



Reading a Review

M. Esteller. Molecular Origins of Cancer: Epigenetics in Cancer.
N Engl J Med 2008; 358: 1148.

I have learned from this reading that I will die not by the agency of great gods of sea and sky, or of the lesser ones, the sprites of groves and wells, nor even by will of the many-breasted mother, Earth herself.

I must kneel instead to bits of my own cells, those invisible smalls within, where methyls delve, and shortened ribbons of RNA plug phosphates to genes and capriciously play with my molecules making them epigenetic.

This change in belief runs through me like a panic attack. Worship my genes? They are far too small for that. I am used to gods who are huge, and call on lightning's power, or sometimes explode a sun over a cave in Palestine.

Water from rock, pillars of fire define my life and beliefs. How can I live with the notion that these new gods of cancer, incapable of emotion, not even of guilt, have no concept of a high God's mercy and unearthly love?

Must I plead to my own, these bits of cell débris, even as they settle down to murder me?

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