

A reading of Lucretius' De rerum natura

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Lucretius's philosophical epic *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things) is a lengthy didactic and narrative celebration of the universe and, in particular, the world of nature and creation in which humanity finds its abode. This earliest surviving full scale epic poem from ancient Rome was of immense influence and significance to the development of the Latin epic tradition, and continues to challenge and haunt its readers to the present day. *A Reading of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura* offers a comprehensive commentary on this great work of Roman poetry and philosophy. Lee Fratantuono reveals Lucretius to be a poet with deep and abiding interest in the nature of the Roman identity as the children of both Venus (through Aeneas) and Mars (through Romulus); the consequences (both positive and negative) of descent from the immortal powers of love and war are explored in vivid epic narrative, as the poet progresses from his invocation to the mother of the children of Aeneas through to the burning funeral pyres of the plague at Athens. Lucretius' epic offers the possibility of serenity and peaceful reflection on the mysteries of the nature of the world, even as it shatters any hope of immortality through its bleak vision of post mortem oblivion. And in the process of defining what it means both to be human and Roman, Lucretius offers a horrifying vision of the perils of excessive devotion both to the gods and our fellow men, a commentary on the nature of pietas that would serve as a warning for Virgil in his later depiction of the Trojan Aeneas.

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Natura - Lucretius: Selections from the De Rerum Natura. By: Titus This book draws on the latest research into the text and interpretation of Lucretius. It is aimed at the A Reading of Lucretius' "De Rerum Natura." By Lee - Lucretius

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