

Classics Orations

Latin Oration

Seneca, *De Consolatione ad Helviam*, 11.8.5-6

Yixing Wang, Class of 2020

[5] Alacres itaque et erecti, quocumque res tulerit, intrepido gradu properemus, emetiamur quascumque terras. [...] Undecumque ex aequo ad caelum erigitur acies, paribus intervallis omnia divina ab omnibus humanis distant. [6] Proinde, dum oculi mei ab illo spectaculo, cuius insatiabiles sunt, non abducantur, dum mihi solem lunamque intueri liceat, dum ceteris inhaerere sideribus, dum ortus eorum occasusque et intervalla et causas investigare vel ocius meandi vel tardius, spectare tot per noctem stellas micantis et alias immobiles, alias non in magnum spatium exeuntis sed intra suum se circumagentis vestigium, quasdam subito erumpentis, quasdam igne fuso praestringentes aciem, quasi decidant, vel longo tractu cum luce multa praetervolantes, dum cum his sim et caelestibus, qua homini fas est, immiscear, dum animum ad cognatarum rerum conspectum tendentem in sublimi semper habeam — quantum refert mea, quid calcem?]

5] Therefore, eager and upright with undaunted step, let us hasten wherever circumstance carries us, let us traverse whatever lands. [...] No matter where the gaze is lifted from earth to heaven, the realms of the divine stand apart from those of humans at a constant distance. [6] Hence, so long as my eyes are not deprived of that spectacle with which they are never sated, so long as I may contemplate the sun and the moon, so long as I may ponder the other planets, so long as I may study their risings and settings, their periods, and the reasons for their quicker and slower passings, so long as I may behold the countless stars gleaming throughout the night — some at rest, others not entering into a vast orbit but circling around themselves within their own field; some suddenly shooting forth, others dazzling the eye with scattered fire as if they were falling, or flying by with a long trail of glistening light — so long as I may stay with these and, in so far as it is permitted to a mortal, commune with celestial beings, so long as I may direct my mind always to the sight of kindred things, striving on high — what does it matter to me which soil I may tread upon?