

## THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

ac peregrina portantium; deus ille maximus potentissimusque ipse vehit omnia. Ne forma quidem et vires beatum te facere possunt; nihil horum patitur vetustatem.

- 11 Quærendum est, quod non fiat in dies eius, qui<sup>1</sup> non possit obstari. Quid hoc est? Animus, sed hic rectus, bonus, magnus. Quid aliud voces hunc quam deum in corpore humano hospitantem? Hic animus tam in equitem Romanum quam in libertinum, quam in servum potest cadere. Quid est enim eques Romanus aut libertinus aut servus? Nomina ex ambitione aut ex iniuria nata. Subsilire in caelum ex angulo licet. Exurge modo

et te quoque dignum  
Finge deo.

Finges autem non auro vel argento; non potest ex hac materia imago deo exprimi similis; cogita illos, cum propitii essent, fictiles fuisse. VALÆ.

### XXXII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Inquiro de te et ab omnibus sciscitor, qui ex ista regione veniunt, quid agas, ubi et cum quibus moreris. Verba dare non potes; tecum sum. Sic vive, tamquam quid facias auditurus sim, immo tamquam visurus. Quæris quid me maxime ex iis, quæ de te

<sup>1</sup> *quoi* Opsopoeus; *quo* pPb; *qui* L.

<sup>a</sup> For example, Time or Chance.

<sup>b</sup> Vergil, *Aeneid*, viii. 364 f.

<sup>c</sup> In the Golden Age, described in *Ep.* xc., when men were nearest to nature and "fresh from the gods."

## EPISTLES XXXI., XXXII.

will not help you ; for this God of whom I speak, though the highest and most powerful of beings, carries all things on his own shoulders. Neither can beauty or strength make you blessed ; for none of these qualities can withstand old age.

What we have to seek for, then, is that which does not each day pass more and more under the control of some power which cannot be withstood.<sup>a</sup> And what is this ? It is the soul,—but the soul that is upright, good, and great. What else could you call such a soul than a god dwelling as a guest in a human body ? A soul like this may descend into a Roman knight just as well as into a freedman's son or a slave. For what is a Roman knight, or a freedman's son, or a slave ? They are mere titles, born of ambition or of wrong. One may leap to heaven from the very slums. Only rise

And mould thyself to kinship with thy God.<sup>b</sup>

This moulding will not be done in gold or silver ; an image that is to be in the likeness of God cannot be fashioned of such materials ; remember that the gods, when they were kind unto men,<sup>c</sup> were moulded in clay. Farewell.

## XXXII. ON PROGRESS

I have been asking about you, and inquiring of everyone who comes from your part of the country, what you are doing, and where you are spending your time, and with whom. You cannot deceive me ; for I am with you. Live just as if I were sure to get news of your doings, nay, as if I were sure to behold them. And if you wonder what particularly pleases

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audio, delectet? Quod nihil audio, quod plerique ex his, quos interrogo, nesciunt quid agas.

2 Hoc est salutare, non conversari dissimilibus et diversa cupientibus. Habeo quidem fiduciam non posse te detorqueri mansurumque in proposito, etiam si sollicitantium turba circumeat. Quid ergo est? Non timeo, ne mutent te, timeo, ne inpediant. Multum autem nocet etiam qui moratur, utique in tanta brevitate vitae, quam breviorē inconstantia facimus aliud eius subinde atque aliud facientes initium. Diducimus illam in particulas ac lancinamus.

3 Propera ergo, Lucili carissime, et cogita quantum additurus celeritati fueris, si a tergo hostis instaret, si equitem adventare suspicareris ac fugientium premere vestigia. Fit hoc, premeris; accelera et evade, perduc te in tutum et subinde considera, quam pulchra res sit consummare vitam ante mortem, deinde expectare securum reliquam temporis sui partem, nihil sibi, in possessione beatae vitae positum, 4 quae beatior non fit, si longior. O quando illud videbis tempus, quo scies tempus ad te non pertinere, quo tranquillus placidusque eris et crastini neglegens ut<sup>1</sup> in summa tui satietate!

Vis scire, quid sit, quod faciat homines avidos futuri? Nemo sibi contigit. Optaverunt itaque

<sup>1</sup> *ut* added by Gertz.

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<sup>a</sup> The text seems to be corrupt. Hense thinks that *expectare* is to be supplied with *nihil sibi*—"To expect nothing for oneself"; but the use of the verb in two meanings would be harsh. The thought seems to be "asking for no added years"; and one suspects the loss of a word like *adrogantem* before *nihil*.

## EPISTLE XXXII.

me that I hear concerning you, it is that I hear nothing, that most of those whom I ask do not know what you are doing.

This is sound practice,—to refrain from associating with men of different stamp and different aims. And I am indeed confident that you cannot be warped, that you will stick to your purpose, even though the crowd may surround and seek to distract you. What, then, is on my mind? I am not afraid lest they work a change in you; but I am afraid lest they may hinder your progress. And much harm is done even by one who holds you back, especially since life is so short; and we make it still shorter by our unsteadiness, by making ever fresh beginnings at life, now one and immediately another. We break up life into little bits, and fritter it away. Hasten ahead, then, dearest Lucilius, and reflect how greatly you would quicken your speed if an enemy were at your back, or if you suspected the cavalry were approaching and pressing hard upon your steps as you fled. It is true; the enemy is indeed pressing upon you; you should therefore increase your speed and escape away and reach a safe position, remembering continually what a noble thing it is to round out your life before death comes, and then await in peace the remaining portion of your time, claiming<sup>a</sup> nothing for yourself, since you are in possession of the happy life; for such a life is not made happier for being longer. O when shall you see the time when you shall know that time means nothing to you, when you shall be peaceful and calm, careless of the morrow, because you are enjoying your life to the full?

Would you know what makes men greedy for the future? It is because no one has yet found himself.

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tibi alia parentes tui; sed ego contra omnium tibi eorum contemptum opto, quorum illi copiam. Vota illorum multos compilant, ut te locupletent. Quicquid 5 ad te transferunt, alicui detrahendum est. Opto tibi tui facultatem, ut vagis cogitationibus agitata mens tandem resistat et certa sit, ut placeat sibi et intellectis veris<sup>1</sup> bonis, quae, simul intellecta sunt, possidentur, aetatis adiectione non egeat. Ille demum necessitates supergressus est et exauctoratus ac liber, qui vivit vita peracta. VALE.

### XXXIII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Desideras his quoque epistulis sicut prioribus adscribi aliquas voces nostrorum procerum. Non fuerunt circa flosculos occupati; totus contextus illorum virilis est. Inaequalitatem scias esse, ubi quae eminent, notabilia sunt. Non est admirationi una arbor, ubi in eandem altitudinem tota silva sur-  
2 rexit. Eiusmodi vocibus referta sunt carmina, refertae historiae. Itaque nolo illas Epicuri existimes esse; publicae sunt et maxime nostrae. Sed in<sup>2</sup> illo magis

<sup>1</sup> *veris* Erasmus; *verbis* MSS.

<sup>2</sup> *in* added by Erasmus.

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<sup>a</sup> *i. e.*, Stoic as well as Epicurean.

## EPISTLES XXXII., XXXIII.

Your parents, to be sure, asked other blessings for you ; but I myself pray rather that you may despise all those things which your parents wished for you in abundance. Their prayers plunder many another person, simply that you may be enriched. Whatever they make over to you must be removed from someone else. I pray that you may get such control over yourself that your mind, now shaken by wandering thoughts, may at last come to rest and be steadfast, that it may be content with itself and, having attained an understanding of what things are truly good,—and they are in our possession as soon as we have this knowledge,—that it may have no need of added years. He has at length passed beyond all necessities,—he has won his honourable discharge and is free,—who still lives after his life has been completed. Farewell.

### XXXIII. ON THE FUTILITY OF LEARNING MAXIMS

You wish me to close these letters also, as I closed my former letters, with certain utterances taken from the chiefs of our school. But they did not interest themselves in choice extracts ; the whole texture of their work is full of strength. There is unevenness, you know, when some objects rise conspicuous above others. A single tree is not remarkable if the whole forest rises to the same height. Poetry is crammed with utterances of this sort, and so is history. For this reason I would not have you think that these utterances belong to Epicurus : they are common property and are emphatically our own.<sup>a</sup>

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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