



Living with a Dead Language: My Romance with Latin

Ann Patty

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An entertaining exploration of the richness and relevance of the Latin language and literature, and an inspiring account of finding renewed purpose through learning something new and challenging

After thirty-five years as a book editor in New York City, Ann Patty stopped working and moved to the country. Bored, aimless, and lost in the woods, she hoped to challenge her restless, word-loving brain by beginning a serious study of Latin at local colleges.

As she begins to make sense of Latin grammar and syntax, her studies open unexpected windows into her own life. The louche poetry of Catullus calls up her early days in 1970s New York, Lucretius elucidates her intractable drivenness and her attraction to Buddhism, while Ovid's verse conjures a delightful dimension to the flora and fauna that surround her. Women in Roman history, and an ancient tomb inscription give her new understanding and empathy for her tragic, long deceased mother. Finally, Virgil reconciles her to her new life—no longer an urban exile, but a rustic scholar, writer and teacher. Along the way, she meets an impassioned cast of characters: professors, students and classicists outside of academia who keep Latin very much alive.

Written with humor, heart, and an infectious enthusiasm for words, Patty's book is an object lesson in how learning and literature can transform the past and lead to an unexpected future.

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