-death then signs were-given:
perturbata animi mens in maerore metuque,
disturbed of-mind mind [intellect] in grief and-fear,
triste supercilium, furiosus voltus et acer,
gloomy the-brow, frenzied the-face and fierce,

sollicitae porro plenaeque sonoribus aures,
troubled further and-full of-noises the-ears,
creber spiritus aut ingens raroque coortus,
frequent the-breath or huge and-rarely risen,
sudorisque madens per collum splendidus umor,
and-of-sweat dripping over the-neck shining the-moisture,
tenvia sputa minuta, croci contacta colore
thin spittle minute, of-saffron tinged with-color
salsaque, per fauces rauca vix edita tussi.
and-salt, through the-throat hoarse scarcely brought-up by-cough.
in manibus vero nervi trahere et tremere artus
in the-hands but the-sinews to-twitch and to-tremble the-frame
a pedibusque minutatim succedere frigus
from and-the-feet little-by-little to-creep-up cold
non dubitabat: item ad supremum denique tempus
not it-besitated: likewise at the-last finally time
conpressae nares, nasi primoris acumen
pinched the-nostrils, of-the-nose of-the-front the-tip
tenve, cavati oculi, cava tempora, frigida pellis
thin, hollowed the-eyes, hollow the-temples, cold the-skin
duraque, inhorrescens rictum, frons tenta tumebat.
and-hard, bristling in-the-gape, the-brow strained swelled.
nec nimio rigida post artus morte iacebant.
nor by-much stiff afterward the-limbs in-death lay.
octavoque fere candenti lumine solis
and-on-the-eighth nearly shining light of-the-sun
aut etiam nona reddebant lampade vitam.
or also on-the-ninth they-gave-up lamp life.
quorum siquis, ut est, vitarat funera leti,
of-whom if-any, as it-is, had-escaped the-funerals of-death,

ulceribus taetris et nigra proluvie alvi
with-sores foul and with-black flux of-the-bowel
posterius tamen hunc tabes letumque manebat,
later yet him wasting and-death awaited,
aut etiam multus capitis cum saepe dolore
or also much of-the-head with often pain
corruptus sanguis expletis naribus ibat:
corrupt blood with-filled nostrils went:
hac hominis totae vires corpusque fluebat.
here of-the-man the-whole strength and-body flowed.

VI.39 · SURVIVORS AND UNBURIED DEAD

Even in those who escaped the bloody flux the disease passed into the sinews, limbs, and genitals, and some, so sharp was their fear of death, lived on gelded by the knife, without hands or feet, or blind; some forgot everything, even themselves. Corpses lay unburied on one another, yet birds and beasts fled the stench or died after tasting it, and the faithful dogs breathed out their lives in the streets. There was no common remedy, since what helped one killed another.

profluvium porro qui taetri sanguinis acre
the-flux further who of-foul blood sharp
exierat, tamen in nervos huic morbus et artus
had-gone-out, yet into the-sinews for-him the-disease and the-frame
ibat et in partis genitalis corporis ipsas.
went and into the-parts genital of-the-body themselves.
et graviter partim metuentes limina leti
and heavily some fearing the-threshold of-death
vivebant ferro privati parte virili,
lived with-the-knife deprived of-the-part manly,

et manibus sine nonnulli pedibusque manebant
and of-hands without some and-of-feet remained
in vita tamen, et perdebant lumina partim:
in life yet, and lost their-eyes some:
usque adeo mortis metus his incesserat acer.
right so-far of-death the-fear on-these had-come sharp.
atque etiam quosdam cepere oblivia rerum
and also some seized forgetfulness of-things
cunctarum, neque se possent cognoscere ut ipsi.
of-all, nor themselves could-they to-know as themselves.
multaque humi cum inhumata iacerent corpora supra
and-many on-the-ground when unburied lay bodies above
corporibus, tamen alituum genus atque ferarum
bodies, yet of-winged-things the-race and of-wild-beasts
aut procul absiliebat, ut acrem exiret odorem,
either far leapt-away, so-that the-sharp it-might-escape smell,
aut, ubi gustarat, languebat morte propinqua.
or, when it-had-tasted, languished with-death near.
nec tamen omnino temere illis solibus ulla
nor yet at-all lightly in-those days any
comparebat avis, nec tristia saecla ferarum
appeared bird, nor the-grim generations of-wild-beasts
exibant silvis: languebant pleraque morbo
came-out from-the-forests: languished most with-disease
et moriebantur. cum primis fida canum vis
and died. among the-first faithful of-dogs the-force
strata viis animam ponebat in omnibus aegre:
strewn the-roads its-soul laid-down in all painfully:
extorquebat enim vitam vis morbida membris.
wrenched-out for the-life the-force diseased from-the-limbs.

incomitata rapi cernebant funera vasta,
unaccompanied to-be-hurried they-saw funerals vast,
nec ratio remedi communis certa dabatur:
nor a-way of-remedy common sure was-given:
nam quod ali dederat vitalis aëris auras
for what to-one had-given vital of-the-air the-breezes
volvere in ore licere et caeli templa tueri,
to-roll in the-mouth to-be-able and of-heaven the-precincts to-behold,
hoc aliis erat exitio letumque parabat.
this to-others was for-destruction and-death prepared.

VI.40 · CONTAGION

Most pitiable of all, whoever caught the disease gave up hope and died as if condemned. The contagion passed from one to another as in flocks and herds, heaping funeral on funeral. Those who shunned their sick for fear of death were punished by a shameful death through neglect, while those who nursed them died of the contagion and the toil, so the best men died in this way. Mourners came back from burying their kin worn out with grief and took to their beds, and no one was spared disease, death, or grief.

Illud in his rebus miserandum magnopere unum
That in these things pitiable greatly one
aerumnabile erat, quod ubi se quisque videbat
distressing was, that when himself each saw
implicitum morbo, morti damnatus ut esset,
entangled in-disease, to-death condemned as-if he-were,
deficiens animo maesto cum corde iacebat,
failing in-mind sad with heart he-lay,
funera respectansque animam amittebat ibidem.
funerals and-looking-to his-soul he-lost on-the-spot.

quippe etenim nullo cessabant tempore apisci
for indeed at-no they-ceased time to-catch
ex aliis alios avidi contagia morbi,
from others others greedy the-contagions of-the-disease,
lanigeras tamquam pecudes et bucera saecla.
wool-bearing as-it-were flocks and horned breeds.
idque vel in primis cumulabat funere funus.
and-that even in the-first-place heaped on-funeral funeral.
nam quicumque suos fugitabant visere ad aegros,
for whosoever their-own shunned to-visit to the-sick,
vitai nimium cupidos mortisque timentis
of-life too greedy and-of-death fearing
poenibat paulo post turpi morte malaque,
punished a-little afterward with-shameful death and-evil,
desertos, opis expertis, incuria mactans.
deserted, of-help bereft, neglect slaughtering.
qui fuerant autem praesto, contagibus ibant
who had-been but at-hand, by-contagions they-went
atque labore, pudor quem tum cogebat obire
and by-toil, shame which then compelled to-undergo
blandaque lassorum vox mixta voce querellae.
and-the-coaxing of-the-weary voice mingled with-the-voice of-complaint.
optimus hoc leti genus ergo quisque subibat.
the-best this of-death kind therefore each underwent.

* * *

(lacuna)

inque aliis alium populum sepelire suorum
and-on others other people to-bury of-their-own
certantes: lacrimis lassi luctuque redibant:
striving: with-tears weary and-with-grief they-returned:

inde bonam partem in lectum maerore dabantur.
thence a-good part on the-bed with-grief were-given.
nec poterat quisquam reperiri, quem neque morbus
nor could anyone to-be-found, whom neither disease
nec mors nec luctus temptaret tempore tali.
nor death nor grief assailed at-time such.

VI.41 · THE DEAD IN THE CITY

Shepherds, herdsmen, and plowmen died in their huts, and children lay dead on their parents and parents on their children. The sick from the countryside crowded into the city and death heaped them up; many lay dead by the fountains, others perished half alive in rags in the streets, and the gods' temples were filled with corpses. Neither religion nor custom held: men buried their dead as they could and laid their kin on pyres built for others, often fighting bloodily rather than abandon the bodies.

Praeterea iam pastor et armentarius omnis
Besides now the-shepherd and herdsman every
et robustus item curvi moderator aratri
and sturdy likewise of-the-curved the-guider plow
languebat, penitusque casa contrusa iacebant
languished, and-from-deep-within in-the-hut thrust-together lay
corpora paupertate et morbo dedita morti.
bodies by-poverty and by-disease given-over to-death.
exanimis pueris super exanimata parentum
lifeless children above lifeless of-the-parents
corpora nonnumquam posses retroque videre.
bodies sometimes you-could and-back to-see.
matribus et patribus natos super edere vitam.
mothers and fathers children above to-give-up life.

nec minimam partem ex agris is maeror in urbem
nor least a-part from the-fields this grief into the-city
confluxit, languens quem contulit agricolarum
flowed-together, languishing which brought of-the-farmers
copia conveniens ex omni morbida parte.
the-multitude meeting from every diseased part.
omnia conplebant loca tectaque; quo magis aestus
all they-filled places and-houses; whereby the-more the-heat
* * *
(lacuna)
confertos ita acervatim mors accumulabat.
crowded so in-heaps death piled.
multa siti protracta viam per proque voluta
many by-thirst dragged the-road along and-forward rolled
corpora silanos ad aquarum strata iacebant
bodies the-fountains at of-waters strewn lay
interclusa anima nimia ab dulcedine aquarum,
cut-off the-breath too-great from sweetness of-waters,
multaque per populi passim loca prompta viasque
and-many through of-the-people everywhere places open and-roads
languida semanimo cum corpore membra videres
languid half-alive with body limbs you-would-see
horrida paedore et pannis cooperta perire,
bristling with-filth and with-rags covered to-perish,
corporis inluvie, pelli super ossibus una,
of-the-body with-dirt, skin upon bones alone,
ulceribus taetris prope iam sordique sepulta.
with-sores foul nearly already and-with-squalor buried.
omnia denique sancta deum delubra replerat
all finally the-holy of-the-gods shrines had-filled

corporibus mors exanimis, onerataque passim
with-bodies death lifeless, and-burdened everywhere
cuncta cadaveribus caelestum templa manebant,
all with-corpses of-the-heavenly-ones the-temples remained,
hospitibus loca quae complerant aedituentes.
with-guests the-places which had-filled the-temple-keepers.
nec iam religio divom nec numina magni
nor now the-religion of-the-gods nor the-powers much
pendebantur enim: praesens dolor exsuperabat.
were-weighed for: present grief prevailed.
nec mos ille sepulturae remanebat in urbe,
nor custom that of-burial remained in the-city,
quo pius hic populus semper consuerat humari:
by-which pious this people always had-been-wont to-be-buried:
perturbatus enim totus trepidabat, et unus
disturbed for whole it-trembled, and one
quisque suum pro re conpostum maestus humabat.
each his-own according-to means laid-out sad buried.
multaque res subita et paupertas horrida suasit:
and-many-things the-crisis sudden and poverty horrid urged:
namque suos consanguineos aliena rogorum
for their-own blood-kin on-another's of-pyres
insuper extructa ingenti clamore locabant,
on-top built with-great outcry they-placed,
subdebantque faces, multo cum sanguine saepe
and-put-under torches, much with bloodshed often
rixantes potius quam corpora desererentur.
brawling rather than the-bodies should-be-deserted.