**Experiencing Death in Petronius’ *Satyricon*: Trimalchio and Failed Ritual**

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I. Et haec ideo omnia publico, ut familia mea iam nunc **sic me amet tamquam mortuum.**[[1]](#footnote-1) (*Sat.* § 71a)

*And all of these things therefore I make public, for the purpose that my* ***household loves me already now in this way just as after I have died****.[[2]](#footnote-2)*

II. Ceterum ego dum omnia stupeo, paene resupinatus crura mea fregi. Ad sinistram enim intrantibus canis ingens, catena vinctus, in pariete **erat pictus**, superque quadrata littera scriptum “Cave canem!” (*Sat.* § 29a)

*For the rest, while I was struck senseless, I almost broke my shins after falling backward. For at the left while we were entering, a huge dog, held by a chain,* ***was painted on the wall****, and above was written in square letters “Beware the dog!”*

III. Ego, crudelissimae severitatis, non potui me tenere, sed conversus ad aurem Agamemnonis . . . “Aliquis oblivisceretur porcum exinterare?” . . . Nec mora, ex plagis ponderis inclinatione crescentibus **tomacula cum botulis** effusa sunt. (*Sat.* 49c-49d)

*I, with unmerciful seriousness, was not able to hold myself back, but turning back toward the ear of Agamemnon . . . “How could anyone forget to disembowel the pig?” . . . Without delay, they poured forth from the wound, which was widening with the weight,* ***liver sausages with sausage meat****.*

IV. Parati aucupes cum harundinibus fuerunt et eos circa triclinium volantes momento temporis exceperunt . . . “Etiam videte quam porcus ille silvaticus lautam comederit glandem.” (*Sat.* § 40b-40c)

*Fowlers were prepared with canes and they caught them while they were flying around the dining room . . . “And see how that pig having run wild in the forest ate such elegant acorns.”*

V. στέρησις δέ ἐστιν αἰσθήσεως ὁ θάνατος.[[3]](#footnote-3)

*Death is the privation of all sentience.*

VI. Statim ampullam nardi apuerit, omnesque nos unxit et, “Spero,” inquit, “futurum **ut aeque me mortuum iuvet tamquam vivum**.” (*Sat.* § 78b)

*Immediately he opened a bottle of nard, and anointed all of us and said “I hope that it will be* ***so that it delights me dead equally as it delights me alive.****”*

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1. Text is from Cutt, Thomas, ed. (1970). *Petronius: Cena Trimalchionis*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. All translations are my own. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Text is from Diogenes Laertius (1972). *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. edited by R.D. Hicks. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)