

Finding a Way Through: Of Walls, Corpses, and God in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*
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The Gaps

And then they revealed that solids were not solid
 That a wall was not solid
 That it consisted of molecules fixed and vibrating
 Some distance apart, as did the flesh

That solidity was really the likelihood
 of stuff not falling
 Between two chairs, down the gaps

And that walking through the wall was impossible
 That it could be like
 Slipping between pine trunks into a forest
 Which had looked from the road impermeable
 But was where something lived

And that one could peer back from the gloom towards
 A different creature
 With tender eyes, with an ear for water.

Frances Leviston

<p>1. stat non fragilis pro Caesare murus Pompeiumque tenet. iam pectora non tegit armis, ac ueritus credi clipeo laeuaque uacasse aut culpa uixisse sua tot uolnera belli solus obit densamque ferens in pectore siluam iam gradibus fessis, in quem cadat, eligit hostem 6.201-6</p>	<p>1. He stands, a not fragile wall for Caesar and holds back Pompey. Now he does not protect his chest with defensive armor, and, fearing that it will be believed that there had been emptiness with respect to his left side and his shield or that he had lived because it was his fault, he alone accepts so many wounds of war, and, growing a dense forest in his chest, now when his steps are tired, he chooses an enemy onto whom he may fall.</p>
<p>2. Dictaea procul, ecce, manu Gortynis harundo tenditur in Scaeuam, quae uoto certior omni in caput atque oculi laeuom descendit in orbem. ille moras ferri neruorum et uincola rumpit adfixam uellens oculo pendente sagittam intrepidus, telumque suo cum lumine calcat. 6.214-9</p>	<p>2. At a distance, look! A Gortynian arrow extends into Scaeva, which, more certain than every prayer, descends into his head and into the left sphere of his eye. That hero breaks the delays of the iron and chains which tether the eye to the head, tearing the arrow which was fixed where the eye was once hanging. Undeterred, he stomps on the weapon with his own sentient eyeball [still attached to it].</p>
<p>3. nam sanguine fuso uires pugna dabat. labentem turba suorum excipit atque umeris defectum inponere gaudet; ac uelut inclusum perfosso in pectore numen et uiuam magnae speciem Virtutis adorant; telaque confixis certant euellere membris, exornantque deos ac nudum pectore Martem armis, Scaeuam, tuis. 6.250-7</p>	<p>3. For, with blood poured out, fighting was giving you strength. A crowd of your brothers lifts you up as you are slipping and rejoices to place you, after you failed, on their shoulders, and they worship the living specter of great Virtus as being a divinity (numen) interred in his pierced breast, and they compete to grab the weapons from his transfixed limbs. They adorn the gods and Mars naked with respect to his chest with your weapons, Scaeva.</p>

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Abstract: <https://camws.org/sites/default/files/meeting2020/abstracts/2113FindingaWayLucan.pdf>