

Cae Emond

It's All Greek to Me

Epicurus really spoke to me. I've learned briefly about Socratic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Existentialist philosophy, but none of them really struck me emotionally, except Epicurus. Epicurus' philosophy is so much of what I want, what I've already done, and I am so very glad that there's a philosophy that understands at least some of my thoughts and feelings towards life. I've gone through the two stages that Epicurus says all men go through: the time when I "shun death as the greatest of all evils, and at another time choose it as a respite from the evils in life."

When I was young, I hated death. I hated the idea of death. I hated seeing my cat die, I hated the funerals of my great-grandparents, and I was utterly terrified of dying. There were nights where I couldn't *sleep* because I was so afraid of dying before I woke up again. It wasn't even fear of monsters or serial killers, it was fear of dying peacefully while I slept. That fear extended into all parts of my life, holding me back from taking chances or putting myself in any kind of danger. The fear overwhelmed me and made my life hell.

Speaking of my life being hell, I've also experienced seeing death as the end to my troubles. My last two years of high school were incredibly stressful, to the point where I was thinking about suicide almost every day. I managed to push through it in Junior year, and make it to the summer, but I snapped early on in my senior year. I was the stage manager and assistant director for our school's production of "In the Heights." Though I had worked on shows before, this one was far bigger and required far more work than I had dealt with before. Add to that missing an entire week of rehearsal, trying to get people to respect the decisions I had made, and balancing a full schedule with AP classes and Pre-Calculus. I was at school from eight to six thirty or later. All of that stress and the responsibility I felt built up, until finally I couldn't stand it. Opening night of the show, I tried to kill myself. Obviously, I was unsuccessful, but I still tried. Do you know what it's like, to know you're going to be dead by tomorrow? Do you know what it's like to *welcome* your death? Let that sink in for a moment. I killed myself. It wasn't an accident, it wasn't someone else's fault, it was all me. I was giddy with relief, so happy that it was going to *end*. I don't speak "only in jest" when I talk about suicide, because I have honestly and truly, with all my heart, mind, and soul, felt that it would be better for me to die. And once I woke up the next morning? I still thought it would be better. But, waking up that morning put the first crack in that belief. Now, having lived through my death, I can see that I should not seek it. If it comes, then I will go with a smile, but I will not make it come. Not again.

I have lived through fear of death, and I have lived through the welcoming of death. Now, I simply live. I live, and I experience, and I have fun. Because I have no idea when my life will end, so I want my time to be that "which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest."