

*Outline: Lucretius' The Way Things Are*  
*Humanities 110, Reed College*

**Book 1      Introduction: Basic Principles**

- A. Invocation to Venus and appeal to Memmius (1-145)
- B. Two basic postulates of atomism:  
    infinite atoms moving in infinite space or void (146-447)
- C. Everything else (time, historical events) is a property of accident of atoms and void (448-82)
- D. The characteristics of atoms (483-634)
- E. Refutation of rival theories (635-920)
- F. Infinity of matter and Space (951-1117)

**Book 2      Different Aspects of the Atomic View of the Self**

- A. The good life (1-61)
- B. The varieties of atomic motion (62-215)
- C. The atomic swerve and its consequences (216-93)
- D. The Conservation of Energy (194-332)
- E. The variety of atomic shapes and the effects of these on sensation (333-729)
- F. Atoms have no secondary qualities such as color, temperature, etc (730-1047)
- G. Worlds are infinite and all mechanically formed like our own (1048-1174)

**Book 3      Nature of the Human Soul**

- A. Epicurus as therapist of the soul (1-30)
- B. The fear of Hell as the Root cause of human vices (31-93)
- C. Material nature of mind and soul--their interrelations and their relation to the body (94-416)
- D. Various arguments for the mortality of the Soul (417-829)
- E. "Death is nothing to us" hell is man's present life (830-1094)

**Book 4      Atomic Images**

**Book 5      Mortality and the Origin of the World**

**Book 6      Meteorology**

- A. Natural Disasters
- B. Disease: the Plague at Athens

**Overview:**

Leads us from bright optimism (pastoral invocation to Venus) to pessimism (plague at Athens) or helps us become Epicureans? (Understand the plague in naturalistic terms and how to deal with it.)