

Writing to Realization: Seneca's 30th Epistle

1. Chronological Disorder

- A. Ep. 30. 1: Bassus Aufidium, virum optimum, **vidi** quassum, aetati obluctantem.
- B. Ep. 30.3: Bassus tamen noster alacer animo **est**.
- C. Ep. 30.5: Bassus noster **videbatur** mihi.
- D. Ep. 30.13 Fateor ergo ad hominem mihi carum ex pluribus me causis **frequentius** venisse...
- E. Ep. 30.5: Nam de morte multa **loquitur** et id agit sedulo ut nobis persuadeat.
- F. Ep. 30.6 'Ergo' **inquit** 'mors adeo extra omne malum est ut sit extra omnem malorum metum.'

2. Writing and Voice:

Ep. 30.7: I know these things have often been said and should often be said (*et saepe dicta et saepe dicenda*), but neither when I was reading (*legerem*) them did they benefit me equally nor when I was listening to people saying these things, who were at some distance away from the fear of those things which they were denying one should fear (*audirem iis dicentibus qui negabant timenda a quorum metu aberant*). Truly, this man before me (*apud me*) held the greatest authority when he was speaking about nearby death (*loqueretur de morte vicina*).

3. Rehearsal for Death

- A. Ep. 30.5: (Bassus seemed) to escort and lay himself out (*prosequi se et componere*) for burial and to live as though outliving himself and to bear wisely a desire for himself (*desiderium sui*).
- B. Ep. 30.12: No one has cheerfully (*hilaris*) greeted approaching death unless he had composed himself (*composuerat*) for it for a considerable time.
- C. Ep. 30.11: whatever nature has composed (*composuit*), it separates (*resolvit*), and whatever it separates (*resolvit*) it recomposes (*componit iterum*).

4. Indirect and Direct Speech

Ep. 30.14: **Dicebat** quidem ille Epicuri praeceptis obsequens, primum sperare se nullum dolorem esse in illo extremo anhelitu; si tamen esset, habere aliquantum in ipsa brevitate solacii; nullum enim dolorem longum esse qui magnus est. Ceterum succursurum sibi etiam in ipsa distractione animae corporisque, si cum cruciatu id fieret, post illum dolorem se dolere non posse. Non dubitare autem se quin senilis anima in primis labris esset nec magna vi distraheretur a corpore. 'Ignis qui alentem materiam occupavit aqua et interdum ruina extinguendus est: ille qui alimentis deficitur sua sponte subsidit.' Libenter haec, mi Lucili, **audio** non tamquam nova, sed tamquam in rem praesentem perductus.

5. Dissolving the Voice

Ep. 30.16-17: He was saying (*aiebat*) that we feel torture through our own effort, since we then tremble when we believe that death is close to us (*prope a nobis esse credimus mortem*). Indeed when is it not close by (*a quo enim non prope est*), ready in all places and at all moments (*parata omnibus locis omnibusque momentis*)? “But let us consider,” he said, “then, when some cause of death seems to approach (*accedere*), how much closer (*aliae propiores*) other causes might be, which are not feared.” An enemy was threatening to kill one man, but indigestion came beforehand. If we wish to discriminate between the causes of our fear, we will find that some exist and some seem to exist (*inveniemus alias esse, alias videri*). We do not fear death, but the thought of death. From this we are indeed always away at the same distance (*ab ipsa enim semper tantundem absumus*). Therefore, if death is to be feared, it should always be feared. Indeed what time is free from death (*quod enim morti tempus exemptum est*)?

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