

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

15 Differam hoc in praesentia; desiderat enim propriam et longam executionem, quemadmodum populo disserendum, quid sibi apud populum permittendum sit, quid populo apud se. Damnum quidem fecisse philosophiam non erit dubium, postquam prostituta est. Sed potest in penetralibus suis ostendi, si modo non institorem, sed antistitem nancata est. VALE.

LIII.

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

1 Quid non potest mihi persuaderi, cui persuasum est ut navigarem? Solvi mari languido. Erat sine dubio caelum grave sordidis nubibus, quae fere aut in aquam aut in ventum resolvuntur. Sed putavi tam pauca milia a Parthenope tua usque Puteolos subripi posse, quamvis dubio et inpendente caelo. Itaque quo celerius evaderem, protinus per altum ad
2 Nesida derexi praecisurus omnes sinus. Cum iam eo processissem, ut mea nihil interesset, utrum irem an redirem, primum aequalitas illa, quae me corruerat, periit. Nondum erat tempestas, sed iam inclinatio maris ac subinde crebrior fluctus. Coepi gubernatorem rogare, ut me in aliquo litore exponeret. Aiebat ille aspera esse et inportuosa nec quicquam se aequè in
3 tempestate timere quam terram. Peius autem vexabar,

^a The poetical name for Naples; perhaps it was once a town near by which gave a sort of romantic second title to the larger city. Professor Summers thinks that this poetical name, together with *tua*, indicates a reference to a passage from the verse of Lucilius. Perhaps, however, *tua* means nothing more than "the place which you love so well," being in the neighbourhood of Pompeii, the birthplace of Lucilius.

^b An islet near the mouth of the bay wherein Baiae was situated. Puteoli was on the opposite side of the bay from Baiae.

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I shall postpone this topic for the present; it demands a long and special investigation, to show how the public should be addressed, what indulgences should be allowed to a speaker on a public occasion, and what should be allowed to the crowd itself in the presence of the speaker. There can be no doubt that philosophy has suffered a loss, now that she has exposed her charms for sale. But she can still be viewed in her sanctuary, if her exhibitor is a priest and not a pedlar. Farewell.

LIII. ON THE FAULTS OF THE SPIRIT

You can persuade me into almost anything now, for I was recently persuaded to travel by water. We cast off when the sea was lazily smooth; the sky, to be sure, was heavy with nasty clouds, such as usually break into rain or squalls. Still, I thought that the few miles between Puteoli and your dear Parthenope^a might be run off in quick time, despite the uncertain and lowering sky. So, in order to get away more quickly, I made straight out to sea for Nesis,^b with the purpose of cutting across all the inlets. But when we were so far out that it made little difference to me whether I returned or kept on, the calm weather, which had enticed me, came to naught. The storm had not yet begun, but the ground-swell was on, and the waves kept steadily coming faster. I began to ask the pilot to put me ashore somewhere; he replied that the coast was rough and a bad place to land, and that in a storm he feared a lee shore more than anything else. But

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quam ut mihi periculum succurreret. Nausia enim me segnis haec et sine exitu torquebat, quae bilem movet nec effundit. Institi itaque gubernatori et illum, vellet nollet, coegi, peteret litus. Cuius ut viciniam attigimus, non exspecto, ut quicquam ex praeceptis Vergilii fiat,

Obvertunt pelago proras

aut

Ancora de prora iacitur ,

- memor artificii mei vetus frigidae cultor mitto me in mare, quomodo psychrolutam decet, gausapatus.
- 4 Quae putas me passum, dum per aspera erepo, dum viam quaero, dum facio? Intellexi non inmerito nautis terram timeri. Incredibilia sunt, quae tulerim, cum me ferre non possem¹; illud scito, Vlixem non fuisse tam irato mari natum, ut ubique naufragia faceret; nausiator erat. Et ego quocumque navigare debuero, vicensimo anno perveniam.
- 5 Ut primum stomachum, quem scis non cum mari nausiam effugere, collegi, ut corpus unctione recreavi, hoc coepi mecum cogitare, quanta nos vitiorum nostrorum sequeretur oblivio, etiam corporalium, quae subinde admonent sui, nedum illorum, quae eo
- 6 magis latent, quo maiora sunt. Levis aliquem motiuncula decipit; sed cum crevit et vera febris exarsit,

¹ *possem* Erasmus; *possim* MSS.

^a *Aeneid*, vi. 3. This was the usual method of mooring a ship in ancient times.

^b *Aeneid*, iii. 277.

^c Compare *Ep.* lxxxiii. 5.

^d Ulysses took ten years on his journey, because of sea-sickness; Seneca will need twice as many.

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I was suffering too grievously to think of the danger, since a sluggish seasickness which brought no relief was racking me, the sort that upsets the liver without clearing it. Therefore I laid down the law to my pilot, forcing him to make for the shore, willy-nilly. When we drew near, I did not wait for things to be done in accordance with Vergil's orders, until

Prow faced seawards^a

or

Anchor plunged from bow ;^b

I remembered my profession^c as a veteran devotee of cold water, and, clad as I was in my cloak, let myself down into the sea, just as a cold-water bather should. What do you think my feelings were, scrambling over the rocks, searching out the path, or making one for myself? I understood that sailors have good reason to fear the land. It is hard to believe what I endured when I could not endure myself; you may be sure that the reason why Ulysses was shipwrecked on every possible occasion was not so much because the sea-god was angry with him from his birth; he was simply subject to seasickness. And in the future I also, if I must go anywhere by sea, shall only reach my destination in the twentieth year.^d

When I finally calmed my stomach (for you know that one does not escape seasickness by escaping from the sea) and refreshed my body with a rub-down, I began to reflect how completely we forget or ignore our failings, even those that affect the body, which are continually reminding us of their existence, —not to mention those which are more serious in proportion as they are more hidden. A slight ague deceives us; but when it has increased and a genuine fever has begun to burn, it forces even a hardy man,

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etiam duro et perpessicio confessionem excipit. Pedes dolent, articuli punctiunculas sentiunt; adhuc dissimulamus et aut talum extorsisse dicimus nos aut in exercitatione aliqua laborasse. Dubio et incipiente morbo quaeritur nomen, qui ubi etiam talaria¹ coepit intendere et utrosque dextros² pedes fecit, necesse 7 est podagram fateri. Contra evenit in his morbis, quibus adficiuntur animi; quo quis peius se habet, minus sentit. Non est quod mireris, Lucili carissime. Nam qui leviter dormit, et species secundum quietem capit et aliquando dormire se dormiens cogitat; gravis sopor etiam somnia extinguit animumque altius 8 mergit, quam ut in ullo intellectu sui sit.³ Quare vitia sua nemo confitetur? Quia etiam nunc in illis est; somnium narrare vigilantis est, et vitia sua confiteri sanitatis indicium est.

Expergiscamur ergo, ut errores nostros coarguere possimus. Sola autem nos philosophia excitabit, sola somnum excutiet gravem. Illi te totum dedica. Dignus illa es, illa digna te est; ite in complexum alter alterius. Omnibus aliis rebus te nega, fortiter, aperte. Non est quod precario philosopheris.

9 Si aeger esses, curam intermisisses rei familiaris et forensia tibi negotia excidissent nec quemquam tanti putares, cui advocatus in remissione descenderes. Toto animo id ageres, ut quam primum morbo libera-

¹ *etiam talaria* Hense; *ut talaria* MSS.

² Hense suspects *dextros*, for which Toup conjectured *distortos*, comparing *Ep.* lxxvii. 3.

³ *ut in ullo intellectu sui sit* Schultess; *ut in ullo intellectus sui est* L; *ut in nullo intellectu sui est* V; *uti nullo intellectu sui est* pPb.

^a That is, they are so swollen that left and right look alike.

^b Literally "on sufferance," whenever other matters permit. Cf. Pliny, *Ep.* vii. 30 *precario studeo*,—"subject to interruption from others."

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who can endure much suffering, to admit that he is ill. There is pain in the foot, and a tingling sensation in the joints; but we still hide the complaint and announce that we have sprained a joint, or else are tired from over-exercise. Then the ailment, uncertain at first, must be given a name; and when it begins to swell the ankles also, and has made both our feet "right" feet,^a we are bound to confess that we have the gout. The opposite holds true of diseases of the soul; the worse one is, the less one perceives it. You need not be surprised, my beloved Lucilius. For he whose sleep is light pursues visions during slumber, and sometimes, though asleep, is conscious that he is asleep; but sound slumber annihilates our very dreams and sinks the spirit down so deep that it has no perception of self. Why will no man confess his faults? Because he is still in their grasp; only he who is awake can recount his dream, and similarly a confession of sin is a proof of sound mind.

Let us, therefore, rouse ourselves, that we may be able to correct our mistakes. Philosophy, however, is the only power that can stir us, the only power that can shake off our deep slumber. Devote yourself wholly to philosophy. You are worthy of her; she is worthy of you; greet one another with a loving embrace. Say farewell to all other interests with courage and frankness. Do not study philosophy merely during your spare time.^b

If you were ill, you would stop caring for your personal concerns, and forget your business duties; you would not think highly enough of any client to take active charge of his case during a slight abatement of your sufferings. You would try your hardest to be rid of the illness as soon as possible. What,

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reris Quid ergo? Non et nunc idem facies? Omnia impedimenta dimitte et vaca bonae menti; nemo ad illam pervenit occupatus. Exercet philosophia regnum suum; dat tempus, non accipit. Non est res subsiciva, ordinaria est; domina est, adesse iubet.¹

10 Alexander cuidam civitati partem agrorum et dimidium rerum omnium promittenti "Eo," inquit, "proposito in Asiam veni, ut non id acciperem, quod dedissetis, sed ut id haberetis, quod reliquissem." Idem philosophia rebus omnibus, "Non sum hoc tempus acceptura, quod vobis superfuerit, sed id vos habebitis, quod ipsa reiecero."²

11 Totam huc converte mentem, huic adside, hanc cole; ingens intervallum inter te et ceteros fiet. Omnes mortales multo antecedes, non multo te di antecedent. Quaeris, quid inter te et illos inter futurum sit? Diutius erunt. At mehercules magni artificis est cluisse totum in exiguo. Tantum sapienti sua, quantum deo omnis aetas patet. Est aliquid, quo sapiens antecedit deum: ille naturae

12 beneficio non timet, suo sapiens. Ecce res magna, habere inbecillitatem hominis, securitatem dei. Incredibilis philosophiae vis est ad omnem fortuitam vim retundendam. Nullum telum in corpore eius sedet; munita est, solida. Quaedam defetigat et

¹ *adesse iubet* Haase; *adest et iubet* MSS.

² *reiecero* Lipsius; *re aegero* p; *re egero* L; *reegero* PV. Haase conj. *erogaro*, Mueck *relegaro*.

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