

I

I

Ἴπποι ταί με φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ' ἐπί θυμὸς ἰκάνοι,
πέμπων, ἐπεὶ μ' ἐς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσαι
δαίμονος, ἣ κατὰ πάντ' ἄστη φέρει εἰδότα φῶτα·
τῆ φερόμην· τῆ γὰρ με πολύφραστοι φέρον Ἴπποι

The steeds that bear me carried me as far as ever my heart
Desired, since they brought me and set me on the renowned
Way of the goddess, who with her own hands conducts the man
who knows through all things. On what way was I borne

[5] ἄρμα τιταίνουσαι, κοῦραι δ' ὁδὸν ἠγεμόνευον.
Ἄξων δ' ἐν χνοίησιν ἴει σύριγγος ἀυτήν
αἰθόμενος - δοιοῖς γὰρ ἐπείγετο δινωτοῖσιν
κύκλοις ἀμφοτέρωθεν -, ὅτε σπερχοῖατο πέμπειν
Ἥλιάδες κοῦραι, προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός,

5 along; for on it did the wise steeds carry me, drawing my car,
and maidens showed the way. And the axle, glowing in the socket
- for it was urged round by the whirling wheels at each
end - gave forth a sound as of a pipe, when the daughters of the
Sun, hasting to convey me into the light, threw back their veils

[10] εἰς φάος, ὡσάμεναι κράτων ἄπο χερσὶ καλύπτρας.
Ἐνθα πύλαι Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἡματός εἰσι κελεύθων,
καὶ σφας ὑπέρθυρον ἀμφὶς ἔχει καὶ λάινος οὐδός·
αὐταὶ δ' αἰθέριαι πλῆνται μέγαλοισι θυρέτροις·
τῶν δὲ Δίκη πολυποῖνος ἔχει κληίδας ἀμοιβούς.

10 from off their faces and left the abode of Night.
There are the gates of the ways of Night and Day, fitted
above with a lintel and below with a threshold of stone. They
themselves, high in the air, are closed by mighty doors, and
Avenging Justice keeps the keys that open them. Her did

[15] Τὴν δὴ παρφάμεναι κοῦραι μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν
πείσαν ἐπιφράδέως, ὡς σφιν βαλανωτὸν ὀχῆα
ἀπτερέως ὥσειε πυλέων ἄπο· ταὶ δὲ θυρέτρων
χάσμι' ἀχανὲς ποίησαν ἀναπτάμεναι πολυχάλκους
ἄξονας ἐν σύριγγιν ἀμοιβαδὸν εἰλίξασαι

15 the maidens entreat with gentle words and skilfully
persuade to unfasten without demur the bolted bars from the
gates. Then, when the doors were thrown back,
they disclosed a wide opening, when their brazen
hinges swung backwards in the

[20] γόμφοις καὶ περόνησιν ἀρηρότε· τῆ ῥά δι' αὐτέων
ἰθὺς ἔχον κοῦραι κατ' ἀμαξιτὸν ἄρμα καὶ Ἴππους.
Καί με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπέδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρὶ
δεξιτερῆν ἔλεν, ὦδε δ' ἔτος φάτο καὶ με προσηύδα·
ὦ κοῦρ' ἀθανάτοισι συνάρορος ἠνιόχοισιν,

20 sockets fastened with rivets and nails. Straight through them,
on the broad way, did the maidens guide the horses and the car,
and the goddess greeted me kindly, and took my right hand
in hers, and spake to me these words: -
Welcome, noble youth, that comest to my abode on the car

[25] Ἴπποις ταί σε φέρουσιν ἰκάνων ἡμέτερον δῶ,
χαῖρ', ἐπεὶ οὐτὶ σε μοῖρα κακῆ προὔπεμπε νέεσθαι
τήνδ' ὁδὸν - ἣ γὰρ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν·,
ἀλλὰ θέμις τε δίκη τε. Χρῆ δὲ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι
ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμεῖς ἦτορ

25 that bears thee tended by immortal charioteers! It is no ill
chance, but justice and right that has sent thee forth to travel
on this way. Far, indeed, does it lie from the beaten track of
men! Meet it is that thou shouldst learn all things, as well
the unshaken heart of persuasive truth, as the opinions of

[30] ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἀληθῆς.
Ἄλλ' ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεται, ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα
χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντός πάντα περῶντα.

30 mortals in which is no true belief at all. Yet none the less
shalt thou learn of these things also, since thou must judge
approvedly of the things that seem to men as thou goest
through all things in thy journey.

II

II

Εἰ δ' ἄγ' ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας,
αἵπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι·
ἣ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,
Πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος - Ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ -

Come now, I will tell thee - and do thou hearken to my
saying and carry it away - the only two ways of search that
can be thought of. The first, namely, that *It is*, and that it is
impossible for anything not to be, is the way of conviction,

[5] ἢ δ' ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς χρεῶν ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,
τὴν δὴ τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπὸν·
οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοιῖς τό γε μὴ ἔόν - οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν -
οὔτε φράσαις·

III

... τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι.

IV

Λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόῳ παρεόντα βεβαίως·
οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἔόν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι
οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντη πάντως κατὰ κόσμον
οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

V

Εὐνὸν δέ μοι ἔστιν, ὀππόθεν ἄρξωμαι· τόθι γὰρ πάλιν
ἴξομαι αὐθις.

VI

Χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἔόν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι,
μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν· τά σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.
Πρώτης γὰρ σ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ ταύτης διζήσιος <εἰργω>,
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῆς, ἣν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδέν

[5] πλάττονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμηχανίη γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν
στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται.
κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φῦλα,
οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτόν νενόμισται
κοῦ ταῦτόν, πάντων δὲ παλίντροπὸς ἔστι κέλευθος.

VII

Οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῆ εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα·
ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἰργε νόημα·
μηδέ σ' ἔθος πολύπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθω,
νωμᾶν ἄσκοπον ὄμμα καὶ ἠχήεσαν ἀκομήν

[5] καὶ γλῶσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηρον ἔλεγχον
ἔξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα.

VIII

Μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο
λείπεται ὥς ἔστιν· ταύτη δ' ἐπὶ σήματ' ἔασι
πολλὰ μάλ', ὥς ἀγένητον ἔόν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἔστιν,
ἔστι γὰρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμές ἢ δ' ἀτέλεστον·

5 for truth is its companion. The other, namely, that *It is not*,
and that something must needs not be, - that, I tell thee, is a
wholly untrustworthy path. For you cannot know what is
not - that is impossible - nor utter it;

III

For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.

IV

5 upon which mortals knowing naught wander in two minds; for
hesitation guides the wandering thought in their breasts, so that
they are borne along stupefied like men deaf and blind.
Undiscerning crowds, in whose eyes the same thing and not the
same is and is not, and all things travel in opposite directions!

V

For this shall never be proved, that the things that are not
are; and do thou restrain thy thought from this way of inquiry.
Nor let habit force thee to cast a wandering eye upon this
devious track, or to turn thither thy resounding ear or thy

VI

5 tongue; but do thou judge the subtle refutation of their
discourse uttered by me.

VII

One path only is left for us to
speak of, namely, that *It is*. In it are very many tokens that
what is, is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete,
immovable and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for

VIII

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[5] οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν,
ἔν, συνεχές· τίνα γὰρ γένναν διζήσεται αὐτοῦ;
πῆ πόθεν αὐξηθὲν; οὔτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἑάσσω
φάσθαι σ' οὐδὲ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν
ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι. Τί δ' ἂν μιν καὶ χρέος ὦρσεν

[10] ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φῦν;
οὕτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεῶν ἔστιν ἢ οὐχί.
Οὐδὲ ποτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς
γίγνεσθαι τι παρ' αὐτό· τοῦ εἴνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι
οὔτ' ὄλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδησιν,

[15] ἀλλ' ἔχει ἢ δὲ κρίσις τούτων ἐν τῷδ' ἔστιν·
ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν· κέκριται δ' οὖν, ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη,
τὴν μὲν ἔαν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον - οὐ γὰρ ἀληθὴς
ἔστιν ὁδός - τὴν δ' ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι.
Πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοιτό ἐόν; πῶς δ' ἂν κε γένοιτο;

[20] εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ', οὐκ ἔστι, οὐδ' εἴ ποτε μέλλει
ἔσεσθαι.
Τῶς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος.
Οὐδὲ διαρετόν ἔστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἔστιν ὁμοῖον·
οὐδὲ τι τῆ μάλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι,
οὐδὲ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἔστιν ἐόντος.

[25] Τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἔστιν· ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει.
Αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν
ἔστιν ἀναρχον ἄπυστον, ἐπεὶ γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος
τῆλε μάλ' ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθῆς.
Ταυτόν τ' ἐν ταυτῷ τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτό τε κεῖται

[30] χούτως ἔμπεδον αὐθι μένει· κρατερῇ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη
πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἔεργει,
οὔνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὸν θέμις εἶναι·
ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδεές· μὴ ἐὸν δ' ἂν παντός ἐδεῖτο.
Ταυτόν δ' ἔστι νοεῖν τε καὶ οὔνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.

[35] Οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφατισμένον ἔστιν,
εὐρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδ' ἦν γὰρ <ἦ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται
ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν
οὔλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμεναι τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται,
ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ,

[40] γίγνεσθαι τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναι τε καὶ οὐχί,
καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διὰ τε χροῶ φανὸν ἀμείβειν.

5 now *it is*, all at once, a continuous one. For what kind of origin for it. will you look for? In what way and from what source could it have drawn its increase? I shall not let thee say nor think that it came from what is not; for it can neither be thought nor uttered that what is not is. And, if it came from

10 nothing, what need could have made it arise later rather than sooner? Therefore must it either be altogether or be not at all. Nor will the force of truth suffer aught to arise besides itself from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does not loose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass

15 away, but holds it fast.

" *Is it or is it not?* " Surely it is adjudged, as it needs must be, that we are to set aside the one way as unthinkable and nameless (for it is no true way), and that the other path is real and true. How, then, can what *is* be going to be in the future?

20 Or how could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is becoming extinguished and passing away not to be heard of. Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, and there is no more of it in one place than in another, to hinder it from holding together, nor less of it, but everything is full of what is.

25 Wherefore all holds together; for what is; is in contact with what is. Moreover, it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away. It is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself.

30 And thus it remaineth constant in its place; for hard necessity keeps it in the bonds of the limit that holds it fast on every side. Wherefore it is not permitted to what is to be infinite; for it is in need of nothing; while, if it were infinite, it would stand in need of everything. It is the same thing that can be thought and for the sake of which the thought exists;

35 for you cannot find thought without something that is, to which it is betrothed. And there is not, and never shall be, any time other, than that which is present, since fate has chained it so as to be whole and immovable. Wherefore all these things are but the names which mortals have given, believing them, to be true -

40 coming into being and passing away, being and not being, change of place and alteration of bright colour.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πείρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστὶ
πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκῳ,
μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντη· τὸ γὰρ οὔτε τι μείζον

[45] οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεόν ἐστι τῆ ἢ τῆ.
Οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἔδον ἔστι, τό κεν παύοι μιν ἰκνεῖσθαι
εἰς ὁμόν, οὔτ' ἔδον ἔστιν ὅπως εἴη κεν ἔντος
τῆ μᾶλλον τῆ δ' ἦσσαν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστὶν ἄσυλον·
οἱ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἴσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει.

[50] Ἐν τῷ σοι παύω πιστὸν λόγον ἠδὲ νόημα
ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης· δόξας δ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας
μάνθανε κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων.
Μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν·
τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἐστὶν - ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσὶν -

[55] τὰντία δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ' ἔθεντο
χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τῆ μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ,
ἠπιον ὄν, μέγ' ἐλαφρόν, ἐωυτῷ πάντοσε τωυτόν,
τῷ δ' ἑτέρῳ μὴ τωυτόν· ἀτὰρ κακείνο κατ' αὐτό
τὰντία νύκτ' ἀδαῆ, πυκινὸν δέμας ἐμβριθὲς τε.

[60] Τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον εἰκότα πάντα φατίζω,
ὡς οὐ μὴ ποτέ τις σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσση.

IX

Αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα φάος καὶ νύξ ὀνόμασται
καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρως δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσι τε καὶ τοῖς,
πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου
ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρῳ μέτα μηδέν.

X

Εἶση δ' αἰθερίαν τε φύσιν τὰ τ' ἐν αἰθέρι πάντα
σήματα καὶ καθαρὰς εὐαγέος ἠελίοιο
λαμπάδος ἔργ' αἰδηλα καὶ ὀππόθεν ἐξεγένοντο,
ἔργα τε κύκλωπος πεύση περίφοιτα σελήνης

[5] καὶ φύσιν, εἰδήσεις δὲ καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχοντα
ἔνθεν ἔφυ τε καὶ ὡς μιν ἄγουσ' ἐπέδησεν Ἀνάγκη
πεῖρατ' ἔχειν ἄστρων.

XI

πῶς γαῖα καὶ ἥλιος ἠδὲ σελήνη
αἰθήρ τε ξυνὸς γάλα τ' οὐράνιον καὶ ὄλυμπος

Where, then, it has its farthest boundary, it is complete on
every side, equally poised from the centre in every direction,
like the mass of a rounded sphere; for it cannot be greater or

45 smaller in one place than in another. For there is nothing
which is not that could keep it from reaching out equally, nor
is it possible that there should be more of what is in this place
and less in that, since it is all inviolable. For, since it is equal
in all directions, it is equally confined within limits.

50 Here shall I close my trustworthy speech and thought
about the truth. Henceforward learn the opinions of mortals,
giving ear to the deceptive ordering of my words.
Mortals have settled in their minds to speak of two forms,
one of which they should have left out, and that is where they go
astray from the truth.

55 They have assigned an opposite substance to each, and marks
distinct from one another. To the one they allot the fire of heaven,
light, thin, in every direction
the same as itself, but not the same as the other. The other is
opposite to it, dark night, a compact and heavy body.

60 Of these I tell thee the whole arrangement as it seems to men,
in order that no mortal may surpass thee in knowledge.

IX

Now that all things have been named light and night;
and the things which belong to the power of each have been
assigned to these things and to those, everything is full at once of
light and dark night,
both equal, since neither has ought to do with the other.

X

And thou shalt know the origin of all the things on high, and all
the signs in the sky, and the resplendent works of the
glowing sun's clear torch, and whence they arose. And thou
shalt learn likewise of the wandering deeds of the round-faced

5 moon, and of her origin. Thou shalt know, too, the heavens
that surround us, whence they arose, and how Necessity took
them and bound them to keep the limits of the stars . . .

XI

How the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the sky that is
common to all, and the Milky Way, and the outermost Olympos,

ἔσχατος ἡδ' ἄστρον θερμὸν μένος ὠρμήθησαν
γίγνεσθαι.

XII

Αἱ γὰρ στεινότεραι πλῆντο πυρὸς ἀκρήτιοι,
αἱ δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς νυκτός, μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἴεται αἴσα·
ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων δαίμων ἢ πάντα κυβερνᾷ·
πάντα γὰρ <ἦ> στυγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιος ἄρχει

[5] πέμπουσ' ἄρσενι θῆλυ μιγῆν τό τ' ἐναντίον αὐτίς
ἄρσεν θηλυτέρῳ.

XIII

Πρώτιστον μὲν Ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων...

XIV

Νυκτιφαῆς περὶ γαίαν ἀλώμενον ἀλλότριον φῶς...

XV

αἰεὶ παπταίνουσα πρὸς αὐγάς ἡελίοιο.

XVa

ὕδατόριζον εἶπειν τὴν γῆν

XVI

Ὡς γὰρ ἕκαστος ἔχει κρᾶσιν μελέων πολυπλάγκτων,
τὼς νόος ἀνθρώποισι παρίσταται· τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ
ἔστιν ὅπερ φρονέει μελέων φύσις ἀνθρώποισιν
καὶ πᾶσιν καὶ παντί· τὸ γὰρ πλέον ἐστὶ νόημα.

XVII

δεξιτεροῖσιν μὲν κούρους, λαιοῖσι δὲ κούρας...

XVIII

Femina virque simul Veneris cum germina miscent,
Venis informans diverso ex sanguine virtus
Temperiem servans bene condita corpora fingit.
Nam si virtutes permixto semine pugnent
Nec faciant unam permixto in corpore, dirae
Nascentem gemino vexabunt semine sexum.

and the burning might of the stars
arose.

XII

The narrower circles are filled with unmixed fire, and those
surrounding them with night, and in the midst of these rushes
their portion of fire. In the midst of these circles is the divinity
that directs the course of all things; for she rules over all painful
birth and all begetting,

5 driving the female to the embrace of the male, and the male to
that of the female.

XIII

First of all the gods she contrived Eros.

XIV

Shining by night with borrowed light, wandering round the earth.

XV

Always straining her eyes to the beams of the sun.

XVa

XVI

XVII

On the right boys; on the left girls.

XVIII

Οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καί νυν ἔασι
καὶ μετέπειτ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε πελευτήσουσι τραφέντα·
τοῖς δ' ὄνομ' ἄνθρωποι κατέθεντ' ἐπίσημον ἑκάστω.

Thus, according to men's opinions, did things comp into being,
and thus they are now. In time (they think) they will grow up and
pass away. To each of these things men have assigned a fixed
name.