

© 2025 Anonymous

This work has been dedicated to the public domain under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

You may copy, modify, distribute, and use this work for any purpose, including machine learning and commercial use, without restriction.

For full legal text, see: <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Macmillan, 1909), Project Gutenberg, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52881/52881-h/52881-h.htm>.

Book 3 – 50 – On The Olive Mount

[3_50:1] Winter, a bad guest, sitteth with me at home; blue are my hands with his friendly hand-shaking.

[3_50:2] I honour him, that bad guest, but gladly leave him alone. Gladly do I run away from him; and when one runneth WELL, then one escapeth him!

[3_50:3] With warm feet and warm thoughts do I run where the wind is calm—to the sunny corner of mine Olive-Mount.

[3_50:4] There do I laugh at my stern guest, and am still fond of him; because he cleareth my house of flies, and quieteth many little noises.

[3_50:5] For he suffereth it not if a gnat wanteth to buzz, or even two of them; also the lanes maketh he lonesome, so that the moonlight is afraid there at night.

[3_50:6] A hard guest is he,—but I honour him, and do not worship, like the tenderlings, the pot-bellied fire-idol.

[3_50:7] Better even a little teeth-chattering than idol-adoration!—so willetteth my nature. And especially have I a grudge against all ardent, steaming, steamy fire-idols.

[3_50:8] Him whom I love, I love better in winter than in summer; better do I now mock at mine enemies, and more heartily, when winter sitteth in my house.

[3_50:9] Heartily, verily, even when I CREEP into bed—: there, still laugheth and wantoneth my hidden happiness; even my deceptive dream laugheth.

[3_50:10] I, a—creeper? Never in my life did I creep before the powerful; and if ever I lied, then did I lie out of love. Therefore am I glad even in my winter-bed.

[3_50:11] A poor bed warmeth me more than a rich one, for I am jealous of my poverty. And in winter she is most faithful unto me.

[3_50:12] With a wickedness do I begin every day: I mock at the winter with a cold bath: on that account grumbleth my stern house-mate.

[3_50:13] Also do I like to tickle him with a wax-taper, that he may finally let the heavens emerge from ashy-grey twilight.

[3_50:14] For especially wicked am I in the morning: at the early hour when the pail rattleth at the well, and horses neigh warmly in grey lanes:—

[3_50:15] Impatiently do I then wait, that the clear sky may finally dawn for me, the snow-bearded winter-sky, the hoary one, the whitehead,—

[3_50:16] —The winter-sky, the silent winter-sky, which often stifleth even its sun!

[3_50:17] Did I perhaps learn from it the long clear silence? Or did it learn it from me? Or hath each of us devised it himself?

[3_50:18] Of all good things the origin is a thousandfold,—all good roguish things spring into existence for joy: how could they always do so—for once only!

[3_50:19] A good roguish thing is also the long silence, and to look, like the winter-sky, out of a clear, round-eyed countenance:—

[3_50:20] —Like it to stifle one's sun, and one's inflexible solar will: verily, this art and this winter-roguishness have I learnt WELL!

[3_50:21] My best-loved wickedness and art is it, that my silence hath learned not to betray itself by silence.

[3_50:22] Clattering with diction and dice, I outwit the solemn assistants: all those stern watchers, shall my will and purpose elude.

[3_50:23] That no one might see down into my depth and into mine ultimate will—for that purpose did I devise the long clear silence.

[3_50:24] Many a shrewd one did I find: he veiled his countenance and made his water muddy, that no one might see therethrough and thereunder.

[3_50:25] But precisely unto him came the shrewder distrusters and nut-crackers: precisely from him did they fish his best-concealed fish!

[3_50:26] But the clear, the honest, the transparent—these are for me the wisest silent ones: in them, so PROFOUND is the depth that even the clearest water doth not—betray it.—

[3_50:27] Thou snow-bearded, silent, winter-sky, thou round-eyed whitehead above me! Oh, thou heavenly simile of my soul and its wantonness!

[3_50:28] And MUST I not conceal myself like one who hath swallowed gold—lest my soul should be ripped up?

[3_50:29] MUST I not wear stilts, that they may OVERLOOK my long legs—all those enviers and injurers around me?

[3_50:30] Those dingy, fire-warmed, used-up, green-tinted, ill-natured souls—how COULD their envy endure my happiness!

[3_50:31] Thus do I show them only the ice and winter of my peaks—and NOT that my mountain windeth all the solar girdles around it!

[3_50:32] They hear only the whistling of my winter-storms: and know NOT that I also travel over warm seas, like longing, heavy, hot south-winds.

[3_50:33] They commiserate also my accidents and chances:—but MY word saith: “Suffer the chance to come unto me: innocent is it as a little child!”

[3_50:34] How COULD they endure my happiness, if I did not put around it accidents, and winter-privations, and bear-skin caps, and enmantling snowflakes!

[3_50:35] —If I did not myself commiserate their PITY, the pity of those enviers and injurers!

[3_50:36] —If I did not myself sigh before them, and chatter with cold, and patiently LET myself be swathed in their pity!

[3_50:37] This is the wise waggish-will and good-will of my soul, that it CONCEALETH NOT its winters and glacial storms; it concealeth not its chilblains either.

[3_50:38] To one man, lonesomeness is the flight of the sick one; to another, it is the flight FROM the sick ones.

[3_50:39] Let them HEAR me chattering and sighing with winter-cold, all those poor squinting knaves around me! With such sighing and chattering do I flee from their heated rooms.

[3_50:40] Let them sympathise with me and sigh with me on account of my chilblains: “At the ice of knowledge will he yet FREEZE TO DEATH!”—so they mourn.

[3_50:41] Meanwhile do I run with warm feet hither and thither on mine Olive-Mount: in the sunny corner of mine Olive-Mount do I sing, and mock at all pity.—

[3_50:42] Thus sang Zarathustra.

Begin Commentary

Background:

Zarathustra is still on the continent and making his way back to his cave. There is a winter theme in this section and we will not be told the climate again until two more sections where we see an autumn theme. Indicating that his return home is the process of his reversing his leaving home.

[3_50:1] Winter, a bad guest, sitteth with me at home; blue are my hands with his friendly hand-shaking.

TN: The German translated here as schlimmer can also be “worse than” as in not bad but worse than something else.¹

AC: The guest sits with him in his home, yet Zarathustra is not home. He is heading back to his cave, which is his home. It could be a temporary home. Combined with the friendly hand-shaking it implies a forced intimacy with winter. Someone Zarathustra would rather not have intruding. Blue are my hands from his friendly hand-shaking he states. Making us ask is a handshake that pulls the warmth out of us its warmth and friendliness? A chilling to the touch. Winter a being that cannot help but force itself into your life and suck the warmth out of you. Next line,

[3_50:2] I honour him, that bad guest, but gladly leave him alone. Gladly do I run away from him; and when one runneth WELL, then one escapeth him!

He honors winter. Not likes, not loves, not enjoys, he is doing what duty and politeness command. Note the repeating honorific. Bad Guest used twice to describe winter. Perhaps one can imagine a homeowner pointing to an unwelcome guest in frustration. He honors him but would gladly escape, fleeing from his own temporary home while presumably winter notices and staggers after him. Whatever it is that winter symbolizes in this section deserves acknowledgment of its existence but not friendship, not love. At least not yet. Next line,

[3_50:3] With warm feet and warm thoughts do I run where the wind is calm—to the sunny corner of mine Olive-Mount.

With also via. Via warm feet and warm thoughts. Winter sits in his home, Zarathustra actively runs. Runs with warm feet full of body strength and warm thoughts that fill his soul. While winter controls his temporary home Zarathustra heads to the Olive-Mount. In the bible the Olive-Mount is a place to lick wounds, used by David and Jesus. Zarathustra runs from what his home which makes us ask why is he so readily willing to abandon it? Perhaps because it is temporary, it is not his real home which is the cave. Perhaps one can imagine a student-dorm. As will be seen later the metaphor begins to shift. In Pre-Socratic Greek thought winter was believed

¹<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/schlimmer>

to be caused by the god Boreas, who was said to bring the winter wind, and north of him was a warm happy place without wind. Next line,

[3_50:4] There do I laugh at my stern guest, and am still fond of him; because he cleareth my house of flies, and quieteth many little noises.

There, in his place of sanctuary, which is not his temporary home, he could look back at the stern guest and feel differently, gratefully. As in acknowledgment that it is useful, not loved. This line with the others suggest an autobiographical of the author. He fled from academic life to Italy. One could imagine him in Basel with strict professors who even being nice drained the warmth for you. Now here, alone and in peace, he is willing to acknowledge the utility of such pedantic exacting men. They crush small ideas from small people, and actively silence the noise of his former home. While it is unpleasant to experience this, this suffocation can be of use. Zarathustra went from hating those types, to escaping them, to looking back with understanding, to finally now being grateful for what they do. A contrast to his Ape in the next session who provides negative utility because no one honored him. Next line,

[3_50:5] For he suffereth it not if a gnat wanteth to buzz, or even two of them; also the lanes maketh he lonesome, so that the moonlight is afraid there at night.

Zarathustra sees winter as the force that wipes out pests, calms the streets, and even seems to blunt the light. If the metaphor of the strict professors the author knew as a student is continued, the passage suggests “The strict professor allows no quarter for a small mind with small ideas, even if the small mind calls in reinforcements. He passes through the laughing students, causing silence in his wake.” Moonlight, the borrowed light of truth, often associated with poor mental health and cognitive impairment, is afraid of the strict professor. Next line,

[3_50:6] A hard guest is he,—but I honour him, and do not worship, like the tenderlings, the pot-bellied fire-idol.

Zarathustra becomes accepting of Winder. Winter is now viewed as a being he still doesn't like but will always honor. With this acceptance of scholastic done and put aside he addresses the other. The pot-bellied fire idol, the god of the home, of domestic bliss. People fleeing from Herr Professor and their tyrant religious leaders demanding too much, the tenderhearted, go to the kindergarten teacher, the warmth. Zarathustra addresses this group of tenderlings and explains why he choose the natural world of the olive mount instead. He would not let the winter sap his warmth and he will not orbit the flame of easy scholarship and easy faith. No stick of winter, no carrot of the fire-idol, only self-overcoming in the Olive-Mount. Next line,

[3_50:7] Better even a little teeth-chattering than idol-adoration!—so willeth my nature. And especially have I a grudge against all ardent, steaming, steamy fire-idols.

The double condemnation. Winter-men are still better than hearth-idols. Winter-men do not want your friendship, your worship, or your material wealth; they want you to grow a spine and a mind. So willeth my nature, Zarathustra doesn't even feel he has a say in this evaluation. It is so true to what he is that if he did not believe this he would be someone else. Especially does he hate the fire-idols with their almost seductive kindness. Better the harshness of real winter that treats you as a human than the soft domestication that makes you only fit for the being on your knees in worship. Perhaps think of the teachers you had who pointed away from themselves to the subject in contrast to the ones who wanted to be your friend. Next line,

[3_50:8] Him whom I love, I love better in winter than in summer; better do I now mock at mine enemies, and more heartily, when winter sitteth in my house.

Him whom I love. Whoever that might be: in the beginning we are told many people Zarathustra loves. Still here it is whomever. Whomever that is Zarathustra loves more in winter. Under academic hardship, under physical hardship, times when they must burn internally lest they be consumed by cold. Now, Zarathustra is on his Olive-Mount and he can mock his enemies with an almost hungry zeal that his temporary home has fallen under the winter's domain

Zarathustra wants enemies worth fighting as was noted in earlier sections. If the new ideas have to withstand the assault of old scholarship they will be sharpened, and made worthy of combat. Next line,

[3_50:9] Heartily, verily, even when I CREEP into bed—: there, still laugheth and wantoneth my hidden happiness; even my deceptive dream laugheth.

There is a mischievous air about this sentence. An almost suppressed snicker. Zarathustra enjoying the image of one of those granite faced German professors tearing into the small thoughts of the new social and political movements. Seeing the tenderlings squirm under the intellectual assault but also seeing how ridiculous the screamer is. A tank vs a fly except the tank is old and stiff. Also possible that this idea of concealed happiness at this junction is to setup for the end of the section. As has been noted in the literature² Zarathustra only makes claim to two arts. The art of concealing and the art of gift-giving. Next line,

²Lampert, Laurence. 1986. *Nietzsche's Teaching : An Interpretation of "Thus Spoke Zarathustra."* New Haven ; London: Yale University Press.

[3_50:10] I, a—creeper? Never in my life did I creep before the powerful; and if ever I lied, then did I lie out of love. Therefore am I glad even in my winter-bed.

Having moved on to a question of power. Old guard vs New Ideas Zarathustra returns to the source of the relationship between the intellectual classes and powers-that-be. This line likely Hiero by Xenophon. An essay where it is argued that the wise are to whisper to power, with the powerful in misery isolation, and the wise able to be fortunate without envy. The claim Zarathustra is making is he has never played this game. He first spoke to the people and was rejected, so he spoke onto the creators instead. If he lied at all it was not for his own gain, it was because of love. Even if this means he has to live in the coldness of poverty with his own companion an insufferable Kantian he would still prefer that than to mingle with the powers-that-be. Who corrupt and dilute. He seems unwilling to forgive Plato. Next line,

[3_50:11] A poor bed warmeth me more than a rich one, for I am jealous of my poverty. And in winter she is most faithful unto me.

Jealous here as jealous of a lover. Zarathustra does not want anyone to have his poverty, he gives away riches, he owns his poverty exclusively. Assuming the metaphor is now shifting of Winter being scholastic to Winter being hardship this is clever perspective shift. We normally think of wealth as being what protects us, yet poverty is always faithful to us, always an option. Even in hardship. In a world where your wisdom has no connection to your material wealth, you are truly free. Connecting to the second part of Joyful Science 377 where the author announces his mistrust of his government. This understanding also comes from the previous line where Zarathustra spoke of the relationship between wisdom and the powers that be.

It is possible this changing metaphor here, this shifting sand is form of secret. A false trail for the ideal reader. Next line,

[3_50:12] With a wickedness do I begin every day: I mock at the winter with a cold bath: on that account grumbleth my stern house-mate.

TN: The German here translated as house-mate is Hausfreund³. Given the more intimate tone of this sentence suggest alternative be more literal and rendered: With a wickedness do I begin every day: I mock at the winter with a cold bath: on that account grumbleth my stern friend of the household.

³<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/hausfreund>

The German here translated as family friend. The literal is “friend of the household”.

AC: boastful of his ability to demand more from himself than ever did hardship. Zarathustra's encounter progressed. Offense, disgust, fleeing, mocking, noticing utility, honor, a desire to surpass, and finally friendship. Zarathustra it seems could only really be friends with someone who sharpens him, is a force on their own right, and does not need him. Next line,

[3_50:13] Also do I like to tickle him with a wax-taper, that he may finally let the heavens emerge from ashy-grey twilight.

A wax-taper. A small candle that was used for lighting stoves. The imagery is layered. Like he is priming the pump for joy from hardship, like he is showing defiance to the cold with a laughably small weapon, like he is showing the old Herr Professor a single line of poetry to coax them out, Likely, intended all and all at once. Next line,

[3_50:14] For especially wicked am I in the morning: at the early hour when the pail rattleth at the well, and horses neigh warmly in grey lanes:—

Zarathustra is describing this story in a backwards manner. Setting the scene and describing the rational after telling us the action. A scene of pure potentiality and zero actuality. The pails are there and rattle from being empty, the horses are warm but are not moving. It is possible he is invoking some of his work on epistemology, where he declared his rejection of the concept that there is a thing and it is separate from its actions. That the idea of cause and effect could be separated. To him humans acted and then explained why. Next line,

[3_50:15] Impatiently do I then wait, that the clear sky may finally dawn for me, the snow-bearded winter-sky, the hoary one, the whitehead,—

What is clever here is Boreas, the Greek god of winter was said to be the son of Eos the goddess of dawn. Boreas was associated with horses so he primed us in the previous verse to think of him. He then is not only telling the story backwards but using words to invoke that backwardness. Dawn gave birth to winter, yet here winter gave way to dawn. He told a backwards story using words forward and those are connected to a parable that runs forward normally but backwards here. Zarathustra is pointing to that ancient way of thought, before purpose defined action, and before reaction came from purpose to pure tension of what is created and what is creating.

The stacking of descriptions is telling. Myth via snow-bearded, social via hoary, and whitehead bodily. The is what is beyond us, that we can know define a role with, that which we can be on intimate terms with. Deep time, deep values, older than our learning, and yet with us when it so chooses. Next line,

[3_50:16] —The winter-sky, the silent winter-sky, which often stifles even its sun!

Suggest alternative translation as “The Winter-sky, the silent one, the one that even conceals its own sun!”. Verb of silence vs Adjective of silence. Silence is what the winter-sky is, not merely what it does. Conceal as in concealing wealth. Picture leaning on a wall and pushing on a wall for the latter and authentic vs ordered action for the former. Winter conceals its depths its wisdom even its warmth. Next line,

[3_50:17] Did I perhaps learn from it the long clear silence? Or did it learn it from me? Or hath each of us devised it himself?

Zarathustra discussing the 3 ways of his time to view cause-and-effect. The first modern Darwin-Newton. He Zarathustra learned active silence from the night-sky. The second Plato-Aristotle, telos. The night-sky needed to be that way for him to learn it. Without Zarathustra's need the supply would not be in stock. Rejecting both he points Heraclitus. The Pre-Socratic who once wrote that the way up was the way down. Next line,

[3_50:18] Of all good things the origin is a thousandfold,—all good roguish things spring into existence for joy: how could they always do so—for once only!

Roguish better translated as willful. This sentence first names two kind of things. Things that are good and just are there, and things that are willed that are good. The German is literal from or with desire. Those willed things do not merely have an origin they spring into existence. Having attacked the nature of cause and effect of both Aristotle and Newton-Darwin he now moves on to the origin of the universe itself. Pointing out that good things that we humans just have access to are over-determined. Not A leads to B, more akin to A C D E and F we get B but we could have gotten B if E is missing. Not a universe of chain reaction, a universe of grinding of movement with matter churning up the tools we use.

Willful good things spring from desire, from overflow. How could there be joy and only one act of creation? If our universe had a prime mover would it be overflowing one who only opened its fist but once? If it were content with one act of creation it was not truly joyful it was a miser and this universe is too abundant for that to be the case. In one stroke Zarathustra has attempted to demolish both views of a linear universe, one with what remained is what was fit and one where what exists to serve an end. Next line,

[3_50:19] A good roguish thing is also the long silence, and to look, like the winter-sky, out of a clear, round-eyed countenance:—

Again willful is more apt for modern ears. A good willful thing is the ability to remain silent out of a face that screams innocence. Might be wondering how we got here. We started out with winter or winter-type people. Cold, serious, needing no comfort, honored but not needing your approval, a form of power without justification or explanation. Then Zarathustra notices that winter or winter-people do not act the way they do for standard reasons, he begins to question the idea that things do happen for a reason. If winter or winter-people do not intend to teach yet the lesson occurs cause-and-effect is on shaking grounds. Once that occurs the origin of the universe is on shaking grounds. If our world has no final explanations of where it is going and where it came from, if causes and effects are intertwined in a mess, if power operates without our permission, if depth is hidden, now what? How is your life not going to be ended by those around you? What is to stop a nihilistic nightmare with you as the first victim? Zarathustra suggests act innocent and learn the art of concealment of your depths. Next line,

[3_50:20] —Like it to stifle one's sun, and one's inflexible solar will: verily, this art and this winter-roguishness have I learnt WELL!

Breaking it up. Like it, he isn't saying the winter-sky learned it from him, he isn't saying he learned it from the winter-sky, he is claiming the practice. This is not teaching, or learning, this is what he does. Sun and one's inflexible solar will. This is not a repetition. He is hide your wisdom and hide your creating force. Inflexible, as in the will the drive is still there just not seen. This art, this technique this skill is not just there, it is an art like any other that needs cultivation. At first this sentence seems to be providing us with no new information but it is repeating the boundary he has set. Silence is not to be used lightly or not used lightly. Hence the point doubled. Next line,

[3_50:21] My best-loved wickedness and art is it, that my silence hath learned not to betray itself by silence.

His best loved, wickedness. Maybe better as deception. Is that his ability to remain silent has not inadvertently attracted even more attention to himself. This is the supreme thing, to not speak and not give the impression that you are withholding back what you want to say. This is either him casting shade on people or readers who torture the text for confession, or it is giving very strong advice to people like him, or linking himself to Jesus in Mark who keeps telling people to keep quiet, or linking himself to Odysseus, or all of them at the same time. Next line,

[3_50:22] Clattering with diction and dice, I outwit the solemn assistants: all those stern watchers, shall my will and purpose elude.

Heraclitus' fragments 52 reads: time is a child playing draughts, the kingly power is a child's. Heraclitus was also associated with chance and being dark concealed, difficult to understand. This fragment strongly implies a viewpoint of a will exerting energy with no seriousness, no aim, no justice, ever-changing rules, and with ever-changing movement. If Zarathustra has cultivated the silence that does not betray itself he can escape all those stern moral authorities who wish to pin him down. Given this is the situation Zarathustra is not making a virtue out being sneaky, he is arguing for using chance and clever words to escape harm from those that would impose order. The stern authorities will demand you to declare, explain, and position yourself. A box to sit in, get out of the box. Next line,

[3_50:23] That no one might see down into my depth and into mine ultimate will—for that purpose did I devise the long clear silence.

Note the placement. Zarathustra is refusing anyone to look down into his depths and look down at his ultimate will, as that would mean someone is above him. A position he will not enter into. To stop this relationship he had to devise for himself the silence. Also, this sentence is written slightly backwards a subordinate clause prior to a main clause. The sentence hides what it holds mirroring the content of what it says. Next line,

[3_50:24] Many a shrewd one did I find: he veiled his countenance and made his water muddy, that no one might see therethrough and thereunder.

He Zarathustra found them, they were trying to hide yet they were found. Hence, they failed at hiding. The shrewd one veiled his countenance. Hence, he knew the danger and was taking an action of concealment. The shrewd one made his water muddy, his ideas were unclear. This is the error. Zarathustra walks with an unmasked face while this shrewd one shows that there is something being hidden. Muddy waters do not hide real depth, they indicate movement below. One could imagine him being interrogated and suggesting that he cannot answer without first defining IS. Next line,

[3_50:25] But precisely unto him came the shrewder distrusters and nut-crackers: precisely from him did they fish his best-concealed fish!

One can imagine the sitcom trope of some character trying to keep something private and when their friends spy on them they find it was not a hidden sin but something that was not meant to be shared. This shrewd one met shrewder ones who trust no one, Assume whatever is hidden hides guilt. They brought along nut-crackers. There is no art to nut cracking. Steady pressure or high impact pressure. Either will eventually work and by hook or crook the secrets

will be found. What secrets did they find? His most personal and fish brought to the surface dies, not because it is weak, because it is not in its element. Next line,

[3_50:26] But the clear, the honest, the transparent—these are for me the wisest silent ones: in them, so PROFOUND is the depth that even the clearest water doth not—betray it.—

TN: Clear can be translated as bright. As in physical bright light and bright as in smart. Wisest here is the same word used in the previous passages, Klugen, which the translation was rendering as shrewd. Thus shrewd, shrewd, wise is the Common translation for the same German word. Suggest shrewd is maintained to prevent conceptual shift not present in original. Final suggested translation: But the bright, the honest, the transparent – these are for me the shrewdest silent ones: in them, so profound is the depth that even the clearest water does not – betray it.

AC: With what is bright, honest, and transparent are the most shrewd, they can remain silent such that even when they are open no one may see how deep their thoughts go. This is pure poetry. A bright shining light over still deep water that goes very low but people assume it is shallow, with more lighting more interrogation providing even less understanding of the depth. Next line,

[3_50:27] Thou snow-bearded, silent, winter-sky, thou round-eyed whitehead above me! Oh, thou heavenly simile of my soul and its wantonness!

In verse 3_50:15 he described the winter-sky as a phenomenon as something that just happened. This immense event that conceals its own sun. in verse 3_50:19 he describes the winter-sky as instructional. It teaches silence. Now, here he is almost confessing that they are alike, a kinship of souls. Zarathustra seems to be feeling a platonic love for it. He keeps touching back to the topic through wanderings on silence and cosmology. Next line,

[3_50:28] And MUST I not conceal myself like one who hath swallowed gold—lest my soul should be ripped up?

TN: The word aufschlitze here is translated as ripped up, suggest slashed open. Rendering the passage And MUST I not conceal myself like one hath swallowed gold—lest my soul should be slashed open?

AC: The visual image is violent in a world of mutual distrust. Someone who swallowed gold. Presumably to hide it since there is not a normal reason to do that. And they are slashed open. Like someone just finding something valuable, swallowing it, and cut-throats not even willing to wait until it passes out. Might be a contrast as well. Zarathustra did a cute little summoning ritual that was harmless, a wax-taper on a foot to get the night sky. The nutcrackers

applied pressure and fished out the best, these cutthroats slash the soul, viewing Zarathustra and his kind innermost desires as mere material to cut through.

There could also be a contrast here. Fish are renewed, farmed, fished, if you eat fish it is incorporated into your body, what remains is not fish. Gold is pulled from the earth and moved around. If you eat gold it comes out in the same way it came in. Next line,

[3_50:29] MUST I not wear stilts, that they may OVERLOOK my long legs—all those enviers and injurers around me?

The entire criminal justice system players have been listed in this section with this being the last. The criminal element. Passage 3_50:22 law enforcement. Passage 3_50:25 the investigators and auditors, as well as the stubborn interrogators. Now here the criminals they pursue. Zarathustra names the parties and suggests counters. For the criminals he suggests stilts, rising him up, making himself appear bigger than he is. Possibility a bit of humor here with the image. Next line,

[3_50:30] Those dingy, fire-warmed, used-up, green-tinted, ill-natured souls—how COULD their envy endure my happiness!

TN: räucherigen is translated here as dingy, suggest smoky. Stubenwarmen as fire-warmed suggest literal as warmed to room-temperature, and vergrünten as green-tinted suggest turning green. Rendering the sentence now: Those smoky, warmed to room-temperature, turning green, embittered souls—how COULD their envy endure my happiness! ⁴

AC: Taken like this there is a food theme in the first clause and a conclusion in the second clause. Given what they are Zarathustra exclaims the impossibility of being free of envy of his happiness. This food shift could be telling the story of the genealogy of their souls. In the

⁴ Räucherigen from räuchern to smoke, to preserve, to dry, to cure. Stubenwarmen from Studen and warmen. Stuben parlor, living room, warmen to warm up. Since warmed to room is awkward warmed to room-temperature chosen for implied author intent. Vergrünten from ergrünten become green

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/rauchern>,
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/stube?q=Stuben>,
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/warmen>, <https://en.langenscheidt.com/german-english/ergruenen>,

beginning they had so much abundance they smoked it preserve it, but did the process poorly. Now time has passed the food is no longer cold nor hot, the good parts have been consumed, what remains is turning green. Thus are the ideas that they have in their soul's.

There is also an implication of heat. Zarathustra mocks the winter with a cold bath, these types huddle around the fire and are spoiled by it. Next line,

[3_50:31] Thus do I show them only the ice and winter of my peaks—and NOT that my mountain windeth all the solar girdles around it!

He will use a similar metaphor in the Three Evil Things Section 54. How Mountains nourish and alter valleys by sending debris and water down. Here he shows them peaks, those things far away and high, without depth. Just calm innocent sterile. Not that truth the covers and wraps around the base melting the ice sending chaos and nourishment to the valley below. Next line,

[3_50:32] They hear only the whistling of my winter-storms: and know NOT that I also travel over warm seas, like longing, heavy, hot south-winds.

Zarathustra is returning to the fable of Boreas. Playing with senses as well. First describing sight and now hearing. Those moldy souls they hear the storm, which announces itself. That conceals the private reality that moves him. His harshness and coldness is what is heard his heavy hot warmth of voyage remains obscured. Next line,

[3_50:33] They commiserate also my accidents and chances:—but MY word saith: “Suffer the chance to come unto me: innocent is it as a little child!”

They commiserate him. Assuming chance needs an explanation, chance means injustice otherwise, that we need to protect moral innocence from reality. He says no. Chance is reality, chance becomes a toxin only when we attempt to moralize it, chance is the morally innocent one. The wording is an echoing and inversion of Jesus in Matthew 19:14. With Jesus children are innocent and provide access the kingdom, the future moral order and the purpose of creation to reach. As he has already dismantled a universe driven to purpose he says that no chance is like children. Innocent and provide access to reality.

Children as the author notes in On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.⁵ have the innocence developed from not having the burden of past. Chance shares it as well. Dice do not accumulate loses and wins, dice do not remember previous throws. Heraclitus looms over this passage as well. A man famously for spending his time in deep thought and then playing knuckle-bones with children. Who accepted the power of chance over human affairs, without wishing it otherwise. Next line,

[3_50:34] How COULD they endure my happiness, if I did not put around it accidents, and winter-privations, and bear-skin caps, and enmantling snowflakes!

At first glance it seems a restatement of [3_50:30], where he described their idea's and soul's. This however discusses the why of the strategy of Zarathustra. Since, they cannot endure his happiness he must seem to accident prone, suffering, trying to preserve what little he has, while merciless fate sends snowflakes on him. Depth is preserved by appearing open, happiness is preserved from the bitter by appearing down on your luck. Next line,

[3_50:35] —If I did not myself commiserate their PITY, the pity of those enviers and injurers!

TN: Leidholde here translated as injurers can be translated as holders-of-sorrow⁶ changing the sentence to “If I did not myself commiserate their pity, the pity of those enviers and holders-of-sorrow.

AC: Continuing the justification of the strategy. Zarathustra admits he must act with pity towards their pity. A cosplay of self-effacement. Which pity? The pity of two groups. Those that want his happiness, and those that hold to their heart their sorrows. Next line,

[3_50:36] —If I did not myself sigh before them, and chatter with cold, and patiently LET myself be swathed in their pity!

⁵Nietzsche F. On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life. Hollingdale RJ, trans. In: Breazeale D, ed. Nietzsche: Untimely Meditations. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. Cambridge University Press; 1997:57-124. Page 61 that is why it affects him like a vision of a lost paradise to see the herds grazing or, in closer proximity to him, a child which, having as yet nothing of the past to shake off, plays in blissful blindness between the hedges of past and future. Yet its play must be disturbed; all too soon it will be called out of its state of forgetfulness.

⁶Leid To be tired of, sorrow, suffering. Hold fair, to favor

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/leid>, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/hold>

A haunting image. Complaining about a life he loves, effacing himself so he shivers in the cold that he secretly mocks, and bracing himself to endure their pity. Pretending to be miserable so he can be pitted when he knows exactly who the real miserable are in the situation. Note the word choice of swathed, like to wrap tightly a blanket around a small child. He who dances has to accept the humiliation of being treated like a shivering child, else those that would destroy him do so. Happiness is to be feared by those, weakness is safe and to be loved. Next line,

[3_50:37] This is the wise waggish-will and good-will of my soul, that it CONCEALETH NOT its winters and glacial storms; it concealeth not its chilblains either.

Combine the two terms together. Waggish-will and good-will. What is for play and what is for benevolence, these two are the components of the wisdom of concealment. His concealment conceals the warmth but freely shows the hardship and the damage. It does not lie, it selectively omits. The question become good-will to whom. He says of his soul but not where it is directed. Venture to suggest it is not for the people in that area since he plans to abandon them, it is for his project. To be the herald of the Übermensch. Next line,

[3_50:38] To one man, lonesomeness is the flight of the sick one; to another, it is the flight FROM the sick ones.

He is going a different direction here. Setting up a tie in at the end of the section. He was just talking about being swaddled and claiming the nature of his concealment. Now we the reader get yanked into a description of lonesomeness. It is jarring, but required to explain why he will do what he does next. Face the cold to escape.

Two kinds of escapes in terms of sickness relationship to lonesomeness are described. One is flight of sick ones. Ones that leave because they cannot endure the costs of living amongst people. The other is flight from sickness. Ones that leave because they do not want to become what was there. Zarathustra is to resolve himself to abandon the people who while deeply flawed still cared for him. This is very difficult to read and empathize with. His argument that care from whom he deems the sick spreads sickness and the best course of action is flight, so the sickness does not spread. Next line,

[3_50:39] Let them HEAR me chattering and sighing with winter-cold, all those poor squinting knaves around me! With such sighing and chattering do I flee from their heated rooms.

All those criminals with suspicious eyes will only hear Zarathustra complain and teeth chattering. With those complaints and chattering will he run from their source of borrowed

warmth. This is Zarathustra at his most abrasive. Him calling them knaves and noting their crooked eyes looking for moral fault to use as a weapon in a never ending melee combat that needs any possible advantage. They hoped to hold him offering the carrot of warmth with the contrast of the winter cold, instead Zarathustra imitates to infiltrate and escapes when they are only listening not watching. Next line,

[3_50:40] Let them sympathise with me and sigh with me on account of my chilblains: "At the ice of knowledge will he yet FREEZE TO DEATH!"—so they mourn.

Having conned them out of survival they will feel bad for him as they view knowledge as harsh unforgiving, that which freeze you out of home and community. Maybe we can see his point of view of the required abandonment better if we accept that these people view knowledge as something to be avoided instead of weights to be lifted. People who would turn Zarathustra into an infant. Next line,

[3_50:41] Meanwhile do I run with warm feet hither and thither on mine Olive-Mount: in the sunny corner of mine Olive-Mount do I sing, and mock at all pity.—

Hither and thither combined with the previous language of children to me paint a picture of a kid just can't control his own energy in paradise. He dared the cold to get passed it, integrated it, and now rejoices. Worth mentioning the legend of the Hyperboreans who enjoyed paradise north of the polar winds. Next line,

[3_50:42] Thus sang Zarathustra.

In the narrative Zarathustra has not won this one, he is just leaving whatever village he was in at the moment. Having hidden who he was and leaving no lasting changes. Free from the constraints he just sings out, with no one to silence him or to hide from.

Note there are echoes in this section to Joyful Science 377.

We Homeless Ones.—Among the Europeans of to-day there are not lacking those who may call themselves homeless ones in a way which is at once a distinction and an honour; it is by them that my secret wisdom and *Joyful Science* is especially to be laid to heart! For their lot is hard, their hope uncertain; it is a clever feat to devise consolation for them. But what good does it do! We children of the future, how *could* we be at home in the present? We are unfavourable to all ideals which could make us feel at home in this frail, broken-down, transition period; and as regards the "realities" thereof, we do not believe in their *endurance*. The ice which still carries

has become very thin: the thawing wind blows; we ourselves, the homeless ones, are an agency that breaks the ice, and the other too thin "realities."... We "preserve" nothing, nor would we return to any past age; we are not at all "liberal," we do not labour for "progress," we do not need first to stop our ears to the song of the market-place and the sirens of the future—their song of "equal rights," "free society," "no longer either lords or slaves," does not allure us!⁷

The author wrote a view in Joyful Science more spelled out and made it more metaphorical in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Ice are there the religious scholastic institutions of Europe, and winter the producers of ice is the traditional scholarship found in Lutheranism and the Catholic Church. As the author did not think highly of the new ideas of the present and had no desire to go to the old ideas of the present he likened himself to being homeless person now and whose home is the future.

Note Dionysus is said to have been born in winter and been born a snake. It is possible there is a connection here with concealment and snake and Dionysus.

The argument presented to the reader here is maybe the most challenging in the book. He seems to be advising people to determine if they are better than other people, fake needing help and pretending they have nothing to offer, then getting out of dodge when possible. This seems to be the ethics of a conman. A guy who sits down at a table and starts with "Poker? Oh I heard about this game. It is the one where you say "go fish", right?" spending the night free of charge at the homeless shelter, then taking a train out of town with the suitcase of winnings. He justifies it by claiming he is only preserving what is his and those there would destroy his purity and his project. A break from our traditional view of what duty means. Perhaps one should question how Zarathustra is so confident that he can determine those people who cared for him were so much lesser they would have no choice but to end him tall poppy style.

Stanley Rosen argues that this section is vital to show that Zarathustra is refusing the crucifixion of Jesus, and helps explain the next section where Zarathustra is avoiding main roads.
⁸

In summary to Zarathustra winter is not mere suffering it has utility, silence is not emptiness it is depth, concealment is not being a coward it is an art, pity is not kindness it is dangerous.

⁷Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Translated by Thomas Common. Project Gutenberg, 2017. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52881/52881-h/52881-h.htm>.

⁸Author: Stanley Rosen, and Michael Allen Gillespie. 2004. *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche's Zarathustra*. Editorial: New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press.

Book 3 – 51 – On Passing By

[3_51:1] Thus slowly wandering through many peoples and divers cities, did Zarathustra return by round-about roads to his mountains and his cave. And behold, thereby came he unawares also to the gate of the GREAT CITY.

[3_51:2] Here, however, a foaming fool, with extended hands, sprang forward to him and stood in his way.

[3_51:3] It was the same fool whom the people called “the ape of Zarathustra:” for he had learned from him something of the expression and modulation of language, and perhaps liked also to borrow from the store of his wisdom. And the fool talked thus to Zarathustra:

[3_51:4] **O Zarathustra, here is the great city: here hast thou nothing to seek and everything to lose.**

[3_51:5] **Why wouldst thou wade through this mire? Have pity upon thy foot! Spit rather on the gate of the city, and—turn back!**

[3_51:6] **Here is the hell for anchorites’ thoughts: here are great thoughts seethed alive and boiled small.**

[3_51:7] **Here do all great sentiments decay: here may only rattle-boned sensations rattle!**

[3_51:8] **Smellest thou not already the shambles and cookshops of the spirit? Steameth not this city with the fumes of slaughtered spirit?**

[3_51:9] **Seest thou not the souls hanging like limp dirty rags?—And they make newspapers also out of these rags!**

[3_51:10] **Hearest thou not how spirit hath here become a verbal game? Loathsome verbal swill doth it vomit forth!—And they make newspapers also out of this verbal swill.**

[3_51:11] **They hound one another, and know not whither! They inflame one another, and know not why! They tinkle with their pinchbeck, they jingle with their gold.**

[3_51:12] **They are cold, and seek warmth from distilled waters: they are inflamed, and seek coolness from frozen spirits; they are all sick and sore through public opinion.**

[3_51:13] **All lusts and vices are here at home; but here there are also the virtuous; there is much appointable appointed virtue:—**

[3_51:14] **Much appointable virtue with scribe-fingers, and hardy sitting-flesh and waiting-flesh, blessed with small breast-stars, and padded, haunchless daughters.**

[3_51:15] **There is here also much piety, and much faithful spittle-licking and spittle-backing, before the God of Hosts.**

[3_51:16] “From on high,” drippeth the star, and the gracious spittle; for the high, longeth every starless bosom.

[3_51:17] The moon hath its court, and the court hath its moon-calves: unto all, however, that cometh from the court do the mendicant people pray, and all appointable mendicant virtues.

[3_51:18] “I serve, thou servest, we serve”—so prayeth all appointable virtue to the prince: that the merited star may at last stick on the slender breast!

[3_51:19] But the moon still revolveth around all that is earthly: so revolveth also the prince around what is earthliest of all—that, however, is the gold of the shopman.

[3_51:20] The God of the Hosts of war is not the God of the golden bar; the prince proposeth, but the shopman—disposeth!

[3_51:21] By all that is luminous and strong and good in thee, O Zarathustra! Spit on this city of shopmen and return back!

[3_51:22] Here floweth all blood putridly and tepidly and frothily through all veins: spit on the great city, which is the great slum where all the scum frotheth together!

[3_51:23] Spit on the city of compressed souls and slender breasts, of pointed eyes and sticky fingers—

[3_51:24] —On the city of the obtrusive, the brazen-faced, the pen-demagogues and tongue-demagogues, the overheated ambitious:—

[3_51:25] Where everything maimed, ill-famed, lustful, untrustful, over-mellow, sickly-yellow and seditious, festereth pernicious:—

[3_51:26] —Spit on the great city and turn back!—

[3_51:27] Here, however, did Zarathustra interrupt the foaming fool, and shut his mouth.—

[3_51:28] Stop this at once! called out Zarathustra, long have thy speech and thy species disgusted me!

[3_51:29] Why didst thou live so long by the swamp, that thou thyself hadst to become a frog and a toad?

[3_51:30] Floweth there not a tainted, frothy, swamp-blood in thine own veins, when thou hast thus learned to croak and revile?

[3_51:31] Why wentest thou not into the forest? Or why didst thou not till the ground? Is the sea not full of green islands?

[3_51:32] I despise thy contempt; and when thou warnedst me—why didst thou not warn thyself?

[3_51:33] Out of love alone shall my contempt and my warning bird take wing; but not out of the swamp!—

[3_51:34] They call thee mine ape, thou foaming fool: but I call thee my grunting-pig,—by thy grunting, thou spoilest even my praise of folly.

[3_51:35] What was it that first made thee grunt? Because no one sufficiently FLATTERED thee:—therefore didst thou seat thyself beside this filth, that thou mightiest have cause for much grunting,—

[3_51:36] —That thou mightiest have cause for much VENGEANCE! For vengeance, thou vain fool, is all thy foaming; I have divined thee well!

[3_51:37] But thy fools'-word injureth ME, even when thou art right! And even if Zarathustra's word WERE a hundred times justified, thou wouldst ever—DO wrong with my word!

[3_51:38] Thus spake Zarathustra. Then did he look on the great city and sighed, and was long silent. At last he spake thus:

[3_51:39] I loathe also this great city, and not only this fool. Here and there— there is nothing to better, nothing to worsen.

[3_51:40] Woe to this great city!—And I would that I already saw the pillar of fire in which it will be consumed!

[3_51:41] For such pillars of fire must precede the great noontide. But this hath its time and its own fate.—

[3_51:42] This precept, however, give I unto thee, in parting, thou fool: Where one can no longer love, there should one—PASS BY!—

[3_51:43] Thus spake Zarathustra, and passed by the fool and the great city.

Begin Commentary

[3_51:1] Thus slowly wandering through many peoples and divers cities, did Zarathustra return by round-about roads to his mountains and his cave. And behold, thereby came he unawares also to the gate of the GREAT CITY.

This is in 3rd person format. This is not Zarathustra relating something happening, it is a story about him. A question posed in the first sentence: how could there have been a great city that he was unaware of by his cave? We are told in the beginning that he was in his cave for ten years and he was not aware of a great city close by? Also the city being unnamed think is key to understanding. Bit of an echo back to section 15 which had the opening line “Many lands saw Zarathustra, and many peoples”. Next line,

[3_51:2] Here, however, a foaming fool, with extended hands, sprang forward to him and stood in his way.

The logistics of the first sentence are compounded here. How did the fool know Zarathustra would come by? Was he waiting for weeks? What if Zarathustra had taken a different route? It is possible, with later passages as well that this story is to be read as if there is some community multiple centuries in the future reading this account that has not yet been refined to the point it fits in with a real gospel. The facts were known

1. There was a wandering sage
2. There was a city that vanished leaving very little traces of its existence

Slowly the myth evolved. Human narratives love a crossover, of course the sage would have visited the city that later on was destroyed. Of course he a sage would have foreseen the destruction. Why didn't he warn them? One of his students tried but he personally knew it was a doomed project. It echoes the ideas but the fool was not shown as a student or the city referenced before or after. All pointing to a possible invented myth within the future followers of Zarathustra. In addition this section has a double ending similar to Mark, which is widely considered the first canonical gospel written. A word of warning to missionaries of the faith.

Next line,

[3_51:3] It was the same fool whom the people called “the ape of Zarathustra:” for he had learned from him something of the expression and modulation of language, and perhaps liked also to borrow from the store of his wisdom. And the fool talked thus to Zarathustra:

Think there is a connection here between the Ape mentioned during the tightrope walker scene in the beginning. The tightrope walker claims to be an ape and Zarathustra assures him that he is not. Here is a would be Zarathustra and Zarathustra cuts him to size. Next line,

[3_51:4] “O Zarathustra, here is the great city: here hast thou nothing to seek and everything to lose.”

The fool speaks after grabbing Zarathustra. The fool starts with an invitation. HERE is the great city, then says how bad it will be to enter. It is a flair for the dramatic. It is pointing to the thing and saying how awful it will be for you. The fool assumes that Zarathustra must not be aware of the situation there, despite it being by his home, because he can't see how anyone aware would still go. In once action and sentence we see that the fool presumes to know better than his teacher and yet need his teacher to validate his pain. This sentence also echoes a biblical warning, the lord commanding a prophet to go speak to the doomed city. Here the prophet is

warned not to. By calling it the “great city” instead of by name the passage is generic and timeless. It could be a social media site or Babylon.

Of note in German the sentence begins “hast du” vs “hast sie”, the fool uses an informal address. Basically the fool presumes to know better than his teacher and yet needs his teacher to agree with him or all his pain means nothing. So he springs up to Z, no hello old teacher no inquiry of his health, and by his word choices demonstrates that he thinks the relationship has changed. He is the teacher now. The man who taught him to burn has a student demand that he agree the flame hurts. The sage said to overcome the world, his student needs him to admit that the world cannot be overcome. You said the world could be great and I need you my former teacher to admit that I was right in giving up on it. It was a scam. Next line,

[3_51:5] Why wouldst thou wade through this mire? Have pity upon thy foot! Spit rather on the gate of the city, and—turn back!

Again the fool commands his teacher. Mire is a nicer term the German is Kotstadt literal feces-city. Possible O.T. reference in that it is a reverse Moses, Moses was commanded to go to a corrupt place to free people, here Zarathustra is commanded not to go somewhere. Possible anti-gospel theme Jesus rides on a donkey into the city, Zarathustra walks and is begged to leave before entering. One must imagine the author walking thru the unclean streets of a German city in the late 19th century. The fool tells us Zarathustra that his sense of touch via his foot will be offended. Of note the Fool lists the first level of corruption the city brings: physical. Next line,

[3_51:6] Here is the hell for anchorites’ thoughts: here are great thoughts seethed alive and boiled small.

Deep thoughts are reduced to a point that they can be digested, an anchorite is a hermit-like figure. The city takes ideas that are whole and difficult and large makes them small and weak. The ideas are not even allowed a proper death and instead are boiled while still alive. In modern terms what is normally a difficult concept the top minds of the field grapple with is presented to the public in pop-science form. The fool tells Zarathustra that his sense of taste will be offended, boiled meat is rather bland. This is the second form of corruption of the city. It replaces deep thought with shallow thought. Next line,

[3_51:7] Here do all great sentiments decay: here may only rattle-boned sensations rattle!

Sentiment as in emotions. All real emotions are left to rot and decay while all fake emotions are doing the work. Rattle-boned is an older English term for a work animal so thin its bones could be seen, notice the play on words. Rattle as in make noise rattle-boned as in without

strength. The only feelings those of the town feel are cleaned up, watered down, and without nourishment. There is no wailing there are “thoughts and prayers”. The fool tells Zarathustra that his hearing will be offended with the rattles.

This is the third corruption of the city. It replaces big authentic emotions with small ones by making small ones louder. The man openly crying is avoided but the slogan that a political leader said they care is everywhere. Next line,

[3_51:8] Smellest thou not already the shambles and cookshops of the spirit? Steameth not this city with the fumes of slaughtered spirit?

Fool moves on to the 4th sense, smell. Telling Zarathustra that you can smell the offense of spirit being cooked. To the author spirit occupies that place with our creative drives and thinking. It is the domain of the brain that can forge new values. The scale of this sentence is different. The mire is incidental, it is on the ground and no one cared, great thoughts are boiled almost at kitchen level, great feelings are allowed to rot, but here the geist the very mind of man is slaughtered to a scale that even at the gates one can smell it. All creativity and capacity to think is made into a commodity and crushed to be served. This is the 4th corruption of the city the mind is assaulted. Next line,

[3_51:9] Seest thou not the souls hanging like limp dirty rags?—And they make newspapers also out of these rags!

Fool moves on to the 5th sense, sight. Note difference between souls and spirit. Soul is generally what cannot be put into words except vaguely. A formulation, Spirit builds meaning; soul bears value. The soul of the people in the great city has no shape it just flops down. And yet they makes newspaper out of it. What has been wrung out its still not allowed to just allowed to die. You read what was left of someone who once had a soul. This is the 5th corruption of the city the soul is assaulted. Next line,

[3_51:10] Hearest thou not how spirit hath here become a verbal game? Loathsome verbal swill doth it vomit forth! -And they make newspapers also out of this verbal swill.

Now passed the senses language itself. Our highest values become yet another game we play. Who can care less, who can care more, who can be made to care, who can be made to not? What motivates you to let factions of the city win? The words needed to change the spirit to win the points to win the game. This is the 6th corruption of the city, language is assaulted.

The word here that swill comes from is Spüllicht there is an alternative translation of used dishwater, think it is the more apt translation since it matches the sentence two sentences back

about limp souls hanging. Presumably after being washed and wrung out. Vomit is a key word choice here since it is an involuntary act. It would seem the spirit of the city itself is vomiting on the inhabitants. A frightful mental image. Instead of spirit of the city uplifting the residents to higher values it instead covers them in offensive material. The city turns personal anecdotal soul, previous line Seest thou not the souls hanging like limp dirty rags?, and sells it and takes the city soul and sells it. One can imagine the news of the city full of writers claiming authority for what they claim to value and what they claim the values of the city are. You cannot trust the founding myth of the city and you cannot trust the origin story of author. Both are invoked to sell you outrage. The talking-heads of the city are corrupt which is the 7th corruption. Next line,

[3_51:11] They hound one another, and know not whither! They inflame one another, and know not why! They tinkle with their pinchbeck, they jingle with their gold.

People are pursued and no one is even sure where the victims are running too. It is reactive instead of creative. The population turns themselves from equals to pursued and pursuer the 8th corruption.

Anger each other and they 1. don't intend it 2. intend it but aren't sure why. People are not elevated in the city they are antagonized unintentionally or intentionally but not with a goal in mind. Impotent rage strikes them leading to resentment the 9th corruption.

Pinchbeck is a form of fake gold. This passage indicates that both the rich and people who can appear rich do so for notice. They jingle with their wealth. The value substance equation is broken. You could imagine them valuing a watch over how much clout it gives you over the quality of the build. The 10th corruption. Next line,

[3_51:12] They are cold, and seek warmth from distilled waters: they are inflamed, and seek coolness from frozen spirits; they are all sick and sore through public opinion.

Booze is used to bring you up and bring you down. Instead of using your passions as an engine a chemical is used to dampen them. When you feel nothing and are numb you drink to feel anything, when you were upset by someone you drink to feel relaxed. The population is fully reactive and reactive to itself. If modern life has you feeling numb and withdrawn do not bother to learn to be your own engine, take a shot. If modern life makes you upset do not bother to learn to regulate or use your own passion instead take another shot.

Basically when they can't handle what they did to each other, via inflaming and hounding, they self medicate vs what Zarathustra would advise to live with that passion and use it. You are angry? Thank the universe for that blessing and carve some wood don't dampen it with poison. It is also a word play that if self-medication doesn't work go find that calm person in your life and spend time with them. Next line,

[3_51:13] All lusts and vices are here at home; but here there are also the virtuous; there is much appointable appointed virtue:—

One can find any base pleasure, the fool admits that there are a few good people around, however the majority of the virtue is for employment. People do not do what they consider right unless it benefits their position in the city. Abraham haggles with god to even 10 saints, but Zarathustra doesn't haggle. Geist matters not numbers. Perhaps best mental image would be a society where the rules are followed by those lacking power to break them out of blind obedience not by choice. No one chooses to return a wallet you left by accident in the restaurant the corporate guidelines state employees are to do that. The choice is not what is right and what is wrong the choice is will you follow the rule or will you not. Next line,

[3_51:14] Much appointable virtue with scribe-fingers, and hardy sitting-flesh and waiting-flesh, blessed with small breast-stars, and padded, haunchless daughters.

The city product is clerical staff with hands for paperwork and bodies for meetings plus waiting rooms, an economy of ribbons and children for appearance not strength. Corruption 11 and 12 and 13. It turns the civil servants into paperwork pushers enshrines mediocrity as medal worthy and turns the children into ornaments. Next line,

[3_51:15] There is here also much piety, and much faithful spittle-licking and spittle-backing, before the God of Hosts.

Trouble with this one. Step by step. There is here piety as in they do have religion. Faithful spittle-licking as in the religion is cared out by sucking up. God of hosts is the old testament way to refer to god indicating that this is not the god of love and truth they worship. This is the god that outranks them. They don't true to align with Christian ideal of a perfectly good being they try to praise a bronze age god who is to be feared. Which ties into the previous line in that they have extended their ideas of a civil service up to theology. God is your boss, you salute the rank not the person. Next line,

[3_51:16] "From on high," drippeth the star, and the gracious spittle; for the high, longeth every starless bosom.

Contrast the sun that he likens unto the truth that overflows the cup in the prologue vs the stars here that drool on people and they are so deprived so poor that they are grateful for the drool. It is a revolting image. In the prologue he imagines himself a bee that has gather too much honey it has to give it away here the city residents aren't feasting on spare honey they are

groveling for spittle. Starless bosom perhaps refers to people who seek recognition for their work in medals. Next line,

[3_51:17] **The moon hath its court, and the court hath its moon-calves: unto all, however, that cometh from the court do the mendican't people pray, and all appointable mendican't virtues.**

The moon doesn't illuminate, it borrows from the sun. The authority here is on borrowed power. Moon-calves refer to a fable that harmful moonbeams would cause low intelligence. Yet even this borrowed authority surrounded by fools do the people grovel to with false virtues.

The government is led by someone with no ideas of their own and attracts people even more foolish. Yet despite second-hand ideas people grovel to it and put the motions of virtues while not having those virtues. They aren't humble but they address the powers that be with the proper titles, they aren't patriotic but they will say the correct words. Suggest rereads of this passage to get a visual on the court of the moon. Dark except a faint reflection, groveling people to those who they cannot see clearly. Next line,

[3_51:18] **"I serve, thou servest, we serve"—so prayeth all appointable virtue to the prince: that the merited star may at last stick on the slender breast!**

The first phrase is I serve, thou servest, we serve is marked in the German equivalent of air quotes. The fool is mocking a phrase that goes around the town. An inversion of the Plato ideal that the rulers of the city serve the city only for excellence while the government officials here serve for worthless medals. Good to keep in mind the extraordinary complex social world the author lived in regarding medals, who had them, who had which, etc.

The fool really takes issue with virtue that looks real but is not. The mentality of a man who gives a customer the correct change not because a sense of giving everyone their due but because the corporate handbook says so. Over and over the fool screams of appointable virtue. The population shows appointable virtue so they may be given the award of a medal, a star on their breast by the prince of who leads the moon court. Not only due they pursue virtue for approval but the approval itself a parody of actual honor.

Passage also is a quote from Zarathustra himself see [3_49:33]. The ape is capable of getting a quote correctly. Next line,

[3_51:19] **But the moon still revolveth around all that is earthly: so revolveth also the prince around what is earthliest of all—that, however, is the gold of the shopman.**

A reverse of the Plato order. Merchants rule Government and Government rules celestial. Since the government decides what virtue really is and the wealthy decide what the government does gold is their form of the good. Also we can see the author's point of view as the so called nobility was hollowed out and bought out by the rising industrial leaders. The German nobility did not die with a bang but with a buyout. Next line,

[3_51:20] The God of the Hosts of war is not the God of the golden bar; the prince proposeth, but the shopman—disposeth!

The god of hosts is the one of the bible. An active force in our world used to justify who rules and what decisions are to be made the god of a golden bar is not a living force but a dead metal. The fool is stating that the city, much like the ancient Israelites, have forsaken their real god for Mammon or Money. The prince doesn't rule via divine fiat the prince follows what his employers say. The last sentence is a play on words of the expression man purposes god disposes. Next line,

[3_51:21] By all that is luminous and strong and good in thee, O Zarathustra! Spit on this city of shopmen and return back!

The fool is now starting to repeat himself. Still luminous is a talented connection to the court of the moon earlier in the rant. The fool repeats himself because he is stuck in a resentment loop. He is not overcoming. Good or gut is an interesting choice of word here. Zarathustra seeks to go beyond good and evil and the fool is still clinging to the herd terms. Connecting back to the first part of this section when the fool is described as someone who can imitate some of what Zarathustra says but misses the point. He isn't even asking Zarathustra to create anymore. He wants him to not try to save the city, or just walk away, he wants Zarathustra to spit on the city and then leave. Next line,

[3_51:22] Here floweth all blood putridly and tepidly and frothily through all veins: spit on the great city, which is the great slum where all the scum frotheth together!

The blood of the city itself is septic. Beyond saving. Heraclitus might be invoked here. He said you can never step in the same river twice because of constant change, the fool insists that the river doesn't change it merely rots. Pretty vile mental image here instead of blood nourishing all parts of the body it moves all that is awful around. Another illusion to Plato and his idea of a city that acted as an individual human. Next line,

[3_51:23] Spit on the city of compressed souls and slender breasts, of pointed eyes and sticky fingers—

Compressed souls, what is the highest most unexpressionable in us is hammered and dented, compressed in a word. Slender breasts lacking all health and strength. Pointed eyes watching everyone and watching who is watching who and finally sticky fingers always stealing. Zarathustra gives freely, the residents of the city put a price on everything. One can imagine the dead stares of men beaten into obedience, malnourished and thin, constantly looking at one another out of fear and stealing all they think they can. The city cannot create it can only steal. Next line,

[3_51:24] —On the city of the obtrusive, the brazen-faced, the pen-demagogues and tongue-demagogues, the overheated ambitious:—

They do not mind their own concern, they are shameless, their public figures write to inflame the masses, the people do not have healthy ambition they have frenzy ambition trying to accomplish what others deem valuable. Perhaps imagine the last part as a roaring steam engine that is leaking and cannot move the train. Next line,

[3_51:25] Where everything maimed, ill-famed, lustful, untrustful, over-mellow, sickly-yellow and seditious, festereth pernicious:—

All of it is injured, all of them have a bad reputation, all of them have no control over their desires, all of them do not trust one another, all are “over-mellow” like fruit with a decayed softness, all of them are almost physically sickly, all of them conspire against one another, and lastly they festereth pernicious. As in they don’t only stink they fester and pernicious as in it is a hidden rot. Two observations here the word fester in English might not be the best translation. Fester implies change a wound festers when it gets worse, the German term could also be translated as boiled over. A mental image of churning water in a pot. Connecting it back to our steam engine before there is something going on but its not directed to movement forward only on to itself. The boiler is boiling but the steam isn’t getting to the engine.

The second observation is that the fool mentioned ill-famed. Now Zarathustra would not care about reputation so why does the fool invoke it? The fool is still mixing values of the city with values of Zarathustra. But what is interesting is that the fool just explained how the people in the city care a lot about how they look and now is saying they fail at it. Even their own awful low virtues they cannot reach. Next line,

[3_51:26] —Spit on the great city and turn back!—

The fool again is repeating himself. Locked in the cycle of resentment. Next line,

[3_51:27] Here, however, did Zarathustra interrupt the foaming fool, and shut his mouth.—

This is where Zarathustra has heard enough. The fool has looped back. Note the preceding two lines had dashes in them. Indicating that the fool was pausing and hoping Zarathustra would agree. He has worn himself down after having enraged himself up. He needs his old teacher to assent, which Zarathustra is not going to do. Instead Zarathustra is going to speak. Having Zarathustra assault the fool has echoes of one Thersites in Iliad. A common born soldier who spoke truth to his commanders, who is then beaten for it. He might have spoken the truth but since it came from cowardly resentment and a position of weakness the author is fine with him being silenced. Next line,

[3_51:28] Stop this at once! called out Zarathustra, long have thy speech and thy species disgusted me!

A double insult. Not only what you said but what kinda man you are that you said it. Next line,

[3_51:29] Why didst thou live so long by the swamp, that thou thyself hadst to become a frog and a toad?

The metaphor is clear, the city is a swamp and the fool has become an animal of it by staying so long. Frogs sit between land and water, endlessly croaking. The fool sits at the gate of the city ranting. Toads are more foul and are associated with poison ugliness. This is a double attack the fool is not only loud he is toxic. Next line,

[3_51:30] Floweth there not a tainted, frothy, swamp-blood in thine own veins, when thou hast thus learned to croak and revile?

Here Zarathustra pushes home his metaphor and says the fool now has swamp water in his veins. The fool thought the corruption was outside the city but by being there he allowed it in himself. Note the doubling again at the end. Croak and revile, from frog and toad, and from speech and species. Zarathustra has done something clever here. Speech-frog-croak, then, species-toad-revile. A triplet. Next line,

[3_51:31] Why wentest thou not into the forest? Or why didst thou not till the ground? Is the sea not full of green islands?

The fool had other options. Zarathustra had told him what resulted and now is showing the fool's culpability in it. Three options are presented: forest, farm, and sea. A match to the 3 forms we saw earlier camel, lion, and child. Of note Zarathustra went to the forest and the green islands earlier in the book and made references to seeds and sowing as well. Another phrasing is build the tangible, build a peace, find somewhere else to be.

As noted by Peter S. Groff in some aspects the fool's refusal to leave the city are akin to Socrates yet without the personal distance, clever dialectic, or humor.

Next line,

[3_51:32] I despise thy contempt; and when thou warnedst me—why didst thou not warn thyself?

Taking a step back Zarathustra asks why the fool wasn't able to warn himself of the city. While Zarathustra often talks about contempt it is to get you moving forward not to attach yourself to what is beneath you. Next line,

[3_51:33] Out of love alone shall my contempt and my warning bird take wing; but not out of the swamp!

Straightforward contempt with love is a driving force not contempt with hate. Next line

[3_51:34] They call thee mine ape, thou foaming fool: but I call thee my grunting-pig,—by thy grunting, thou spoilest even my praise of folly.

The ape initiates Zarathustra is placing the pig even lower. Worth noting that pigs thrive in three environments named; forests, farms, and green islands. Zarathustra is really twisting the knife here. Not only were other options open but the fool would have thrived in them. It is not an illusion of choice. Praise of folly part is tricky. Fools make folly and Zarathustra praises folly but not this fool and not this folly. Suggest the reading is that Zarathustra praises folly it is a folly of a child higher play and joy not the folly of bad decisions that confine you to poison. Next line,

[3_51:35] What was it that first made thee grunt? Because no one sufficiently FLATTERED thee:—therefore didst thou seat thyself beside this filth, that thou mightiest have cause for much grunting,—

You did not get praised so you decided to sit there to have a lot to complain about. As before Zarathustra is not saying the fool was wrong about the city he is upset about the choices and speech of the fool. Not the action the reaction. Next line,

[3_51:36] —That thou mightiest have cause for much VENGEANCE! For vengeance, thou vain fool, is all thy foaming; I have divined thee well!

You are vain meaning you depend on the opinions of others. Which when denied leads you to resentment and from their moralizing and ranting. You could have choose any of the 3 metamorphoses and been successful. Camel the farm and productive labor, the forests the lion and independence, or the green islands child and exploration. Instead the fool stayed seeking vengeance on those that did not heap praise on him. Next line,

[3_51:37] But thy fools'-word injureth ME, even when thou art right! And even if Zarathustra's word WERE a hundred times justified, thou wouldest ever—DO wrong with my word!

You sought to hurt the Great City but really you are hurting me, your former teacher. Even when you are correct about the Great City, even if you were the most correct person whomever was correct about anything you would still misuse what I taught you. It was the process of application not the physics underlying it. Truth in the wrong hands becomes poison. What is more because he is aping Zarathustra the ideas of his teacher become associated. It is guilt by association. People will see the fool and think that is what Zarathustra is saying.

[3_51:38] Thus spake Zarathustra. Then did he look on the great city and sighed, and was long silent. At last he spake thus:

Rant is over counter rant is over, five animal metaphors, and one swamp. The croaking the vengeance the demand for silence. Zarathustra does not just walk away at this point he looks at the Great City and sighs. It really does corrupt everything, including one of his former students and by extension Zarathustra himself. The fool is not merely a fool he is the bastard child of the city and Zarathustra. And all the damage this place has done it is well, still here.

The silence adds to the drama of the moment. The fool can be silenced but the city abides.

Of note that most sections end with Thus Spoke Zarathustra but this one restarts, if the theory holds that this section is fictional within the novel universe and was part of a community folk tales much later this could be the type of restart that we see in Gospel of Mark. Next line,

[3_51:39] I loathe also this great city, and not only this fool. Here and there— there is nothing to better, nothing to worsen.

Zarathustra is not speaking to the fool anymore and it is not clear who is being addressed. We are not told of any onlookers to the exchange. Feeds into the idea that this sandwich story is part of the community that came much later. They are the intended audience. The line itself the fool is the symptom the Great City is the disease. The city cannot be made worse and it cannot be improved, a line that will make more sense soon. Next line,

[3_51:40] Woe to this great city!—And I would that I already saw the pillar of fire in which it will be consumed!

We see in the gospels, written decades later, Jesus predicting the destruction of the temple. Here we have Zarathustra predicting the fall of the Great City. Two problems are solved in one line

1. why didn't the historical Zarathustra build a community there if it was right by his cave?
2. Why the city fell. Because Zarathustra condemned it. Sure. Why did he condemn it however? Well we were just told by the fool.

The pillar of fire is telling very biblical.

It would seem that the Great City not only corrupted the fool but has even corrupted Zarathustra a bit by extension through the fool. Here he is wishing destruction not love on the city. Also a reversal of the biblical prophets. The prophets argue and plead with god they lament the bloodbath that is coming. Zarathustra does not.

Speculation of what it must have been like the day the Great City fell. Pundits and influencers and nepo babies and so-called leaders watching the flooded dam crack. All agreeing it is someone's fault while the one or two plumbers who are left blink, think of their credit card debt, and welcome the waves. Next line,

[3_51:41] For such pillars of fire must precede the great noontide. But this hath its time and its own fate.—

Noontide is discussed as an allegory in other sections of the book. At noon wisdom, the sun, is at its highest. All that is left is the steady act of going under. All shadows become their smallest and life must be said yes to or not. The Great City must be destroyed before this occurs. When humans can live on earth without delusion or small thoughts. And we can almost feel the aside as Zarathustra tells us that this Great City has its time and fate. There is no need to bring the destruction early it will happen. Next line,

[3_51:42] This precept, however, give I unto thee, in parting, thou fool: Where one can no longer love, there should one—PASS BY!—

Zarathustra has returned to role of teacher, he is not just yelling at the fool he is yelling at all of us who uses his words. When you can no longer love, when you can no longer say yes again to it, pass by. Do not do as the fool and wallow. It is survival so you do not get infected and self-discipline in that you have to be prepared to do the very hard act of letting it have its time and place. This is perhaps the hardest challenge Zarathustra hands us, natural problem solvers having to know when to walk away. Next line,

[3_51:43] Thus spake Zarathustra, and passed by the fool and the great city.

Jesus entered on a donkey, Zarathustra passed by. The sheer totality of the Great City. You remember that scene in the OT when Abraham pleads for Sodom and the city can't even produce ten? Genesis 18. There is no sense it does not offend, no class worth mentioning, their top thinkers/rulers/spiritual leaders/artists even the middle class even the children even the infrastructure. Nothing is worth saving. Your options are to stay in Sodom and become even worse than the residents or to pass by.

Weaver Santaniello in the Death of God suggests that the fool is actually asking Zarathustra to go away, not join him on the outskirts but actually go away. Leave him to wallow. Also that Eugen Dühring might be who Nietzsche had in mind when writing about the fool.

Odysseus with his wanderings was the one who assaulted Thersites. It is too much to say Zarathustra is a stand in for Odysseus, but the stories do echo. This is not the first time we have seen Zarathustra align with Odysseus. See [3_49:1].

Worth quoting Beyond Good and Evil #146 He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee.

Weaver Santaniello. "Nietzsche: American Idol or European Prophet? The 'Death of God' in America and Nietzsche's Madman." *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, vol. 38, no. 2–3, 2017, pp. 201–22. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjtheophil.38.2-3.0201>. Accessed 13 July 2025.

Groff, Peter. ““Is the Sea Not Full of Verdant Islands?”: Zarathustra on Passing by the Great City.” Joy and Laughter in Nietzsche’s Political Philosophy: Alternative Liberatory Politics, Ed. Michael McNeal and Paul Kirkland (Bloomsbury, 2022), 2022.

Book 3 – 52 – Apostates

[3_52:1] Ah, lieth everything already withered and gray which but lately stood green and many-hued on this meadow! And how much honey of hope did I carry hence into my beehives!

[3_52:2] Those young hearts have already all become old—and not old even! only weary, ordinary, comfortable:—they declare it: “We have again become pious.”

[3_52:3] Of late did I see them run forth at early morn with valorous steps: but the feet of their knowledge became weary, and now do they malign even their morning valour!

[3_52:4] Verily, many of them once lifted their legs like the dancer; to them winked the laughter of my wisdom:—then did they bethink themselves. Just now have I seen them bent down—to creep to the cross.

[3_52:5] Around light and liberty did they once flutter like gnats and young poets. A little older, a little colder: and already are they mystifiers, and mumblers and mollycoddles.

[3_52:6] Did perhaps their hearts despond, because lonesomeness had swallowed me like a whale? Did their ear perhaps hearken yearningly-long for me IN VAIN, and for my trumpet-notes and herald-calls?

[3_52:7] —Ah! Ever are there but few of those whose hearts have persistent courage and exuberance; and in such remaineth also the spirit patient. The rest, however, are COWARDLY.

[3_52:8] The rest: these are always the great majority, the common-place, the superfluous, the far too many—those all are cowardly!—

[3_52:9] Him who is of my type, will also the experiences of my type meet on the way: so that his first companions must be corpses and buffoons.

[3_52:10] His second companions, however—they will call themselves his BELIEVERS,—will be a living host, with much love, much folly, much unbearded veneration.

[3_52:11] To those believers shall he who is of my type among men not bind his heart; in those spring-times and many-hued meadows shall he not believe, who knoweth the fickly faint-hearted human species!

[3_52:12] COULD they do otherwise, then would they also WILL otherwise. The half-and-half spoil every whole. That leaves become withered,—what is there to lament about that!

[3_52:13] Let them go and fall away, O Zarathustra, and do not lament! Better even to blow amongst them with rustling winds,—

[3_52:14] —Blow amongst those leaves, O Zarathustra, that everything WITHERED may run away from thee the faster!—

[3_52:15] “**We have again become pious**”—so do those apostates confess; and some of them are still too pusillanimous thus to confess.

[3_52:16] Unto them I look into the eye,—before them I say it unto their face and unto the blush on their cheeks: Ye are those who again PRAY!

[3_52:17] It is however a shame to pray! Not for all, but for thee, and me, and whoever hath his conscience in his head. For THEE it is a shame to pray!

[3_52:18] Thou knowest it well: the faint-hearted devil in thee, which would fain fold its arms, and place its hands in its bosom, and take it easier:—this faint-hearted devil persuadeth thee that “**there IS a God!**”

[3_52:19] THEREBY, however, dost thou belong to the light-dreading type, to whom light never permitteth repose: now must thou daily thrust thy head deeper into obscurity and vapour!

[3_52:20] And verily, thou choosest the hour well: for just now do the nocturnal birds again fly abroad. The hour hath come for all light-dreading people, the vesper hour and leisure hour, when they do not—“take leisure.”

[3_52:21] I hear it and smell it: it hath come—their hour for hunt and procession, not indeed for a wild hunt, but for a tame, lame, snuffling, soft-treaders’, soft-prayers’ hunt,—

[3_52:22] —For a hunt after susceptible simpletons: all mouse-traps for the heart have again been set! And whenever I lift a curtain, a night-moth rusheth out of it.

[3_52:23] Did it perhaps squat there along with another night-moth? For everywhere do I smell small concealed communities; and wherever there are closets there are new devotees therein, and the atmosphere of devotees.

[3_52:24] They sit for long evenings beside one another, and say: “**Let us again become like little children and say, ‘good God!’**”—ruined in mouths and stomachs by the pious confectioners.

[3_52:25] Or they look for long evenings at a crafty, lurking cross-spider, that preacheth prudence to the spiders themselves, and teacheth that “**under crosses it is good for cobweb-spinning!**”

[3_52:26] Or they sit all day at swamps with angle-rods, and on that account think themselves PROFOUND; but whoever fisheth where there are no fish, I do not even call him superficial!

[3_52:27] Or they learn in godly-gay style to play the harp with a hymn-poet, who would fain harp himself into the heart of young girls:—for he hath tired of old girls and their praises.

[3_52:28] Or they learn to shudder with a learned semi-madcap, who waiteth in darkened rooms for spirits to come to him—and the spirit runneth away entirely!

[3_52:29] Or they listen to an old roving howl- and growl-piper, who hath learnt from the sad winds the sadness of sounds; now pipeth he as the wind, and preacheth sadness in sad strains.

[3_52:30] And some of them have even become night-watchmen: they know now how to blow horns, and go about at night and awaken old things which have long fallen asleep.

[3_52:31] Five words about old things did I hear yester-night at the garden-wall: they came from such old, sorrowful, arid night-watchmen.

[3_52:32] “For a father he careth not sufficiently for his children: human fathers do this better!”—

[3_52:33] “He is too old! He now careth no more for his children,”—answered the other night-watchman.

[3_52:34] “HATH he then children? No one can prove it unless he himself prove it! I have long wished that he would for once prove it thoroughly.”

[3_52:35] “Prove? As if HE had ever proved anything! Proving is difficult to him; he layeth great stress on one’s BELIEVING him.”

[3_52:36] “Ay! Ay! Belief saveth him; belief in him. That is the way with old people! So it is with us also!”—

[3_52:37] —Thus spake to each other the two old night-watchmen and light-scarers, and tooted thereupon sorrowfully on their horns: so did it happen yester-night at the garden-wall.

[3_52:38] To me, however, did the heart writhe with laughter, and was like to break; it knew not where to go, and sunk into the midriff.

[3_52:39] Verily, it will be my death yet—to choke with laughter when I see asses drunken, and hear night-watchmen thus doubt about God.

[3_52:40] Hath the time not LONG since passed for all such doubts? Who may nowadays awaken such old slumbering, light-shunning things!

[3_52:41] With the old Deities hath it long since come to an end:—and verily, a good joyful Deity-end had they!

[3_52:42] They did not “begloom” themselves to death—that do people fabricate! On the contrary, they—LAUGHED themselves to death once on a time!

[3_52:43] That took place when the unGodliest utterance came from a God himself—the utterance: “**There is but one God! Thou shalt have no other Gods before me!**”—

[3_52:44] —An old grim-beard of a God, a jealous one, forgot himself in such wise:—

[3_52:45] And all the Gods then laughed, and shook upon their thrones, and exclaimed: “**Is it not just divinity that there are Gods, but no God?**”

[3_52:46] He that hath an ear let him hear.—

[3_52:47] Thus talked Zarathustra in the city he loved, which is surnamed “The Pied Cow.” For from here he had but two days to travel to reach once more his cave and his animals; his soul, however, rejoiced unceasingly on account of the nighness of his return home.

Begin Commentary

[3_52:1] Ah, lieth everything already withered and grey which but lately stood green and many-hued on this meadow! And how much honey of hope did I carry hence into my beehives!

We know later that he is addressing the residents about the higher men he left in Pied Cow but the beginning we are eavesdropping. Not knowing who he is speaking to and where. We can assume that it is in autumn in more ways than one. The second sentence is stretching the metaphor from the prologue to the breaking point. He claimed he was like a bee [1_0:7] who had too much honey, here he implies that he brought honey to a beehive. Perhaps suggesting that he saw himself as more as the bee who taught the other bees to gather honey by showing them honey, showing them what was possible. This would match what he said earlier how he was the herald of the ubermensch not the übermensch.

The fact that we do not know where this is happening in the first sentence is very unusual for section 3, later on who he is addressing will change as well. The effect is a bewilderment on the reader matching the bewilderment of Zarathustra on seeing his higher men lapse.

Additionally there are some structure similarities between here and Ecclesiastes. The lack of context and the shifting of who is being address and the mournful tone. Next line,

[3_52:2] Those young hearts have already all become old—and not old even! only weary, ordinary, comfortable:—they declare it: “**We have again become pious.**”

He sees his former followers have achieved all the flaws of the elderly with none of the positives. Having been set free by Zarathustra’s speeches they have retreated back into mediocrity of religion and comfort. Pay heed to the word choices here. They have grown old, not that they have grown. They have again become pious. The phrasing is inversion of our normal virtues that rank pious as higher. The higher men have become pious like an addict relapsing. Next line,

[3_52:3] Of late did I see them run forth at early morn with valorous steps: but the feet of their knowledge became weary, and now do they malign even their morning valour!

Before the higher men were bold but they grew tired and presently they even hate what they were. Subtle shifting metaphors from seasons, to age, to human movement. The section is titled Apostates another word for heresy. Indicating that the higher men of Pied Cow have committed heresy against what Zarathustra laid down. In this passage the feet of knowledge, the understanding Zarathustra has given them, has not made them stronger it has made them weaker. Or rather they allowed it to make them weaker. And now they malign what they once were. Praising their new weakness as being superior to their former strength. Strength is not weakness, to say otherwise is heresy to Zarathustra. Next line,

[3_52:4] Verily, many of them once lifted their legs like the dancer; to them winked the laughter of my wisdom:—then did they bethink themselves. Just now have I seen them bent down—to creep to the cross.

Echoing back to the Prologue where Zarathustra we are told moves like a dancer [1_0:19]. The implication here is that even with the weight of his wisdom on their feet their strength was such that they moved with fluid grace. They danced to the music of play, the height of the 3 stages. Then it came down. They bethink. What is normally useful, reflection became in this case crippling. Bringing them back to the herd of conformity. Now they no longer dance upright free they creep low down bent groveling in submission to religion. Next line,

[3_52:5] Around light and liberty did they once flutter like gnats and young poets. A little older, a little colder: and already are they mystifiers, and mumblers and mollycoddles.

Gnats make a big show of buzzing around but are gone in a day. Young poets invoke images of people who can articulate beauty without depth due to inexperience. Leaning towards the idea that the author is warning us to not think just getting a brand new toy of an idea means you have mastered it, absorbed it, made it your own. Fast to pickup and fast to put down. The slightest strain, natural aging and the weather, and they regressed to their pre-zarathustra state. Mystifiers using vague ideas to make the simple difficult, mumblers speaking their prayers and mollycoddles the spoiled. Of note Zarathustra uses parables all of the time so you may wonder what the difference is. The corrupted higher men now speak in parables and so does he. The difference is Zarathustra speaks for the life-affirming, the dangerous, the demanding. The mystifiers speak evasively, weakly, and cowardly. One speaks to uplift and one speaks out of cowardice.

There is also something thematic going on. He keeps throwing metaphors/similes up. Autumn, bees, age, body movement, gnats, poets. could almost swear he is getting worked up and throwing analogies at the problem hoping if he can find one that fits he can get a handle on the situation. Next line,

[3_52:6] Did perhaps their hearts despond, because lonesomeness had swallowed me like a whale? Did their ear perhaps hearken yearningly-long for me IN VAIN, and for my trumpet-notes and herald-calls?

A moment of doubt for Zarathustra. Maybe it is his fault. Where did the sin come from? He wasn't there. They yearned for him to return and he did not in time. The allusions are multiple with this short passage. Moses goes up the mountain and the sin of the golden calf, Jonah obviously, even Jesus to a degree in that he is to return and set things right, perhaps a reference to what the hermit said in the beginning to him "As in the sea hast thou lived in solitude ". Which would all add to the bitterness of the situation. Zarathustra points the way he does not want to lead to the way yet unsupervised the higher men relapse. And Zarathustra mission is not only a failure but his own life is a repeating failure. Next line,

[3_52:7] —Ah! Ever are there but few of those whose hearts have persistent courage and exuberance; and in such remaineth also the spirit patient. The rest, however, are COWARDLY.

It would seem persistent courage is the hinge virtue not doctrine purity that causes apostates. The Ah is a mark of resignation and discovery. He has shown them the way to freedom, they tasted it, they were terrified, they went back. Yet there are still a minority within a minority with some courage. Next line,

[3_52:8] The rest: these are always the great majority, the common-place, the superfluous, the far too many—those all are cowardly!—

Just repeating himself, very un-Zarathustra. He normally makes each sentence count and shock. Here he is not only repeating himself across the sentences but within in it. Clearly this offense has rattled him. Next line,

[3_52:9] Him who is of my type, will also the experiences of my type meet on the way: so that his first companions must be corpses and buffoons.

Well, here is some whiplash. Zarathustra goes from lamenting particulars to prophecy and memory. Someone like him is going to fail at first, he will attract the heavy spiritually cold

unable to grow but non-resisting dead and the full of potential and active hostility of the buffoon. Also touches on the Prologue and how appropriate it happened in the same town. Next line,

[3_52:10] His second companions, however—they will call themselves his BELIEVERS,—will be a living host, with much love, much folly, much unbearded veneration.

After death and mockery you get the naive crowd. Their love is real but their maturity is not. They will call themselves his believers. Not that they believe the ideas, not that they are believers in even him, they call themselves it. As if making a claim, even a poor one, will make it true. Next line,

[3_52:11] To those believers shall he who is of my type among men not bind his heart; in those spring-times and many-hued meadows shall he not believe, who knoweth the fickle faint-hearted human species!

Youth is all fireworks. To all would be prophets don't mistake fireworks for fuel. Next line,

[3_52:12] COULD they do otherwise, then would they also WILL otherwise. The half-and-half spoil every whole. That leaves become withered,—what is there to lament about that!

First way to understand this is just a statement of realism. They just do not have the courage to hold the Zarathustran view of life. The result is the movement non-movement is better off without them. There is no reason to mourn someone who causes more problems than they are worth no longer causing problems.

Second way to understand is the biblical passages they echo. Jonah lamenting the death of the tree after the city was spared, and Jesus repeated reminders that half faith is actually worse than none.

Also think there is a third component. If they could they will, it is FOMO. They immaturity of his followers are such that whatever is presented as an option is what they want. Next line,

[3_52:13] Let them go and fall away, O Zarathustra, and do not lament! Better even to blow amongst them with rustling winds,—

Like Ecclesiastes we see here Zarathustra making peace with the natural turn of events. Leaves wither and are scattered by the wind, such is the nature of autumn. Connection to Ecclesiastes 1:6 where the wind return according to its circuits. The prophet changed from

speaking to others to addressing himself. The shifting tone perhaps suggests that the advice is to reader who assumes his role one day. We can think of the previous section and his advice about releasing resentment. Notice that Zarathustra still thinks some good came out of it. The leaves didn't just fall, he rustled them. Next line,

[3_52:14] —Blow amongst those leaves, O Zarathustra, that everything WITHERED may run away from thee the faster!—

Connects well with the previous line. He is getting himself pumped that the more he speaks the more those not of his kind will flee. A variation of Isaiah 40:7-8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever. This concludes the prophets first lament in this section. Next line,

[3_52:15] “We have again become pious”—so do those apostates confess; and some of them are still too pusillanimous thus to confess.

Tricky line. We saw in the first lament that the apostates declared their relapse. He grasped it, he let the emotions wash over him, he made a plan of action, and he YES again it. Now he appears to be circling back. This is really not like him. He moves forward, he says only a few words with great power, now however he is ranting and raving. The trick is on the word difference. Before they “declared” it, now they “confess” it. This whole incident has deeply rattled the man and he needs to address it on multiple angles. As for the line directly some of them confess that they are cowards, some of them are so cowardly they won't even own it. Next line,

[3_52:16] Unto them I look into the eye,—before them I say it unto their face and unto the blush on their cheeks: Ye are those who again PRAY!

Not being subtle here. They might be cowards but Zarathustra is not. He looks into them and throws it at them. They pray? Of all the people they pray? No metaphor, no parable, just a straight angry declaration of what they did. A teacher reduced to scolding. Zarathustra rarely condemns, he chooses to uplift but here he is fed up. Perhaps slight connection to Elijah Kings 1:18. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. His students were wavering between the two options. Live on earth, or grovel to their previous god. Next line,

[3_52:17] It is however a shame to pray! Not for all, but for thee, and me, and whoever hath his conscience in his head. For THEE it is a shame to pray!

In German the structure is a bit clearer. Three people are singled out Zarathustra himself, his student, and anyone else who knows better. Might be connected to Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. In any case here we see Zarathustra at the peak of his elitism. Prayer for the herd? Not his concern. Prayer for those who have heard his words? A shameful disgrace that he is having difficulty processing.

Imagine the anguish you would feel watching someone you respect have to grovel to an employer, or client, or customer, or a government official, or anyone with the smallest power. Seeing the strong bending the knee, you would want to shake them. Tell them that it is not needed, remind them of their strength. The apostates bent the knee to a phantom, a product of human fears. This is why Zarathustra shakes with rage. Strength shall not knell to weakness. Next line,

[3_52:18] Thou knowest it well: the faint-hearted devil in thee, which would fain fold its arms, and place its hands in its bosom, and take it easier:—this faint-hearted devil persuadeth thee that “there IS a God!”

Breaking it up. “thou knowest it well” means you cannot excuse it with ignorance. “the faint-hearted devil” the voice in your head that isn’t a screaming raging rebel against god, the devil of being scared and lazy. “in thee”. Not supernatural, not even external, in you. Together Zarathustra is saying you know you have a voice in your head willing you to comfort and terror. “which would fain fold its arms”. i.e. the prayer position “place its hands in its bosom”. Echoing of Paul telling us that knowledge of god is written in our hearts. “and take it easier”. No more overcoming and striving. “this faint-hearted devil persuadeth thee that “there is a god”. This thing, this nothing, this voice in your head that talks from its fear and weakness actually convinced you that an actual god exists? Even if a god did what would this voice know of it? It knows fear and confusion and how to grovel, it would know nothing of metaphysics. The rest of the line is a classic Zarathustra reversal. The devil tempts you to not follow god, this devil tempts you to follow god. While religion teaches us that the voice leads us to god, Zarathustra reveals the voice to be our cowardice. Next line,

[3_52:19] THEREBY, however, dost thou belong to the light-dreading type, to whom light never permitteth repose: now must thou daily thrust thy head deeper into obscurity and vapour!

Light = truth, you have to avoid truth. If you are faced with it you cannot rest in it. And every day you have to shove your head deeper and deeper into what isn’t real and what doesn’t

make sense. The imagery here is Plato. The light hides nothing and reveals everything. Fog isn't water or air it looks solid but it is fluid.

It is more explicit in the original German. The you in the last sentence. Implying that for people Zarathustra has not saved they can just stay where they are in terms of faith, but the ones he has set free have to go deeper into the fog and contradictions and weak ideas if they return. Once you have tasted truth of the light you will have to go even deeper into the cave. Once you are unchained from the Plato Cave and see the sun you only go back to unchain others you ought not to hide in the darkest part of the cave. Next line,

[3_52:20] And verily, thou choosest the hour well: for just now do the nocturnal birds again fly abroad. The hour hath come for all light-dreading people, the vesper hour and leisure hour, when they do not—"take leisure."

God died, thus that particular sun has set. It is at that moment, in the setting of the sun of faith that the higher men crawled back to it. The line is dripping with sarcasm and followed by sardonic. The imagery is of birds that are afraid of light now able to flourish in the darkness. The types of religion that actually do better after religion has failed.

In Germany at the time families would gather in prayer and bible reading in the evening during leisure hour, and monks for vesper. He is sardonically implying that they should hide from truth with those using piety as a shield.

Roughly equivalent to a parent yelling at this child who dropped out the week before graduation "now of all times, you choose now to drop out!? Fine drop out! Go hang out with your idiot friends!". Again this isn't the normal Zarathustra, this incident has shaken him to his core. Next line,

[3_52:21] I hear it and smell it: it hath come—their hour for hunt and procession, not indeed for a wild hunt, but for a tame, lame, snuffling, soft-treaders', soft-prayers' hunt,—

Speaking now of the local shamans. First observation, like in section 51 Passing By, the senses are now being assaulted. He sees the fog and nocturnal birds, he smells the hunt, he hears them. The hunt has the promise of meat but not a hunt for souls, food denied. Second observation the wild hunt is from German folk mythology. A conclave of demons hunting party who if a mortal saw would either be killed or abducted by them. The implication is that they aren't hunting like demigods. They are hunting with small careful steps, they are terrified, and seeking souls to save with soft prayers. Next line,

[3_52:22] —For a hunt after susceptible simpletons: all mouse-traps for the heart have again been set! And whenever I lift a curtain, a night-moth rusheth out of it.

The shamans are like predators in the wild, they go after the animals they think are weakest. He could almost respect a shaman that went up to him and vowed to save his soul or die trying. Cause that would be making danger his profession. These

Zarathustra is implying here getting abducted by a the cast of the movie Heavy Metal has some nobility in it. You didn't stand a chance against demigods. There is no shame in losing to that thing with chainsaw arms. But getting abducted by a priest in the twilight of their faith? That is like getting killed in the tutorial level by a 4 year old. You lost to nothing.

Moving slowly through the sentence “for a hunt after susceptible simpletons” i.e. they go after those who are already unable to defend their values. “All mouse-traps” a hunter risks, they could be hurt, the shamans lay a trap. Not even a bear trap, a mouse trap. They don’t seek larger powerful prey. “for the heart have again been set”. They go after your emotions, confession, love, belonging, shame. “and whenever I lift a curtain” whenever Zarathustra shines light into darkness. “a night-moth rusheth out of it”. Here he finds another pious type. It is funny and disgusting. Funny as in slapstick a bug flying out of the curtain is the gag, disgusting like an insect infestation where the more you look, the more of them you find.

Really sharpening his critic of religion here. How he believed it preyed on the downtrodden of society and united them in resentment. The shamans hunt for who could never be a threat and bait their trap. Next line,

[3_52:23] Did it perhaps squat there along with another night-moth? For everywhere do I smell small concealed communities; and wherever there are closets there are new devotees therein, and the atmosphere of devotees.

Continuing the insect metaphor. Religion doesn’t spread like fire it spreads like an infestation, hidden from the light of truth. It doesn’t just remain a private practice it changes the entire environment it is in. The hopeless frustration of a roach bedbug infestation. Not a wild animal that can just be dealt with, the grind of weak but numerous foe that creeps and crawls scurries and hides. It is not even worth the fight needed. Next line,

[3_52:24] They sit for long evenings beside one another, and say: “**Let us again become like little children and say, ‘good God!’**”—ruined in mouths and stomachs by the pious confectioners.

A romantic relationship that has gone sour. One of the couple suggests that we go back to the way things used to be, the other responds that they do not want to live in the past. Except the response wasn’t here this time. One can imagine the higher men sitting together in the evening,

passive not creating, depressed about Zarathustra not returning. They suggest to themselves can we just not go back? To the before-times, before Zarathustra came and spoke to us? We can become like children again and enter into the kingdom of god. The result of walking away from real food? Having their appetite spoiled with candy. The bible praises childlike faith, Zarathustra exposes prayer as junk food and religion as childishness. Next line,

[3_52:25] Or they look for long evenings at a crafty, lurking cross-spider, that preacheth prudence to the spiders themselves, and teacheth that “under crosses it is good for cobweb-spinning!”

We begin with an exclusive OR. The higher men who reverted to children are already addressed. This is the other group. This group looks to spend much time with a lurking cross-spider. A common insect in Germany. With the cross being a reference to the church as well. The pious church leader preaches prudence to others of its kind. A circle, lecturing without real students. What does it preach? Prudence. Not daring, not being tough, not being strong, or bold. It preaches prudence. The next part the grammar gets tricky and it is quite possible the author meant it this way. “and teacheth”. Whom does it teacheth? The beginning of the sentence it describes the highermen downfall the middle it says what the shamans teach one another. Is the “and teacheth” to the highermen or to other shamans?

With the assumption that it teaches other spiders it is implying that this method of attack. Of laying traps for the small minded is easy to do under the cross. A pure self-motivated means of an end. You want followers who cannot resist you? Under the cross you can thrive at that.

With the assumption that it teaches the higher men a startling result appears. The author is suggesting that this is the last card organized religion has to play. The bad arguments didn't work, the love didn't work, the fear didn't work. Religion has met their strongest foe. Someone who wants to build not be enchanted, suffocated, or soothed. Fine religion says, you want to build. Tell me my child, when have you seen a spider web in the air? Have you always seen the intricate webs attached to a support of some sort? Build under our watchful eye. We will support you. It seems Zarathustra was aware of the presupposition argument for god. Next line,

[3_52:26] Or they sit all day at swamps with angle-rods, and on that account think themselves PROFOUND; but whoever fisheth where there are no fish, I do not even call him superficial!

Reference to his aphorism that metaphysical truths aren't even superficial. A superficial statement covers only the surface but a swamp surface is vague and covered with scum. Reference also to Jesus calling on his followers to be fishers of men. An angle rod is for fishing fish, something you can eat. In a swamp all you are getting are toads leaches and other in-

edibles. In the previous section he called the stew of resentment of the Great City a swamp. As a whole this paints a rather absurd image of the priestly class.

They might have the right tools but it is the wrong job. They are looking for men but instead find toads, thinking themselves clever for buying the best tool. Indicating that even if Z grants the wisdom of what they say their method is flawed. In the previous sentences he indicates that the priests are successful in catching people now he is saying "oh yes they catch things, but not fish". Next line,

[3_52:27] Or they learn in godly-gay style to play the harp with a hymn-poet, who would fain harp himself into the heart of young girls:—for he hath tired of old girls and their praises.

At glance it seems to be saying the obvious. Some rereading there are more ways to understand it.

First an air of physical seduction here. A bit of how the youth are tempted away by the saccharine sweetness of religion. Not religion as it is, not Jesus and Paul demanding celibacy and to live in sackcloth barefoot. Jesus loving the little children religion.

Second, there is an argument that whenever you see women or girl in this book you should try putting the word wisdom in its place and see if the sentence still works. With this you get the idea that the priests are tired of telling people endless retellings of Jesus. So they do a sermon "what would Jesus do for [insert topical issue]". They are trying to be relevant not be being this towering thing the world must grapple with, but by finding an inroad into the new thing. It is parasitic, reactive, not creative and value creating. It is a reach but it does hold since earlier in the section Zarathustra talks about youth being all fireworks and no fuel. If the wisdom equals girls then the priests are chasing the new without depth pretty thing instead of the older deep ones.

Third a bit of a deal with the devil thing here. Religion teaming up with the musicians. It gets converts, the musicians get their pick of the pews. Every wheel gets its grease. Next line,

[3_52:28] Or they learn to shudder with a learned semi-madcap, who waiteth in darkened rooms for spirits to come to him—and the spirit runneth away entirely!

Seances religious figures attending sessions hoping to speak to ghosts. Rising in popularity in the time of this book. Still there are layers to be read here. Spirit in English has the same multiple meanings as it does in German. Spirit can mean ghosts and it can mean mind. With that understanding its true on two levels. They are trying to summon spirits but the spirits aren't having it. Yes N is an atheist but he could still make ghost jokes. But Spirit is also Giest. So these priests basically didn't live up to their own standards of intellectual rigor or beliefs. My overall view of this scene is some religious figure desperate to feel something. The spiritual bug

is there but its not clicking. So he goes visit some modern Witch of Endor. and learns the nonsense. And the respectable parts of his brain sees that and says "yeah I am out".

There is also a play on slight scene setting here. Light is wisdom it exposes what is hidden, darkness is when the sun has set. These priests are doubly ignorant, not only inside with artificial light, it is artificial light that was dimmed.

Also of note is the “learn to shudder”. Implying that they do not shudder out of transcendence as a natural reaction but out of imitation. Inauthentic awe. And why should they not? There is nothing real there so of course they must play at it and pretend there is more depth than there is. Next line,

[3_52:29] Or they listen to an old roving howl- and growl-piper, who hath learnt from the sad winds the sadness of sounds; now pipeth he as the wind, and preacheth sadness in sad strains.

Zarathustra seems to be addressing the apostates here no longer the religious leadership. It could be an author mistake or he is borrowing the OT prophet form of addressing multiple groups with a single word “Hear oh Israel!”. Is he talking about the priests, or the kings, or the householders, or the shepherds, or the merchants? He is talking to anyone this applies to. This sentence points to the Apostates it is doubtful that some powerful Bishop would be much moved by a sad bar song when their faithful sing weekly in harmony. The repeated changes from whose being addressed also has a confusing effect. No longer a simple chain of predation, a web. The priests and the devout and the apostate and the soothsayers and the musicians all bunched together. All ruling and all serving, all.

The apostate have backslid into hearing something that sounds sad and taking it in as sad. Mistaking melancholy for depth. One might picture being a teenager again and hearing a popular love song and thinking it is the highest expression of human love ever put to music.

The piper is portrayed as a pathetic figure. No longer young and traveling and playing with new songs. Worn out playing the 3 tunes he knows by heart. Next line,

[3_52:30] And some of them have even become night-watchmen: they know now how to blow horns, and go about at night and awaken old things which have long fallen asleep.

Picture the former lapsed or the born non-affiliated feeling they must earn their place by being more religious than the pious. Night-watchmen not warriors, knowing how to blow their safety whistle. Zarathustra could respect an old school priest sword in one hand and holy water in the other, ready to die fighting the demons of his world, but not a night-watchman religious. Not someone who decides to start bringing up long settled theological concerns and calls out the imperfections of the flock. Next line,

[3_52:31] Five words about old things did I hear yester-night at the garden-wall: they came from such old, sorrowful, arid night-watchmen.

Five words, possible allusion to 1 Corinthians 14:19 where Paul says he would rather speak five intelligible words than ten thousand in a tongue, more likely translation error and should be “five utterances”, given that 5 sentences take place in this scene. In any case he is recalling an example of the lapsed, last night at the garden-wall. This is very likely allegorical with the garden-wall meaning the border between where they were and him and where they are now. Old sorrowful and dried out. The elderly who are done with life. Next line,

[3_52:32] “For a father he careth not sufficiently for his children: human fathers do this better!”—

At the garden wall, at the borderlands of faith and atheism, they privately doubt and turn over the narrative. Not in clear day but at night, a hidden shameful thing amongst those who fake the most religious conviction. Their god is not a perfected being they seek to unite with their father provides, a petty bourgeois complaint not a fiery atheism claim. Skydaddy doesn’t kiss boo boos. Next line,

[3_52:33] “He is too old! He now careth no more for his children,”—answered the other night-watchman.

Theology reduced to gossip. While leaders of the Christians once proclaimed that god is love these half-faithful gossip about their god diminishing capabilities. They won’t do the sensible thing and understand that their god has died, they have grown attach to him, even if he can no longer even summon the impotent desire to care for them. Next line,

[3_52:34] “HATH he then children? No one can prove it unless he himself prove it! I have long wished that he would for once prove it thoroughly.”

Does he have children? Are there actually followers of the Christian god on earth? No one can know this for sure except for him. So the apostate wishes for the proof so children can exist. Slight change of tone, the previous two apologized for god this one says the neglect is justified on lack of faith, but can easily be corrected. Next line,

[3_52:35] “Prove? As if HE had ever proved anything! Proving is difficult to him; he layeth great stress on one’s BELIEVING him.”

You want god to prove himself so he will have children? That is a challenge for him, he survives on belief not on proof. Notice the various deflections. God would have more faithful if he would show himself, evidence would remove doubt. Rather than addressing it belief is held up as a virtue instead. Next line,

[3_52:36] “Ay! Ay! Belief saveth him; belief in him. That is the way with old people! So it is with us also!”—

With nothing else to point to this god depends on his last weapon, his reputation. The 5th line is the punchline to the joke. God doesn't care about his followers, God has grown to old to even care about his followers, we aren't even sure if he has followers anymore he would if he made evidence, he never produces evidence, he depends on reputation. This is not a dead god or a live god, this is a god on its last legs. And this is what the apostates forsake him for! Next line,

[3_52:37] —Thus spake to each other the two old night-watchmen and light-scarers, and tooted thereupon sorrowfully on their horns: so did it happen yester-night at the garden-wall.

Light-scarers, scarecrows against and afraid of the light. They try to stop the light dawning across the world by pretending courage knowing fear is what motivates them. As both they and the nightwatchman of faith blow their horns sadly. These are not the righteous proclaiming the good news or the horns of the OT that once tore down walls, this is a sad puff. The meeting doesn't end with a plan of action or even a real clarification of what is going on, the meeting might as well not have happened. No, let's go team rah rah, just a rehash of the old doubts and counters. It is powerlessness. And the scene ends not with a bang but with a whisper. Next line,

[3_52:38] To me, however, did the heart writhe with laughter, and was like to break; it knew not where to go, and sunk into the midriff.

Plain-reading. Zarathustra finds the ceremony of complaint ending with a sad toot of the horn hilarious. As if the ceremony was worth even that. Next line,

[3_52:39] Verily, it will be my death yet—to choke with laughter when I see asses drunken, and hear night-watchmen thus doubt about God.

There is a small undercurrent here. Saying it will be my death yet implies that this stuff is not just nonsense, and funny nonsense for how seriously it is taken, but it can literally get you killed. The people afraid of the progress of the world are not thinking straight and the guardians

of faith are having doubts. Not a great combination to be around some people who are afraid and other people desperate to prove themselves. Its funny and you can laugh, but sticking around can get you hurt. Next line,

[3_52:40] Hath the time not LONG since passed for all such doubts? Who may nowadays awaken such old slumbering, light-shunning things!

Even now in this day and time we are still arguing about this? Its absurd! God is dead and you are engaging with apologetics within the framework that he is a given. Earlier we discussed how it isn't clear who Zarathustra is addressing concluding that every sentence should be understood that it applies to you or it does not. If it doesn't read the next and see if you see yourself in that one. A very later OT manner of speaking. This one applies to the atheist who is still willing to debate theology. Next line,

[3_52:41] With the old Deities hath it long since come to an end:—and verily, a good joyful Deity-end had they!

We aren't arguing about the theology of Zeus anymore. And we begin the short fable of the death of the other gods by starting with a description of their death. They died well, a possible connection to the Greek concept of the importance of a good death. The old gods had a clean end. The christian god has this half-hearted apologetics. The difference between getting knocked down in your prime and lingering until you became embarrassing. Next line,

[3_52:42] They did not “begloom” themselves to death—that do people fabricate! On the contrary, they—LAUGHED themselves to death once on a time!

Been said that the typical way Christianity viewed paganism was joyless idol worship, this is the line that Zarathustra mocks and states the opposite in the parable. The pagan gods laughed to death not cried. Next line,

[3_52:43] That took place when the unGodliest utterance came from a God himself—the utterance: “There is but one God! Thou shalt have no other Gods before me!”—

Author is taking poetic liberties here, the announcement of having no other gods and the denying the existing of other gods is far apart in the bible and in history. The flipping is that monotheism is usually seen as more godly, but Zarathustra argues that it is less. The old pagan gods showered the world with events and feeling and rivalries, the new god wasn't overflow. The new god demanded absolute loyalty and wasn't even that interesting. The misery nature of it was

ungodly. And by denying the existences of his fellow creator gods it cut itself off from the source of strength. What god would do that? Is it not the least god like thing a being could do seek to live in a universe where no one is its equal? That is the act of a human who will allow no rivals not a superior being. Next line,

[3_52:44] —An old grim-beard of a God, a jealous one, forgot himself in such wise:—

In such wise is an older idiom that means in such ways. The elderly sky father of the bible messed up and by denying the existence of his equals and fellows cut itself off from the divinity itself. Perhaps you can imagine a person whose art suffers because they consider themselves the only real artist in existence. Next line,

[3_52:45] And all the Gods then laughed, and shook upon their thrones, and exclaimed: “**Is it not just divinity that there are Gods, but no God?**”

It is an awkward to translate part. He is saying isn’t it the nature of the divine the existence of multiple gods vs one singular god? Truth is slippery and multifaceted, morality is flexible, growth and change are the norm with static perfection a transient exception. If our world is made in shadow of the divine wouldn’t it be the case that this held even more up there? The absurdity of the thought of the bible god that there was one singular perfection caused the rest of the gods to laugh until they no longer existed. The parable has dark Greek turn, the prophecy was self-fulfilling. Next line,

[3_52:46] He that hath an ear let him hear.—

There are multiple allusions in the bible here, quite possibly all of them are what is meant. Revelations deals with heresy, Mark uses this line to explain why Jesus talks in parables, Matthew uses this line at the end of the parable of the sower and as reference to Isaiah. The prophet with this manner of speaking to everyone and no one at once. The first sentence doesn’t tell us when and where this is occurring, we have to read until the end to know. Only example of this in section 3. Zarathustra changes who he is addressing in the middle, from anyone who will listen to his apostles when he says it is a disgrace to pray. Next line,

[3_52:47] Thus talked Zarathustra in the city he loved, which is surnamed “The Pied Cow.” For from here he had but two days to travel to reach once more his cave and his animals; his soul, however, rejoiced unceasingly on account of the nighness of his return home.

It says in the end that "Thus talked Zarathustra in the city he loved, " this is the key. He was in the city complaining about the fall of the higher men he had left. It is almost like this is hitting him so hard he is doing a diet version of what the fool was doing in section 51. Ranting and raving and repeating himself. Struggling to articulate how bad the fall was except in the very end he rejoices that he is leaving to be alone. He doesn't do what the fool does. He was thrown in a worst situation than the fool. Presumably the city was already bad, the fool came, he ranted. Zarathustra came to a mediocre village, built something, it got corrupted. He rants but leaves. The fool curses in place while Zarathustra curses on the way out. And still can muster love for it.

Pied Cow is the city we encountered first in the Prologue. Echoing how the Buddha keeps returning to Jeta's Grove (Jetavana) near the city of Sāvatthī. Both are little towns that anchor the sage's movement between being alone or being near alone or with the crowd. Both are points on the spiral. The sage wanders and spirals back to the point. Both show the difference between lofty ideas and ordinary ears to hear them.

The two days journey is perhaps a reference to the 3 days of the Easter Miracle, but without the resurrection. Jesus was betrayed and traveled to the afterlife alone, Zarathustra was betrayed and traveled to his cave alone.

Note: taken together section 50,51, and 52 if Winter is understood to be a teacher, the fool a loyal follower, and the apostates failed students we can see the trauma of his experience that leads to the next section. His teacher was useful but insufferable to be around, his imitation did more harm than help, and his students forsake him and what he taught. This is a total breakdown of a teacher; a disappointing mentor, a student that makes a mockery of the teaching, and a mass of students who abandoned what they learned.

Book 3 – 53 – The Return Home

[3_53:1] O lonesomeness! My HOME, lonesomeness! Too long have I lived wildly in wild remoteness, to return to thee without tears!

[3_53:2] Now threaten me with the finger as mothers threaten; now smile upon me as mothers smile; now say just: "Who was it that like a whirlwind once rushed away from me?—

[3_53:3] —Who when departing called out: 'Too long have I sat with lonesomeness; there have I unlearned silence!' THAT hast thou learned now—surely?

[3_53:4] O Zarathustra, everything do I know; and that thou wert MORE FORSAKEN amongst the many, thou unique one, than thou ever wert with me!

[3_53:5] One thing is forsakenness, another matter is lonesomeness: THAT hast thou now learned! And that amongst men thou wilt ever be wild and strange:

[3_53:6] —Wild and strange even when they love thee: for above all they want to be TREATED INDULGENTLY!

[3_53:7] Here, however, art thou at home and house with thyself; here canst thou utter everything, and unbosom all motives; nothing is here ashamed of concealed, congealed feelings.

[3_53:8] Here do all things come caressingly to thy talk and flatter thee: for they want to ride upon thy back. On every simile dost thou here ride to every truth.

[3_53:9] Uprightly and openly mayest thou here talk to all things: and verily, it soundeth as praise in their ears, for one to talk to all things—directly!

[3_53:10] Another matter, however, is forsakenness. For, dost thou remember, O Zarathustra? When thy bird screamed overhead, when thou stoodest in the forest, irresolute, ignorant where to go, beside a corpse:—

[3_53:11] —When thou spakest: ‘Let mine animals lead me! More dangerous have I found it among men than among animals:’—THAT was forsakenness!

[3_53:12] And dost thou remember, O Zarathustra? When thou satest in thine isle, a well of wine giving and granting amongst empty buckets, bestowing and distributing amongst the thirsty:

[3_53:13] —Until at last thou alone satest thirsty amongst the drunken ones, and wailedst nightly: ‘Is taking not more blessed than giving? And stealing yet more blessed than taking?’— THAT was forsakenness!

[3_53:14] And dost thou remember, O Zarathustra? When thy stillest hour came and drove thee forth from thyself, when with wicked whispering it said: ‘Speak and succumb!’—

[3_53:15] —When it disgusted thee with all thy waiting and silence, and discouraged thy humble courage: THAT was forsakenness!”—

[3_53:16] O lonesomeness! My home, lonesomeness! How blessedly and tenderly speaketh thy voice unto me!

[3_53:17] We do not question each other, we do not complain to each other; we go together openly through open doors.

[3_53:18] For all is open with thee and clear; and even the hours run here on lighter feet. For in the dark, time weigheth heavier upon one than in the light.

[3_53:19] Here fly open unto me all being’s words and word-cabinets: here all being wanteth to become words, here all becoming wanteth to learn of me how to talk.

[3_53:20] Down there, however—all talking is in vain! There, forgetting and passing-by are the best wisdom: THAT have I learned now!

[3_53:21] He who would understand everything in man must handle everything. But for that I have too clean hands.

[3_53:22] I do not like even to inhale their breath; alas! that I have lived so long among their noise and bad breaths!

[3_53:23] O blessed stillness around me! O pure odours around me! How from a deep breast this stillness fetcheth pure breath! How it hearkeneth, this blessed stillness!

[3_53:24] But down there—there speaketh everything, there is everything misheard. If one announce one's wisdom with bells, the shopmen in the market-place will out-jingle it with pennies!

[3_53:25] Everything among them talketh; no one knoweth any longer how to understand. Everything falleth into the water; nothing falleth any longer into deep wells.

[3_53:26] Everything among them talketh, nothing succeedeth any longer and accomplisheth itself. Everything cackleth, but who will still sit quietly on the nest and hatch eggs?

[3_53:27] Everything among them talketh, everything is out-talked. And that which yesterday was still too hard for time itself and its tooth, hangeth to-day, outchamped and outchewed, from the mouths of the men of to-day.

[3_53:28] Everything among them talketh, everything is betrayed. And what was once called the secret and secrecy of profound souls, belongeth to-day to the street-trumpeters and other butterflies.

[3_53:29] O human hubbub, thou wonderful thing! Thou noise in dark streets! Now art thou again behind me:—my greatest danger lieth behind me!

[3_53:30] In indulging and pitying lay ever my greatest danger; and all human hubbub wisheth to be indulged and tolerated.

[3_53:31] With suppressed truths, with fool's hand and befooled heart, and rich in petty lies of pity:—thus have I ever lived among men.

[3_53:32] Disguised did I sit amongst them, ready to misjudge MYSELF that I might endure THEM, and willingly saying to myself: “Thou fool, thou dost not know men!”

[3_53:33] One unlearneth men when one liveth amongst them: there is too much foreground in all men—what can far-seeing, far-longing eyes do THERE!

[3_53:34] And, fool that I was, when they misjudged me, I indulged them on that account more than myself, being habitually hard on myself, and often even taking revenge on myself for the indulgence.

[3_53:35] Stung all over by poisonous flies, and hollowed like the stone by many drops of wickedness: thus did I sit among them, and still said to myself: “Innocent is everything petty of its pettiness!”

[3_53:36] Especially did I find those who call themselves “the good,” the most poisonous flies; they sting in all innocence, they lie in all innocence; how COULD they—be just towards me!

[3_53:37] He who liveth amongst the good—pity teacheth him to lie. Pity maketh stifling air for all free souls. For the stupidity of the good is unfathomable.

[3_53:38] To conceal myself and my riches—THAT did I learn down there: for every one did I still find poor in spirit. It was the lie of my pity, that I knew in every one,

[3_53:39] —That I saw and scented in every one, what was ENOUGH of spirit for him, and what was TOO MUCH!

[3_53:40] Their stiff wise men: I call them wise, not stiff—thus did I learn to slur over words.

[3_53:41] The grave-diggers dig for themselves diseases. Under old rubbish rest bad vapours. One should not stir up the marsh. One should live on mountains.

[3_53:42] With blessed nostrils do I again breathe mountain-freedom. Freed at last is my nose from the smell of all human hubbub!

[3_53:43] With sharp breezes tickled, as with sparkling wine, SNEEZETH my soul— sneezeth, and shouteth self-congratulatingly: “Health to thee!”

[3_53:44] Thus spake Zarathustra.

Begin commentary

There is a faint connection here to Siddhartha the Buddha. Not only did he keep returning to the same place, and he seemed to get annoyed by his apostles. This caused him to want to be alone to think.

[3_53:1] O lonesomeness! My HOME, lonesomeness! Too long have I lived wildly in wild remoteness, to return to thee without tears!

This is an author doing an inversion. Coming to a cave is going home while living in civilization was living in the wild. Sets up for a prodigal son retelling where being alone is not just a state of being and an emotion but a role, like a parent. Next line,

[3_53:2] Now threaten me with the finger as mothers threaten; now smile upon me as mothers smile; now say just: "Who was it that like a whirlwind once rushed away from me?—

Living deeply with solitude, Zarathustra begins to anthropomorphize it. Not typical for absence itself to have moods. A little note: Zarathustra's followers morphed and forsook him in his absence but his solitude remained loyal. People might betray you, but being alone will always be there. Next line,

[3_53:3] —Who when departing called out: 'Too long have I sat with lonesomeness; there have I unlearned silence!' THAT hast thou learned now—surely?

When you sit with being alone a long time you forget how to be silent. You know the opposite result you would expect at first. Silence isn't just lack of noise. It is not speaking when speaking is possible. Which is only the case when people are around. Like friendship, you don't have it without someone else. The sage remains silent until they find the right ears, then they overflow. Being alone had driven out the habit of silence from Zarathustra. A bit like not having physical access to alcohol is not the same as sobriety. Next line,

[3_53:4] O Zarathustra, everything do I know; and that thou wert MORE FORSAKEN amongst the many, thou unique one, than thou ever wert with me!

The projection of Lonesomeness continues to monologue. Reminding the prophet that it knows what happened. The uniqueness of Zarathustra makes him more forsaken in a crowd than he ever was with his own Lonesomeness. Next line,

[3_53:5] One thing is forsakenness, another matter is lonesomeness: THAT hast thou now learned! And that amongst men thou wilt ever be wild and strange:

It declares a difference between the two states. One is active abandonment, the other is absence of people. Tearing down the prophet, telling him that you will always be more at home without me than with them. It's possible the author intended this cringe narcissism for the voice. Trying to demonstrate that inner voices often overstate how much they claim to be important when they aren't, we humans are important, inner voices are merely ways our brain presents information to itself. If self-comfort stagnation sounds cringe, it means you still got a mind that can judge. Next line,

[3_53:6] —Wild and strange even when they love thee: for above all they want to be TREATED INDULGENTLY!

Among people you seem wild, as in you need to be tamed, strange as in you are just another oddity not yet assigned to a box. Love didn't bridge the gap in understanding, it concealed the truth. And why? Because anyone who has read this far has complained once that Zarathustra sets the bar too high. Still, Lonesomeness is lying here or at least not telling the whole truth. Yes, the reader and his followers didn't enjoy the standard set but it is not binary. One can complain and still aspire. This is the stick. Next line,

[3_53:7] Here, however, art thou at home and house with thyself; here canst thou utter everything, and unbosom all motives; nothing is here ashamed of concealed, congealed feelings.

Here is the carrot. No one will distort and simplify you, no one will use what you are against you. You have radical freedom from the gaze of others. Note the double home and house. This is not just his home, this is where he really belongs, at least according to avatar of Lonesomeness. Next line,

[3_53:8] Here do all things come caressingly to thy talk and flatter thee: for they want to ride upon thy back. On every simile dost thou here ride to every truth.

The temptress continues. Offering Zarathustra something he cannot have amongst humans. His ideas will remain here unchallenged, they will fit together perfectly. Whim will become law and castles in the sky shall be built. Next line,

[3_53:9] Uprightly and openly mayest thou here talk to all things: and verily, it soundeth as praise in their ears, for one to talk to all things—directly!

Without shame and without guile you may talk about all things, concretes and abstractions. No one will be searching for agendas and hidden meanings. These object/abstractions will love being worthy of being talked to directly. Almost as if some object/abstract concept would enjoy the idea that a human thinks of them not in terms of utility, not in terms of what the human wants them to be but are not, but exactly what the human wants them to be. Not talking about liberty as in what it gains a society, not talking about it in trying to match what the typical definition is to what you need it to be at the moment, but instead just saying liberty is what the person wants it to mean. The jargon-heavy world of continental philosophy is avoided here. Next line,

[3_53:10] Another matter, however, is forsakenness. For, dost thou remember, O Zarathustra? When thy bird screamed overhead, when thou stoodest in the forest, irresolute, ignorant where to go, beside a corpse:—

The temptress is doubling back after promising a play area. This whole thing reads like a clingy parent talking to their 20-year-old "hey why don't you move back in? You remember that car accident? We can set up the basement so you can have some privacy". In any case this is a clear reference to the prologue and it reads like emotional blackmail. She/it takes a low moment that Zarathustra managed to overcome and turns it until a proof of deficiency. Good parenting would have reminded Zarathustra that at his low moment she was still with him and she will always be there to help him be even better, bad parenting is cutting him down at his root. Of note she/it says the corpse not his friend. For solitude is a jealous goddess. Next line,

[3_53:11] —When thou spakest: ‘Let mine animals lead me! More dangerous have I found it among men than among animals:’—THAT was forsakenness!

Recall the speech in the beginning where Zarathustra likened man to a rope stretched between animal and übermensch. Recall his parable of the last man which ties into the idea that you might think moving to a safe spot and staying there will protect you, but it won't. There is no static spot in our existence. You will continue down the path you choose. The serpent and eagle are companions not meant for destinations. Next line,

[3_53:12] And dost thou remember, O Zarathustra? When thou satest in thine isle, a well of wine giving and granting amongst empty buckets, bestowing and distributing amongst the thirsty:

Tricky passage. This event did not happen the way described in the text. There are scenes like it but none match exactly. He said in the beginning he was like a bee that gathered too much honey and he wanted to bestow and distribute it. The invocation of wells resembles Night-Song. It would appear that Lonesomeness is gas-lighting him. The metaphor with the well of water seems to echo Moses and Jesus, one smiting the rock to make a well for the people and one transforming water into wine. This combined with the idea that he is distributing wine to the thirsty gives us a dark vision. Lonesomeness arguing that the mission was not a failure from lack of resources, it was because the need was infinite. The poor will always be among you, Zarathustra will not always be among you. Even if given infinite resources, literal wells of wine, it still would not have been enough. Next line,

[3_53:13] —Until at last thou alone satest thirsty amongst the drunken ones, and wailedst nightly: ‘Is taking not more blessed than giving? And stealing yet more blessed than taking?’— THAT was forsakenness!

Lonesomeness twisting the knife here. The mission was not only doomed from the start but even moderate success was pathetic. Zarathustra's vision of his cup overflowing became the

designated driver for the human race. Note the double stacked inversions. It is better to get than to give, and it is better to take what is not yours than to accept a gift freely given. Giving is overflow, taking is sensible, stealing is will to power without the path. Lonesomeness inverts the hierarchy pronouncing worthy as unworthy and unworthy as having worth. Next line,

[3_53:14] And dost thou remember, O Zarathustra? When thy stillest hour came and drove thee forth from thyself, when with wicked whispering it said: ‘Speak and succumb!’—

A clear reference to the Stillest hour when a voice gave Zarathustra the doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence and he was a reluctant prophet. There is a stacked attack here, Lonesomeness finishes. Acts, via the corpse, words via his moment of failure, mission with the parable of the wine well, and lastly she undercuts his insight calling the knowledge of the Eternal Recurrence wicked. What he does, what he says, what his task is, and what knowledge he has have been devastatingly undercut. And for this to happen right after the Apostates must have been his lowest moment. Next line,

[3_53:15] —When it disgusted thee with all thy waiting and silence, and discouraged thy humble courage: THAT was forsakeness!”—

She continues to invert and toss it in his face. Even you became insulted by yourself, even you pitied yourself with your desire to remain silent, with your strength held in reserve. You waited for the right time? How did that work out for you? Next line,

[3_53:16] O lonesomeness! My home, lonesomeness! How blessedly and tenderly speaketh thy voice unto me!

It is a bit aligned. However, he did begin by asking Lonesomeness to scold him. Granted she brought a tank to a knife fight but she did do what he asked. Maybe the author is implying that Zarathustra never fully got past good and evil. And so he wants the punishment he thinks he deserves. Or maybe he, like the Fool in Section 51, needs someone to be a witness. Someone to say "I see your pain and I pity you". After spending so much time not being seen or understood he needs someone, anyone, to really see him. Which Lonesomeness gives him. The child is scolded and runs back to the parent for a hug, it is the only safe spot they know. Next line,

[3_53:17] We do not question each other, we do not complain to each other; we go together openly through open doors.

True questions are not needed. She knows him perfectly, he knows her perfectly. They don't complain because there is nothing to complain about, their relationship is with thought, not with clean vs. dirty socks. The last part implies a life with no obstacles, everything an open door, you just walk without struggle or shame through. There is a faint thing here. Like Zarathustra is saying we get one another but we aren't working together. Kinda like one's couch that has a small indent in it from its owner. On the surface it sounds ideal. No friction, no misunderstanding, but there is also no growth and no friction. Next line,

[3_53:18] For all is open with thee and clear; and even the hours run here on lighter feet. For in the dark, time weigheth heavier upon one than in the light.

In the lightness of the mountaintop is contrasted with the darkness of civilization. Everything moves swifter up here in the land without responsibility. Think the author is implying that there is yet another way to fall off the tightrope when one mistakes play of the child for the freedom from burden. The hours not only pass quickly but they run on lighter feet, i.e. children's feet. No obligations, no roots, no future, no past, just an ever-present now and that now is fun. You can fall into the darkness, mediocrity, the herd, or you can fall into the light and have the self dissolve another way. Next line,

[3_53:19] Here fly open unto me all being's words and word-cabinets: here all being wanteth to become words, here all becoming wanteth to learn of me how to talk.

Everything ever said and everything that can be said lies there for Zarathustra, it seems that all of the vague ideas themselves wish to be named, and all that are named want to be fleshed out in full. In the sun on his mountain the physical beings do not aspire to be with the ideal, the ideal aspires to be on earth. Zarathustra is mistaking the power of his ability to articulate the unspoken to insight in them. Playing god without the wisdom. According to the mythos of the Bible the first act of Man was to name all he saw, the second was to complain he had no equal to speak it to. Zarathustra however has Lonesomeness. An Adam who thinks he has no need of an Eve. Words are coined, but the communication is dead. He can tell his insights to Lonesomeness, but she already knows what he does. Next line,

[3_53:20] Down there, however—all talking is in vain! There, forgetting and passing-by are the best wisdom: THAT have I learned now!

Zarathustra continues the downward spiral. Referencing the Fool [3_51:42] and the Apostates. He points out the futility of speech and the only form of movement at all is not engaging and forgetting instead of integrating into self. Passing-by references the fool again and the Apostates. Forgetting was for the apostates. He is admitting you know what? Waking those

guys up and they crawled back to sleep. Now they are even worse off compared to if they had never heard the good news, had he never met them. Some have even become night watchman. So the best possible advice Zarathustra can give you here at his bleakest? If you have wisdom don't share it, and if you hear it forget it. The hermit very long ago had it right, stay on the mountain give them nothing. Of note he complains about talking being in vain yet admits that here it is also the case. One is being misunderstood completely the other is to be understood completely. Either way Lonesomeness shall reign in wisdom. Even at his lowest Zarathustra knows he is leaning to one side on the tightrope and will fall. Next line,

[3_53:21] He who would understand everything in man must handle everything. But for that I have too clean hands.

The clean hands echo the gravediggers in the beginning which leans into the idea that some ideas or motifs or people are not worth burying as that is too dignified of a response. Perhaps the way some dictators and arch criminals are given unmarked graves or burials at sea. He says that if you are going to begin the project of understanding humans you must be capable of handing anything they throw at you, the worst in us. He says he cannot do that task but the way he says it is telling. He is too clean for it. The vice of cowardice of being squeamishness pretending to be refinement and goodness. You can see how the rant is slowly taking on the Ecclesiastes at this point. Next line,

[3_53:22] I do not like even to inhale their breath; alas! that I have lived so long among their noise and bad breaths!

He is really starting to sound like the fool in section 51. His disgust has long degraded beyond philosophy disagreements to pure physical sensation. The thing is he did pass-by. Almost as if the author is saying "when you can no longer love pass-by is step 1, step 2 is saying yes-again to your failure". Here Zarathustra is stuck between steps, he condemned the mess, he left the mess, but he has not affirmed the mess as part of his journey. Next line,

[3_53:23] O blessed stillness around me! O pure odours around me! How from a deep breast this stillness fetcheth pure breath! How it hearkeneth, this blessed stillness!

Stillness is given a human form and we are told it only inhales the pureness. You can almost hear it pull you in. It inhales, it does not exhale so it is uncorrupted with what its breath can do. When Zarathustra was with humans he exchanged breath, here he exhales into stillness. While the sun overflows the stillness absorbs. Once virtue has been taken from the body it becomes the stillness, static pure and unchanging. He is almost like addressing the platonic realm and heaven and calling it a parasite. This thing that takes the best in us and drinks from it without

being sated. All our sacrifice, all our thoughts, all our prayers, all our striving has been directed to the supreme form, lifeless unchanging stillness. A virtue pit. If the sun was heaven, this isn't even hell, this is much worse. The blessed would seem to be the height of sarcasm or an indication of how low Zarathustra has fallen. Next line,

[3_53:24] But down there—there speaketh everything, there is everything misheard. If one announce one's wisdom with bells, the shopmen in the market-place will out-jingle it with pennies!

Contrast to the earth where everything fills the air with stirring and life and noise. The perfect clarity is broken. Even if you would tell people you have wisdom loudly, some money maker will out-advertise you with not even gold, the lowest possible value. The reading might be strained but it is as if Zarathustra is saying if you could actually talk to a Platonic form it would want to be real, and yet everything that is real wishes to be absorbed into the lifeless stillness. A perfect triangle would plead for a child to draw it, while a drawing of a triangle would sigh and wish for perfection. And Zarathustra is standing there the mediator between being and becoming. Next line,

[3_53:25] Everything among them talketh; no one knoweth any longer how to understand. Everything falleth into the water; nothing falleth any longer into deep wells.

Slight tense shift. He talked in past before but now talks in present. The act of Recalling it, has made him revisit it. Nothing speaks up here but down there everything speaks and no one understands. Things still fall into water but it is surface water, foamy chops, not the deep still water of wisdom. It might be an echo of Old and Young Women when he addresses the embodiment of wisdom and likens humans to a deep cavern for her to fill with water. If that is the case he would be saying yeah, this time has passed don't bother with wisdom and humans anymore. However, that is metaphor-stacking so it could be reaching. Would explain the tense shift, before he argued for the project with Sophia. Let us humans work with you to make the Übermensch, she did not think much of his plan, so now he is saying yeah I am done with this project. Sophia glides on the surface, Zarathustra tried to pull her down into the depths now he knows the depths are gone. Next line,

[3_53:26] Everything among them talketh, nothing succeedeth any longer and accomplisheth itself. Everything cackleth, but who will still sit quietly on the nest and hatch eggs?

Again repeating himself. He is frustrated about the talking. "succeedeth" means to be successful not to follow. Everything makes a cry as if they have made something, anything but is

there even one among them that will do their bloody job without demand of recognition? Next line,

[3_53:27] Everything among them talketh, everything is out-talked. And that which yesterday was still too hard for time itself and its tooth, hangeth to-day, outchamped and outchewed, from the mouths of the men of to-day.

That the speaking is everlasting. It isn't that everyone just talks, it is everyone claps back on what was said. Time and talk is supposed to wear down the extra and give us only eternal great truths. Instead it is chewed and chewed and chewed until what remains is pulp. Zarathustra smashes idols, the men of earth macerate them. Next line,

[3_53:28] Everything among them talketh, everything is betrayed. And what was once called the secret and secrecy of profound souls, belongeth to-day to the street-trumpeters and other butterflies.

Speech betrays you, it reveals what is most secret in your spirit. Everyone belongs to everyone else, every thought is for public discussion. You must have an opinion on every topic and it will be proclaimed to the world. Possible allusion to your ideas becoming the wings of butterflies. Which exist to be seen but whose notice can spell their demise. Street-trumpeters take your idea and scream it to the world, butterflies go from flower to flower with no loyalty to any. One is a clenched fist the other this week's shiny idea. The fool's rant also matches here. Next line,

[3_53:29] O human hubbub, thou wonderful thing! Thou noise in dark streets! Now art thou again behind me:—my greatest danger lieth behind me!

Wonderful thing as it's complicated strange, not as praise. Dark as in the play on light and dark in the book. The imagery of dark concealing while there is sound which you can hear but it is just noise. The imagery is haunting. One imagines stumbling in the dark. With man-made buildings cutting you from what little light there is. You desperately orientate yourself to whatever sound you hear but it is just noise. And you can only define yourself relative to it. Humans used to be guided by the stars but in the cage we have fashioned we are guided by the endlessly chattering. Maybe a reference to the Jesus-Peter interaction, when Jesus told him to get behind him. Jesus foretells his death, Peter denies the prophecy, and Jesus calls him out. Also implying that Zarathustra denies Eternal Recurrence, he knows he will face this danger again. Next line,

[3_53:30] In indulging and pitying lay ever my greatest danger; and all human hubbub wisheth to be indulged and tolerated.

The Jesus metaphor continues. Jesus knows he will die and has to die, Peter wishes to spare him to soften what needs to happen, Jesus condemns Peter for softening him. For his pity. The real danger is not anything the crowd can do to Zarathustra in terms of physical danger, it is what the influence of the crowd can do by trying to be nice. Humans do not want to be told to strive, they want to be pitied and indulged and amused. As Zarathustra dwelt among men, he faced the danger of giving them what they want. Next line,

[3_53:31] With suppressed truths, with fool's hand and befooled heart, and rich in petty lies of pity:—thus have I ever lived among men.

A teacher to be effective must teach on the level of understanding, Zarathustra in his agony doesn't declare this good. He understands it is the price one must pay, and no longer wishes to do so. Bending low, softening your words are required, not desirable. Next line,

[3_53:32] Disguised did I sit amongst them, ready to misjudge MYSELF that I might endure THEM, and willingly saying to myself: "Thou fool, thou dost not know men!"

A reference to prologue. Notice the bent here. Zarathustra isn't expressing his will to power. If he had he would see human nature as something he has to work with, a given without judgment that he could forge into something. Instead he is revising his own history. The carpenter blaming his tools and raving that the failure is really on himself for assuming that he was the wrong one in the situation. Instead of blaming his tools. Next line,

[3_53:33] "One unlearneth men when one liveth amongst them: there is too much foreground in all men—what can far-seeing, far-longing eyes do THERE! "

You learn less about humanity by more time with humanity. Because humans have too much going on up front, if you are looking for depth you won't see it. The way is blocked. But the rage, it isn't simply that this is the nature of the beast, this is unacceptable a disgrace. A totally hopeless situation. Zarathustra is blinded, he can no longer physically see anymore what he once loved. Next line,

[3_53:34] "And, fool that I was, when they misjudged me, I indulged them on that account more than myself, being habitually hard on myself, and often even taking revenge on myself for the indulgence."

Repeating himself again. Twisting the knife in his own narrative yet again. Originally he was right. No one on earth had talked like he did, he should have expected people not to instantly get it. Now he is still constructing an ego-preserving narrative. Not Yes Saying, stewing in resentment. Trying to make his failure noble instead of fuel for growth. Next line,

[3_53:35] Stung all over by poisonous flies, and hollowed like the stone by many drops of wickedness: thus did I sit among them, and still said to myself: "Innocent is everything petty of its pettiness!"

We have seen poisonous flies before, a swarm that saps your energy one little bite at a time. The image of the stone is telling. A strong hard thing, granite being worn out by the formless one pat pat pat at a time. And he expresses resentment at what he said before, even when he knew what was going on he still, through clenched jaw perhaps, uttered: they are innocent of their smallness just like all small things are. So in a sense he did commit the sin he accused himself of before, he did show pity. The shame must be intense for him now, remembering that he once allowed himself to mistake his pity for strength. Next line,

[3_53:36] Especially did I find those who call themselves "the good," the most poisonous flies; they sting in all innocence, they lie in all innocence; how COULD they—be just towards me!

An inversion. We typically think of those of us who are good as those who avoid causing harm, are careful of their words and actions, and align themselves with justice. He is saying that they were the worst to him in practice. Because they are innocent. How could one expect them to judge his words correctly when they are confidently correct in their errors? And since they call themselves the good, not society them, for them to accept Zarathustra was correct means rejection of their own works. Next line,

[3_53:37] He who liveth amongst the good—pity teacheth him to lie. Pity maketh stifling air for all free souls. For the stupidity of the good is unfathomable.

You feel bad. You are seeing a group of people who are actually making an effort they just are heading in the wrong direction, so you nudge them to the correct path. And when you pity the good you end up lying to spare their feelings. The very air becomes a foul and stifling because honesty is holding its breath. Also, it is freaken work, you want to explore and build instead you are playing the role of a teacher saying "A for good effort!" And you know what? The sheer depths of ignorance of the self-righteous is beyond your ken. You can correct an error, you can't argue with ignorance that declares itself virtue, all you can do is lie and pity it. Next line,

[3_53:38] To conceal myself and my riches—THAT did I learn down there: for every one did I still find poor in spirit. It was the lie of my pity, that I knew in every one,

Perhaps a more modern translation would read: I learned down there to conceal the richness of my spirit, because everyone else was so poor in their spirit, my pity lied to me. It told me that I saw a spark of resemblance, myself in them. Now, Zarathustra is lying to himself. He did find his type down there. The hermit, the tightrope walker, and the youth. Next line,

[3_53:39] —That I saw and scented in every one, what was ENOUGH of spirit for him, and what was TOO MUCH!

He is disgusted that he thought he could actually judge people and decide what they were capable of. He said he wanted equals and eventually more than equals. People who would ascend so much higher than him that they would have contempt for Zarathustra. Instead their pathetic state made Zarathustra have to keep lying, keep softening, keep begging. His mission was to bring out the best in humanity, instead we brought out the worst in him. He has contempt for his pity, the pity we imposed on him. We kept offering him our weakness as if it were a gift and eventually Zarathustra accepted it as good enough and now resents his compromise. Next line,

[3_53:40] Their stiff wise men: I call them wise, not stiff—thus did I learn to slur over words.

One can imagine a young Nietzsche in university with his thick-headed teacher sucking the joy out of Homer and him years later raging at himself for groveling calling the man “Herr Professor”. Zarathustra had to learn the art of lying among humanity, first a lie of omission. Not calling their best what they were. Next line,

[3_53:41] "The grave-diggers dig for themselves diseases. Under old rubbish rest bad vapours. One should not stir up the marsh. One should live on mountains."

Seems to be a metaphor for professors and anyone who wants to teach. Grave diggers put away safely what has passed on. As a sign of respect for what was once living and protection of the living from what is now dead. Yet here the act of reverence and practical living summons the very demons it sought to dispose of safely. So don't bother, he wanted to give god a proper burial and now fears he instead pulled up from the past the worst god had for us. He regrets the entire project. It would have been better to let the corpse of god just lay on the streets instead of attempting to put it in the ground. Next line,

[3_53:42] With blessed nostrils do I again breathe mountain-freedom. Freed at last is my nose from the smell of all human hubbub!

We finally got the location, he has left Pied Cow and is up on the mountain either at or very near his home. Rejoicing at his freedom, even his nostrils will be blessed with the clean air. There is a slight humor here. The sense we feel the least attached to, smell, is the first sense to feel salvation. The last shall be first, the first shall be last. Next line,

[3_53:43] With sharp breezes tickled, as with sparkling wine, SNEEZETH my soul— sneezeth, and shouteth self-congratulatingly: “Health to thee!”

Breezes, indifferent often blocked by human civilization, is instead the worthy thing and it alone brings his soul redemption. As it tickles it, and he violently expels the rot. It is almost as if his own soul is rising a toast to the rest of him. Good health, my main man! Next line,

[3_53:44] Thus spake Zarathustra.

And so ends the dark section on a high note.

Book 3 – 54 – The Three Evil Things

[3_54:1] In my dream, in my last morning-dream, I stood to-day on a promontory— beyond the world; I held a pair of scales, and WEIGHED the world.

[3_54:2] Alas, that the rosy dawn came too early to me: she glowed me awake, the jealous one! Jealous is she always of the glows of my morning-dream.

[3_54:3] Measurable by him who hath time, weighable by a good weigher, attainable by strong pinions, divinable by divine nut-crackers: thus did my dream find the world:—

[3_54:4] My dream, a bold sailor, half-ship, half-hurricane, silent as the butterfly, impatient as the falcon: how had it the patience and leisure to-day for world-weighing!

[3_54:5] Did my wisdom perhaps speak secretly to it, my laughing, wide-awake day-wisdom, which mocketh at all “infinite worlds”? For it saith: “**Where force is, there becometh NUMBER the master: it hath more force.**”

[3_54:6] How confidently did my dream contemplate this finite world, not new-fangledly, not old-fangledly, not timidly, not entreatingly:—

[3_54:7] —As if a big round apple presented itself to my hand, a ripe golden apple, with a coolly-soft, velvety skin:—thus did the world present itself unto me:—

[3_54:8] —As if a tree nodded unto me, a broad-branched, strong-willed tree, curved as a recline and a foot-stool for weary travellers: thus did the world stand on my promontory:—

[3_54:9] —As if delicate hands carried a casket towards me—a casket open for the delectation of modest adoring eyes: thus did the world present itself before me to-day:—

[3_54:10] —Not riddle enough to scare human love from it, not solution enough to put to sleep human wisdom:—a humanly good thing was the world to me to-day, of which such bad things are said!

[3_54:11] How I thank my morning-dream that I thus at to-day's dawn, weighed the world! As a humanly good thing did it come unto me, this dream and heart-comforter!

[3_54:12] And that I may do the like by day, and imitate and copy its best, now will I put the three worst things on the scales, and weigh them humanly well.—

[3_54:13] He who taught to bless taught also to curse: what are the three best cursed things in the world? These will I put on the scales.

[3_54:14] VOLUPTUOUSNESS, PASSION FOR POWER, and SELFISHNESS: these three things have hitherto been best cursed, and have been in worst and falsest repute—these three things will I weigh humanly well.

[3_54:15] Well! Here is my promontory, and there is the sea—IT rolleth hither unto me, shaggily and fawningly, the old, faithful, hundred-headed dog-monster that I love!—

[3_54:16] Well! Here will I hold the scales over the weltering sea: and also a witness do I choose to look on—thee, the anchorite-tree, thee, the strong-odoured, broad-arched tree that I love!—

[3_54:17] On what bridge goeth the now to the hereafter? By what constraint doth the high stoop to the low? And what enjoineth even the highest still—to grow upwards?—

[3_54:18] Now stand the scales poised and at rest: three heavy questions have I thrown in; three heavy answers carrieth the other scale.

[3_54:19] Voluptuousness: unto all hair-shirted despisers of the body, a sting and stake; and, cursed as “the world,” by all backworldsmen: for it mocketh and befooleth all erring, misinferring teachers.

[3_54:20] Voluptuousness: to the rabble, the slow fire at which it is burnt; to all wormy wood, to all stinking rags, the prepared heat and stew furnace.

[3_54:21] Voluptuousness: to free hearts, a thing innocent and free, the garden-happiness of the earth, all the future's thanks-overflow to the present.

[3_54:22] Voluptuousness: only to the withered a sweet poison; to the lion-willed, however, the great cordial, and the reverently saved wine of wines.

[3_54:23] Voluptuousness: the great symbolic happiness of a higher happiness and highest hope. For to many is marriage promised, and more than marriage,—

[3_54:24] —To many that are more unknown to each other than man and woman:—and who hath fully understood HOW UNKNOWN to each other are man and woman!

[3_54:25] Voluptuousness:—but I will have hedges around my thoughts, and even around my words, lest swine and libertine should break into my gardens!—

[3_54:26] Passion for power: the glowing scourge of the hardest of the heart-hard; the cruel torture reserved for the cruellest themselves; the gloomy flame of living pyres.

[3_54:27] Passion for power: the wicked gadfly which is mounted on the vainest peoples; the scorner of all uncertain virtue; which rideth on every horse and on every pride.

[3_54:28] Passion for power: the earthquake which breaketh and upbreaketh all that is rotten and hollow; the rolling, rumbling, punitive demolisher of whitened sepulchres; the flashing interrogative-sign beside premature answers.

[3_54:29] Passion for power: before whose glance man creepeth and croucheth and drudgeth, and becometh lower than the serpent and the swine:—until at last great contempt crieth out of him,—,

[3_54:30] Passion for power: the terrible teacher of great contempt, which preacheth to their face to cities and empires: “**Away with thee!**”—until a voice crieth out of themselves: “**Away with ME!**”

[3_54:31] Passion for power: which, however, mounteth alluringly even to the pure and lonesome, and up to self-satisfied elevations, glowing like a love that painteth purple felicities alluringly on earthly heavens.

[3_54:32] Passion for power: but who would call it PASSION, when the height longeth to stoop for power! Verily, nothing sick or diseased is there in such longing and descending!

[3_54:33] That the lonesome height may not for ever remain lonesome and self-sufficing; that the mountains may come to the valleys and the winds of the heights to the plains:—

[3_54:34] Oh, who could find the right prenomen and honouring name for such longing! “Bestowing virtue”—thus did Zarathustra once name the unnamable.

[3_54:35] And then it happened also,—and verily, it happened for the first time!—that his word blessed SELFISHNESS, the wholesome, healthy selfishness, that springeth from the powerful soul:—

[3_54:36] —From the powerful soul, to which the high body appertaineth, the handsome, triumphing, refreshing body, around which everything becometh a mirror:

[3_54:37] —The pliant, persuasive body, the dancer, whose symbol and epitome is the self-enjoying soul. Of such bodies and souls the self-enjoyment calleth itself “virtue.”

[3_54:38] With its words of good and bad doth such self-enjoyment shelter itself as with sacred groves; with the names of its happiness doth it banish from itself everything contemptible.

[3_54:39] Away from itself doth it banish everything cowardly; it saith: “**Bad—THAT IS cowardly!**” Contemptible seem to it the ever-solicitous, the sighing, the complaining, and whoever pick up the most trifling advantage.

[3_54:40] It despiseth also all bitter-sweet wisdom: for verily, there is also wisdom that bloometh in the dark, a night-shade wisdom, which ever sigheth: “**All is vain!**”

[3_54:41] Shy distrust is regarded by it as base, and every one who wanteth oaths instead of looks and hands: also all over-distrustful wisdom,—for such is the mode of cowardly souls.

[3_54:42] Baser still it regardeth the obsequious, doggish one, who immediately lieth on his back, the submissive one; and there is also wisdom that is submissive, and doggish, and pious, and obsequious.

[3_54:43] Hateful to it altogether, and a loathing, is he who will never defend himself, he who swalloweth down poisonous spittle and bad looks, the all-too-patient one, the all-endurer, the all-satisfied one: for that is the mode of slaves.

[3_54:44] Whether they be servile before Gods and divine spurnings, or before men and stupid human opinions: at ALL kinds of slaves doth it spit, this blessed selfishness!

[3_54:45] Bad: thus doth it call all that is spirit-broken, and sordidly-servile—constrained, blinking eyes, depressed hearts, and the false submissive style, which kisseth with broad cowardly lips.

[3_54:46] And spurious wisdom: so doth it call all the wit that slaves, and hoary-headed and weary ones affect; and especially all the cunning, spurious-witted, curious-witted foolishness of priests!

[3_54:47] The spurious wise, however, all the priests, the world-weary, and those whose souls are of feminine and servile nature—oh, how hath their game all along abused selfishness!

[3_54:48] And precisely THAT was to be virtue and was to be called virtue—to abuse selfishness! And “selfless”—so did they wish themselves with good reason, all those world-weary cowards and cross-spiders!

[3_54:49] But to all those cometh now the day, the change, the sword of judgment, THE GREAT NOONTIDE: then shall many things be revealed!

[3_54:50] And he who proclaimeth the EGO wholesome and holy, and selfishness blessed, verily, he, the prognosticator, speaketh also what he knoweth: “**BEHOLD, IT COMETH, IT IS NIGH, THE GREAT NOONTIDE!**”

[3_54:51] Thus spake Zarathustra.

Begin Commentary

It isn't 100% clear how near this event is to the events of the previous section. Since we are told later on in the book that it is not very long after his return, we can assume that this is either the next morning or very near the next morning after the depressing fall of section 53.

[3_54:1] In my dream, in my last morning-dream, I stood to-day on a promontory— beyond the world; I held a pair of scales, and WEIGHED the world.

Last night he had a dream, towards the end of night. The borderline between the awake and the subliminal when a degree of lucid dreaming is possible. In it Zarathustra stood on a promontory, a rock that sticks out of water, beyond the world but from the world. He held a set of scales. Not a god, a man, a man would judge the world. And from that vantage he judged the earth. Note the “to-day”. The double implication. He dreamed it happened now and he dreamed he was judging the now. No more lamenting the past, no more pointing to the future. Zarathustra will judge the teeming masses of earth as they are at this moment. Well rested he can see clearly. This is a hinge sentence of the entire piece. As we will see he will present 3 drives in humans that are often seen as vices, he argues that they are not. Not in the Aristotelian mean sense, virtues being the midpoint between dissimilar vices. He is not arguing for that. The image of the virtues for Aristotle is the scales the balance, the image for Zarathustra is the rope. The tension between the drives for say celibacy vs. promiscuity. Zarathustra is claiming that he is further along in history than Aristotle so he sees more. The scales and a good weigher, two sentences from now, are a salute to that man. Then he will introduce the hurricane. Almost as if he is raising a glass to the philosopher saying “good job on Apollo my friend, you got him sorted out. I am further ahead so I know about Dionysus”. Next line,

[3_54:2] Alas, that the rosy dawn came too early to me: she glowed me awake, the jealous one! Jealous is she always of the glows of my morning-dream.

Reason demands she be acknowledged, and tolerates dreaming inspiration only when she cannot see it. Most of us feel the pull of realism when we daydream, here it is given a more literal form. Next line,

[3_54:3] Measurable by him who hath time, weighable by a good weigher, attainable by strong pinions, divinable by divine nut-crackers: thus did my dream find the world:—

It is tricky here but the author is winking at his epistemology. You can measure the world but only if you had infinite time which you do not have, you could determine its value but only if you already had a value system in place, you could understand it but only if you have strong wings to take you above it, and as a whole you need godlike ability and tools to crack the strongest nut of mystery. You need science with plenty of time, value that can avoid valuing, the ability to fly from the earth but with strength not escape, and a tenacity of the gods. This is what his dream vision showed Zarathustra of our world. There is no contradiction between the claim that the scales symbolized Aristotle and also symbolized scientific measurement as both meanings work and arguably one came from the other. Next line,

[3_54:4] My dream, a bold sailor, half-ship, half-hurricane, silent as the butterfly, impatient as the falcon: how had it the patience and leisure to-day for world-weighing!

Zarathustra is describing what his dream was like here not what happened in it. He presents a unity of opposites, a Heraclitus fusion of ship which is goal directed action driven, and a hurricane which is goalless action driving. The dream was the unity of the two. It was also silent and beautiful to look at like the butterfly unlike the noise and chatter of earth. Falcons are not known for their impatient nature they are known for tension before striking and taking their time to strike. Suggesting his dream might have seemed like it was just only now appearing but really it was soaring above ready to come down. The dream description is likely a metaphor for inspiration. Next line,

[3_54:5] Did my wisdom perhaps speak secretly to it, my laughing, wide-awake day-wisdom, which mocketh at all “infinite worlds”? For it saith: “Where force is, there becometh NUMBER the master: it hath more force.”

The top of the mountain is associated with the Platonic realm. He slept there and dreamed. While he did the rosy dawn, the light of the new world, and his wisdom of it intruded even onto his dream. It saw the infinite multiplicity of the forms and it laughed. Look at the earth, the only place with real power, do not numbers rule here? No one buys that gods move objects anymore, force does and force takes its orders from numbers. This world over any possible other. Next line,

[3_54:6] How confidently did my dream contemplate this finite world, not new-fangledly, not old-fangledly, not timidly, not entreatingly:—

His dream was of the old way, of the infinities of Plato and religion. The new wisdom came in of positivism and said sterilize measure and confine yourself to this one world. The old and new annihilated or fused and created a third path. A way to see existence with no cowardly delusions and no demand it gives you meaning. A disinterested world that we can face and rejoice in. Next line,

[3_54:7] —As if a big round apple presented itself to my hand, a ripe golden apple, with a coolly-soft, velvety skin:—thus did the world present itself unto me:—

Note the stacked adjectives. The vision of the world as an apple is not just desirable it is so wonderful Zarathustra almost is at a loss of words. A repeating motif in the book of Eve and the apple. Zarathustra indicating that the fall was our greatest moment of the species. When we looked upon the wisdom and declared it desirable in our eyes. The world doesn't just seem this way to Zarathustra it presented itself to him. Unlike Eve he did not have to reach out his hand, it presented to him.

The recovery is immense here. After the fall of the previous section, The Return Home, he can now see the world as desirable. Next line,

[3_54:8] —As if a tree nodded unto me, a broad-branched, strong-willed tree, curved as a recline and a foot-stool for weary travellers: thus did the world stand on my promontory:—

The previous sentence described the world as delight, this one presents the world as companion. Breaking it down. “As if the tree nodded unto me” implies a greeting the world greeting him. A broad-branched implies that it is all embracing all inclusive. Strong-willed tree implies the strength of this world not just nurturing but capable of it. This isn’t a soft Eden one must tread carefully this is the strong-will world. And yet it is curved a foot-stool. For weary travellers, the actively engaged may stop a moment to catch their breath. The vast difference between this image of the world and the Great City, where even the ground offends with mud. Slight biblical inversion, God’s throne is in heaven and the earth is his footstool, Zarathustra sees the earth as the footstool, not for gods but for man. Only above the world in the mountains could he have rediscovered that it was earth that was the sanctuary. Next line,

[3_54:9] —As if delicate hands carried a casket towards me—a casket open for the delectation of modest adoring eyes: thus did the world present itself before me to-day:—

A common argument that the more modern translation here is not casket but rather shrine. The poetic symbolism is rich in this trinity. Apple is naturally produced, the tree grows from the earth, a shrine is made from the tree by human hands. Apple implies appetite, the tree the earth

and the shrine our sense of awe. The three fold symbolism of the new religion, this worldly a fellowship with nature, to reverence. Next line,

[3_54:10] —Not riddle enough to scare human love from it, not solution enough to put to sleep human wisdom:—a humanly good thing was the world to me to-day, of which such bad things are said!

Not so chaotic that the human mind cannot process it and thus cannot love it, not so boring that we can write it off. A world fit and worthy of love by humans. Here he rejects the dual between the materialistic world that sees earth as dull mechanism and the Plato-Religious world that sees it as a shadow, as dirty, as unfit for beings with immortal souls such as we. While Zarathustra argues the opposite that this world can be loved because it is predictable but full of mystery. Next line,

[3_54:11] How I thank my morning-dream that I thus at to-day's dawn, weighed the world! As a humanly good thing did it come unto me, this dream and heart-comforter!

Zarathustra is showing character development. In the beginning of the book he depended on signs in the sky such as a snake coiled around an eagle, now his mind is the source of myths and signs. He thanks his dream, he knows it is a dream, it is revelation from within. And he announces it as humanly good. A thing good for humans not a good in reference to some ultimate form. He weighed the world and by his values declared it fit for human life. Next line,

[3_54:12] And that I may do the like by day, and imitate and copy its best, now will I put the three worst things on the scales, and weigh them humanly well.—

He is on a roll, the perfect alignment of reason and inspiration high above the fray of humanity and is going to apply this to what we deem the worst the 3 worst aspects of humans but with a human centered view instead of a god centered view. Now, the translation we are using renders ablerne as copy. Perhaps better is the literal, which is to unlearn. Meaning that his new state of thinking is not just a perspective he is taking. He is going to imitate it and also use it to actively unlearn what he supposed to be true in the past. Zarathustra recognizes the crisis he just faced and knows he is sick, his new outlook is going to help him root out the source of the diseased thoughts. Next line,

[3_54:13] He who taught to bless taught also to curse: what are the three best cursed things in the world? These will I put on the scales.

First understanding, he is referencing the original Zarathustra. The one that the author claimed was the first person to preach that good and evil had a metaphysical component. That is who he is. Once the original Zarathustra could talk about good he must be able to talk about evil. The original Zarathustra learned how to take morals to the sky, this version of him will learn how to return them to the earth.

Second understanding, he is referring to himself. He just blessed a world that is often held in disdain by the our intellectuals and spiritual leaders so he has to continue the inversion. If the world itself is usually seen as evil is really good then the morals of the world are also suspect.

Both understandings can be true at once. And in either case he will now use his system to decide about what is deemed the worst in us. Next line,

[3_54:14] VOLUPTUOUSNESS, PASSION FOR POWER, and SELFISHNESS: these three things have hitherto been best cursed, and have been in worst and falsest repute—these three things will I weigh humanly well.

Worth noting that he knows the result he wants before conducting the experiment and while he is in full preacher mode he is alone on the mountain. This isn't good science since it presumes the conclusion, which he says when he notes the false repute, and it is not good religion since he is not even preaching to the converted and that could be a key to understand this mindset. The engineer meeting the pious who works on self rather than outsourcing redemption. One could argue that the three sins he lists and the fact that he lists it in this quasi-Platonic realm is him addressing the tripartite soul model of Plato. Body desires, reason, and passion. He shifts it slightly to align it closer to Christian thought. Arguing that the three most lied about and vilified things in you. What your body wants, what your values are, and what you hope to achieve. Once you are told that you shall have no will outside X, no ambition but to serve X, and your own body is but a distraction from X, nothing remains in you.

Another possible leaning is from Buddhism which the author had studied extensively. The devil in Buddhist thought is named Mara and has three daughters who tempt the Buddha. Bodily desire, discontentment, and greed/passion. This reading makes a later sentence a better fit as he calls the earth as witness. Next line,

[3_54:15] Well! Here is my promontory, and there is the sea—IT rolleth hither unto me, shaggily and fawningly, the old, faithful, hundred-headed dog-monster that I love!—

Multiple meanings are stacked here, but the word “fawningly” needs to be addressed first. The German is schmeichlerisch and in the 19th century the word had a more neutral unemotional feel to it. Do not think “he flatters me” think “the wind caresses me”. With that said the first meaning here is what one would see at a normal beach. Dionysus is embodied as the

ocean. She rolls, she has a primitive nature, the water parts where he stands but yet his body is mostly of her, she is old, she is faithful in the sense that she will forever lap the shore. The hundred-head dog-monster is a combination of two separate Greek legends Cerberus and the Hydra. One might imagine Zarathustra the thinking feeling being on the Fjord of Apollo surrounded by the ocean of Dionysus with his scales weighing the three most hated sins of the human race, the author is clearly in a poetic mood.

Another meaning here is that the sea represents humanity. One of the acts he accuses people of were getting too close or fawning him. If we follow the information given so far the mountain where his cave is not literally surrounded by water. This reading would mean that he is standing in the quasi-platonic realm with humanity down below. And as he has said before he loves humanity. Next line,

[3_54:16] Well! Here will I hold the scales over the weltering sea: and also a witness do I choose to look on—thee, the anchorite-tree, thee, the strong-odoured, broad-arched tree that I love!—

If we assume the sea is Dionysus, then he is standing at the edge of her and Apollo. With the scales of science and Aristotle, calling the earth as witness to judge the three sins of mankind. There is a subtle Buddhist reference here. According to the fable the Buddha was tempted from enlightenment by Mara and his three daughters who represent bodily delight, discontentment, and passions. As the Buddha sat under the tree Mara tried one final temptation arguing that the Buddha was not worthy of insight. The Buddha made no reply but touched the ground, calling the earth as witness. The goddess of the earth appeared and rang out her hair symbolizing the worthy deeds of the man. Next line,

[3_54:17] On what bridge goeth the now to the hereafter? By what constraint doth the high stoop to the low? And what enjoineth even the highest still—to grow upwards?—

Zarathustra brings up three questions about the nature of existence before he addresses the three supposed sins of existence. What connects being and becoming? Why makes greatness give from itself? What makes the great continue to strive? A new trinity Time, Creation, and Will to Power. Or maybe Causality, becoming, and value creation. Next line,

[3_54:18] Now stand the scales poised and at rest: three heavy questions have I thrown in; three heavy answers carrieth the other scale.

Confusing sentence. We are not actually told what the answers are, we are told the three questions. Lambert suggests the three sins might be the key. Suggest that instead it is perspectivism. The author held the view that capital T truth was not the goal, the goal was utility.

This would mean the sentence is saying that the three questions do have an answer in our reality just we do not have them nor do we need them directly. Somehow be becomes be, somehow abstract interacts with the concrete, somehow the highest has incompleteness and infinite. Again we see a subtle Buddhist reference here, the parable of the arrow. Next line,

[3_54:19] Voluptuousness: unto all hair-shirted despisers of the body, a sting and stake; and, cursed as “the world,” by all backworldsmen: for it mocketh and befooleth all erring, misinferring teachers.

Hair-shirted refers to the practice of wearing uncomfortable clothing by certain religious leaders. A mortification of the flesh. A sting as in a constant pain, and a stake an object that runs through them, that they are willing to die on. They curse voluptuousness as worldly. Who is they? The backworldsmen. The believers in a world behind this one. And voluptuousness mocks them, for all their words and strength their body knows what it wants and is the real teacher they have shown disdain for. Next line,

[3_54:20] Voluptuousness: to the rabble, the slow fire at which it is burnt; to all wormy wood, to all stinking rags, the prepared heat and stew furnace.

Since he has addressed the saints he now moves on to the masses of humanity. Since the herd has agreed with the morality of the saints but refuses to live by the standard they live a life of guilt over what they are. Not the cleansing fire or fire of passion, a slow burn that consumes. The wormy wood a symbol of rot and decay, the stinking rag and allusion to Isaiah 64:6 where being righteous is compared to stinking rags, implying the morality of disdaining lust is what is really the bad thing here not their failure to live up to the code. The prepared heat and stew imagery is powerful, the act of love being an unholy mix of what is base with the guilt, stewed together inseparable. Next line,

[3_54:21] Voluptuousness: to free hearts, a thing innocent and free, the garden-happiness of the earth, all the future’s thanks-overflow to the present.

To those who have integrated themselves with the rhythm of their bodies they can appreciate the act so much it almost pulls from the future gratitude. By moralists we are told to abstain until marriage or until death promises future happiness, while this group knows that their future-selves will thank them for what they do now. Note the garden-happiness part seems to invoke the prefall state in the Bible. Where Adam and Eve had children and were naked without shame. Next line,

[3_54:22] Voluptuousness: only to the withered a sweet poison; to the lion-willed, however, the great cordial, and the reverently saved wine of wines.

To those without a zest for life intimacy is enjoyable but leaves them worse off, to those with vitality and courage it just makes them stronger, they save it as a reserve stock. The wine of wines. One can imagine him thinking of poets here putting their feelings of love into verse. The German is geschonte to put away for a safekeeping. The order of the four sentences is the order of hierarchy of salvation. True hell, purgatory, this earth, and here heaven. If Lambert holds the key to the scales verse then love for the author is a verb. A process where people go from individuals to an act that celebrates this earth. Next line,

[3_54:23] Voluptuousness: the great symbolic happiness of a higher happiness and highest hope. For to many is marriage promised, and more than marriage,—

Here we see the shadow of Plato's *Symposium*: The Ladder of Love. While Plato used love as proof of the above Zarathustra is using it as proof of earthly happiness. Our relationship with it in its highest form is a unification of forces, Apollo and Dionysus, being and becoming. The last sentence is tricky in English and perhaps better rendered "for many marriage is destiny, for some far greater than marriage". Next line,

[3_54:24] —To many that are more unknown to each other than man and woman:—and who hath fully understood HOW UNKNOWN to each other are man and woman!

The wording is strange here, and in German it is also strange. Perhaps the author was trying to achieve in grammar a strangeness to equal the strangeness of the genders for one another. Scene setting with word order. The author believed creation came from the interactions of opposites. To Plato Eros was reunifying what was divided. To Zarathustra it is the strange interactions that produce creation. Next line,

[3_54:25] Voluptuousness:—but I will have hedges around my thoughts, and even around my words, lest swine and libertine should break into my gardens!—

Note the order. Zarathustra says he will guard his thoughts before guarding his words. Most of us guard our words more than our thoughts, however Zarathustra is alone on the mountain. He needs to get the teaching correct prior to sharing. The double condemnation. Attacking swines, those who treat the act without meaning, and the libertine those who treat the act as an ascetic ideal. The tightrope walker walks, on one side animal lust, on the other sophistication of form. Next line,

[3_54:26] Passion for power: the glowing scourge of the hardest of the heart-hard; the cruel torture reserved for the cruellest themselves; the gloomy flame of living pyres.

Breaking it down. For those who claim or are regarded without feeling, passion for power will be this unstoppable foe. Burning them without release. Zarathustra will not downplay the situation. Even if you try not to care, if you try to withdraw, your desire to shape your world and create will not stop. Yet passion of power also will judge. Those who are cruel, who focus on hurting others instead of advancement will be tortured by it. Forever needing more and more without getting what it should be producing. One might imagine eating only food with no nutritional value in greater and greater quantities while starving. Finally the living pyres. Pyres are for the dead not the living. Passion for power for those who are walking dead will be a flame that only illuminates the sadness of the situation. Next line,

[3_54:27] Passion for power: the wicked gadfly which is mounted on the vainest peoples; the scorner of all uncertain virtue; which rideth on every horse and on every pride.

The Socrates vibes are here. The mad gadfly of Athens. A city at its height in that time. Passion for power is an inescapable force. Even if you are absolute being of accomplishment, it remains. It scorns all uncertain virtue as did Socrates. Do you do what you call good but cannot give an account of it? Your desire to rule will mock that virtue using reason as its tool. It rides on every horse, i.e., no one is immune to its call. Strangely passion of power is portrayed negatively here yet in the beginning it was weighted as better. Zarathustra is indicating that it is a force we grapple with not morally judge. Go through your life trying to do what you deem the morally correct thing, if you are unsure of what that is your ambition will harass and laugh at you. Everyone you see and do not see is wrestling with the same. Next line,

[3_54:28] Passion for power: the earthquake which breaketh and upbreaketh all that is rotten and hollow; the rolling, rumbling, punitive demolisher of whitened sepulchres; the flashing interrogative-sign beside premature answers.

Continuing on the trend, passion for power is force of our biology. It is indifferent to our moral evaluation, yet it feeds into all evaluations we make. He likens it to an earthquake, no matter how strong the institution or value the ambitious can break it if it rotten or if it hollow. Yet it also breaks what breaks other things, such as military. No earthquake made something weak, it is exposes what is weak. Whitened sepulchers is a borrowing from the Bible, Matthew 23:27 referring to white washed tombs. They look clean, but they mark where the dead things are. The last sentence is pure Socrates. Any answer not up to snuff, cowardly, quick, inherited was crushed by Socrates with reason. Nietzsche claimed Socrates however operated from a position of decadency while Zarathustra is operating from a position of strength. This whole line contains

the book itself. It will expose the weakness of the Western and Eastern edifices, bury the dead, and make you question any bad answer. Next line,

[3_54:29] Passion for power: before whose glance man creepeth and croucheth and drudgeth, and becometh lower than the serpent and the swine:—until at last great contempt crieth out of him—,

A ladder of response to seeing an embodied version of passion of power. First you creep, avoid being seen. Having been seen you bend low to appear small and non-threatening hoping to not be noticed. Having been noticed you serve and as you serve you end up fawning. We do not think highly of the snake or the pig but we admit that they do not fawn. Finally, and hopefully, you will see what you have become. A fawning slave and will scream rebellion. Next line,

[3_54:30] Passion for power: the terrible teacher of great contempt, which preacheth to their face to cities and empires: “**Away with thee!**”—until a voice crieth out of themselves: “**Away with ME!**”

The German word he chooses for teacher here is in feminine tense. Aligning with his ongoing metaphor of wisdom being a women. The passage argues that ambition is a terrible teacher, terrible as in scary as in has high expectations and what does she teach? To feel contempt. First for others and then inwards on the holder. Only by being disgusted by what the situation is and who we are can we ascend higher. Complicity is fawning groveling slave thinking. Next line,

[3_54:31] Passion for power: which, however, mounteth alluringly even to the pure and lonesome, and up to self-satisfied elevations, glowing like a love that painteth purple felicities alluringly on earthly heavens.

Passion of power has moved from a powerful impersonal force to an alluring seductive one. You think you are immune to her siren call because you are pure? Because you are hermit? No, even onto you she whispers. She whispers and she draws in the sky your dreams. Ties in with the author and his ideas of charity being part of power struggles. You do not give without the desire to rule. The line here is autobiographical for Zarathustra. For all his strength and big talk, for all his purity and enjoying being a hermit on his mountain top he was seduced by passion of power to descend. How appropriate he comes to this understanding after the previous section when he felt contempt and after the previous passage where he claims passion for power makes one feel contempt. One may imagine Zarathustra trying to nice guy the universe into liking him. Next line,

[3_54:32] Passion for power: but who would call it PASSION, when the height longeth to stoop for power! Verily, nothing sick or diseased is there in such longing and descending!

Trickle down metaphysics. This is not the powerful lowering themselves to rise others upwards, this is charity used as an excuse to deal with overflow and achieve yet more power. Power as need, power as a mask for inadequacy, power as a tool against insecurity. The crash of opposites that bring about creation. Notice the active denial towards the end. Zarathustra has caught himself trying to bend the knee to those he thinks he can fix. It is cringe, and everyone knows it. So he throws the denial on it. There is nothing nice guy about overflow. Next line,

[3_54:33] That the lonesome height may not for ever remain lonesome and self-sufficing; that the mountains may come to the valleys and the winds of the heights to the plains:—

Echoing the first scene when Zarathustra notes that the sun could not be fully content in its perfection. It must overflow, and transform. Contrast with the more Plato view of self-sufficient perfection. Zarathustra is in the verb camp not the noun and adjectives camp. Passion for power is what interrupts that state, bringing the higher to the lower. Got to love the Heraclitus vibes here. A valley is only possible with a mountain, a mountain with a valley. The physics links to the poetry. A mountain sends water and avalanches and sediment to a valley, not for the sake of the valley does it alter it, it sends because it cannot do otherwise. So to the creating one. While a flat plain allows wind to ascend upwards. So does the world to the creating one. Neither can do differently.

Possible callback to [3_50:31-32] which reads: Thus do I show them only the ice and winter of my peaks—and NOT that my mountain windeth all the solar girdles around it! They hear only the whistling of my winter-storms: and know NOT that I also travel over warm seas, like longing, heavy, hot south-winds. Next line,

[3_54:34] Oh, who could find the right prenomen and honouring name for such longing!
“Bestowing virtue”—thus did Zarathustra once name the unnamable.

Prenomen is perhaps better translated as baptism name. Honouring name as honorific. Such as The Great or the Saint. Zarathustra is saying/questioning here if anyone could ever name this unnameable thing. He once did and he is ashamed of even trying. He tried to introduce her into his system with a name to come in and a name to recognizing what she has done, bestowing virtue was all he could come up with. You can see the contrast here between this and the last section “Here fly open unto me all being’s words and word-cabinets: here all being wanteth to become words, here all becoming wanteth to learn of me how to talk.”. Up in the Platonic pure world of his mountaintop everything wants nice ordered names following nice ordered words. An

Apollo domain. Just however to talk about descent alone and Dionysus says no, I am lord of the physical and I mock any attempt to be pinned down by mere words. This process is older than Zarathustra, then humanity, then morality, then even our world. Next line,

[3_54:35] And then it happened also,—and verily, it happened for the first time!—that his word blessed SELFISHNESS, the wholesome, healthy selfishness, that springeth from the powerful soul:—

He is almost certainly referring to himself. He is becoming his own myth. At the moment he dared to give the Bestowing Virtue that term the first time in human history someone blessed wholesome healthy selfishness. There is something very Mark Gospel about this. A mood and effect. What is the wholesome healthy selfishness and why did it occur the moment he named that the force bestowing virtue? Because prior to that moment charity caused lack and this type comes from abundance. Could not help to give because they have too much to ever contain. Not pity, not altruism, not guilt, but from lack of storage. Of note he uses Geist as the last word which before was translated as spirit, the part of the brain that deals with the day to day. Next line,

[3_54:36] —From the powerful soul, to which the high body appertaineth, the handsome, triumphing, refreshing body, around which everything becometh a mirror:

This is highly poetic so best discussed in pieces. “From the powerful soul”. He uses Seele. Which refers to the parts of the mind that putting into words becomes a challenge. The deep primal sense of life parts. Recall section 51 where the Fool was insulted that the Great City tried to make newspapers out of it. “to which the high body appertaineth” To modern readers perhaps “owned” works better. To which the high body is owned. Aligning with his ideas that wisdom comes from our body. An inversion of the Plato/Christian view that disdains the body and worships the mind. The mind we are told is the prisoner of the body, Zarathustra suggests it is the highest expression of it. Leib is the word he uses for body here, the lived in experience of body not the biological fact of the body. See how he heaps on praises of the experience of being embodied? Handsome, triumphing and refreshing. “around which everything becometh a mirror”. The handsome, triumphing, refreshing combination of soul and body forms the better world that reflects what it is. It is not reaction it is agency. A will to power of creation. Next line,

[3_54:37] —The pliant, persuasive body, the dancer, whose symbol and epitome is the self-enjoying soul. Of such bodies and souls the self-enjoyment calleth itself “virtue.”

He moves like a dancer, smooth and subtle. His very presence convinces others to imitation. All benefit from being in his midst but he does not do it for them. Moralists convince

via words, the powerful soul convinces with action. His outside and inside are locked as one, exactly how he seems is what he contains. Ones like this even what the merely do for themselves are virtues and they feel no shame in that. Next line,

[3_54:38] With its words of good and bad doth such self-enjoyment shelter itself as with sacred groves; with the names of its happiness doth it banish from itself everything contemptible.

With its words, not other words, its words. His/her evaluation of good and evil. Does this powerful soul use to shelter itself from the elements of the world. The powerful soul defines its own good and evil. Sacred groves are interesting. In the Bible pretty much every time a grove is mentioned it is in context of rogue religion. Of the 36 times it is found in the KJV only 5 are remotely positive and for food. The rest well it is almost like the various authors of the Bible viewed groves the way we would a toddler near a set of power tools. OK, an adult has to step in here. The naming of happiness is also rich, to name something is to give it power. This soul names what brings it joy and thus with its attitude of gratitude banishes all that it would hate. Next line,

[3_54:39] Away from itself doth it banish everything cowardly; it saith: “Bad—THAT IS cowardly!” Contemptible seem to it the ever-solicitous, the sighing, the complaining, and whoever pick up the most trifling advantage.

This soul forbids anything it deems cowardly away from its groves. It sees that as bad, its morals aren't of our typical society. We tend to think of good and evil as what we do to one another while this soul sees good and evil in terms of strength. Being afraid is a moral question and it deems it bad. It has contempt to the people pleasers who fawn, the ones that are broken by dreams they could not achieve, the ones that fill the air with their complaints and whoever picks up the most trifling advantage. Here we see the anti-free market tendencies of Zarathustra. It is not that he is a socialist either, his point is more of beyond economics argument. The endless pursuit of money by bending, by picking up is base. The creation overflow is not. Next line,

[3_54:40] It despiseth also all bitter-sweet wisdom: for verily, there is also wisdom that bloometh in the dark, a night-shade wisdom, which ever sigheth: “All is vain!”

Bitter-sweet maybe better as melancholy. This soul hates melancholy. The bloom in the dark is odd. Few flowers do that, the ones that do not feed on sunlight, they feed on decaying organic matter or parasitical. Maybe this ties in with his themes of sunlight being the source of wisdom and strength and overflow while night time being its absence. A time where the only real light we have is reflected or we cobbled together chemically with what the sun provides during the day. The image of it is a sort of terrible beauty. Which is like well night shade or in German

Nachtschatten, a plant that looks pretty but is deadly to consume. There might be a subtle word choice here. Schatten is shadow and he meets his person calling him his shadow later on, there are also themes here that a shadow is produced by something blocking the light, in this case real wisdom. Or Plato in that we see shadows of the real, maybe this Nachtschatten implies there is a form of truth here but its almost to the point of parody of real truth. The last line is from Ecclesiastes which has a part where it mentions the sun going down and coming back up again. Tying into Zarathustra's idea of the yes saying to the eternal reoccurrence. Taken as a whole this line is urging us to despise the cleverly cynical. Next line,

[3_54:41] Shy distrust is regarded by it as base, and every one who wanteth oaths instead of looks and hands: also all over-distrustful wisdom,—for such is the mode of cowardly souls.

The timid mistrust of one another stands on one pole. Base could also be understood as of low utility. As the powerful soul knows they can act this way but does not see the utility. Is contrasted with the all cynical trust no one view. Those that depend on tiny checks to alert them of danger and those that assume cynical stances because they see danger everywhere. Both of the modes of the cowardly soul. While the powerful soul depends on looks and hands. Actions and looking in the eyes of another person. Next line,

[3_54:42] Baser still it regardeth the obsequious, doggish one, who immediately lieth on his back, the submissive one; and there is also wisdom that is submissive, and doggish, and pious, and obsequious.

The ladder of moral decay moves down another rung. The ever helpful, the slightly melancholy sighing, the complainers, and bottom feeder capitalist, the timid, the oath-demanders, cynics, and now the one who does nothing but fawn, weaponized their weakness. The dog doesn't hunt and work with the humans, it rolls on its back exposing its belly. The being that forfeits its dignity, decision making, its strength to the powerful. Then he moves on to describe systems and philosophies in those terms. Ones that instruct that this is right and proper. Next line,

[3_54:43] Hateful to it altogether, and a loathing, is he who will never defend himself, he who swalloweth down poisonous spittle and bad looks, the all-too-patient one, the all-endurer, the all-satisfied one: for that is the mode of slaves.

Even lower than the fawner is the enduring person. The stoic. The person who ingests the poison and the contempt others feel towards them. Eventually they will moralize it. They will deem their situation right and proper, and the whole civilization will become slaves. This being

takes pride on turning the other cheek and needing only the basics to survive. The fawner debases themselves, the all enduring one debases the species. Next line,

[3_54:44] Whether they be servile before Gods and divine spurnings, or before men and stupid human opinions: at ALL kinds of slaves doth it spit, this blessed selfishness!

All these people they could bow to God the entity or bow to the divine path or bow to man the people or bow to the ideas man announces. All, all are a form of slaves that blessed selfishness spits on. There is no safe spot, no refuge for its judgment. Follow god, follow a divine plan, follow a state or boss, or follow an ideology. Anything but following your overcoming is a form of slavery. Note the spitting against which we have seen before. The act of feeling so much contempt that words are too much dignity awarded to it. Next line,

[3_54:45] Bad: thus doth it call all that is spirit-broken, and sordidly-servile—constrained, blinking eyes, depressed hearts, and the false submissive style, which kisseth with broad cowardly lips.

Suggest an alternative translation as: bad, she bites everything bent and cheap-submissive, bound, winking eyes, and that lying yielding way that kisses with broad, cowardly lips. Bad as in bad not evil, she bites. A physical reaction. It is so revolting it requires a physical response, much like spiting. Cheap-submissive, it isn't even earned submissiveness. It is given for nothing and means nothing. Bound eyes of a slave forced to look at their master, winking eyes of a slave that thinks he has gotten comfortable with the masters' vices/ The lying yielding not overcoming yielding, that kisses the ring with a fake smile. And is a coward while doing so. Next line,

[3_54:46] And spurious wisdom: so doth it call all the wit that slaves, and hoary-headed and weary ones affect; and especially all the cunning, spurious-witted, curious-witted foolishness of priests!

Spurious wisdom here is After-Weisheit. After can be translated as fake or pseudo or in this translation spurious, After can also be translated as anus. The sentence double meaning is the witticisms of these groups are fake wisdom or just the emissions of a butt. The witticisms of the slaves of the old man i.e., the hoary-headed and those that are tired of living is not real wisdom. It is overflow in the sense it comes from the rear. Perhaps think of all the cynical takes you have heard in your life from same shit different day to FUBAR and consider this section. Was it people asserting what little good they had left or was it farting in verbal form? These jokes aren't even funny, they aren't wise. They fill the air with decay and stink. Nothing will ever change,

nothing can change, caring is burdensome, accept the grind and the joke about the chains, not a ha-ha joke one lower than a fart.

The second part of the sentence handles the religious leaders or possibly things in their wheelhouse. Not required that any shaman ever said this but something that people identify as something they could have said. The particular fart-speech of the priest is over-witty and terrible and has a sorta stupid-smart property. It is clever in a way that breaks. The priests are too clever for “nothing ever changes” so they crank out “everything happens for a reason”. Next line,

[3_54:47] The spurious wise, however, all the priests, the world-weary, and those whose souls are of feminine and servile nature—oh, how hath their game all along abused selfishness!

Again spurious wise can be translated as fart wit instead. He adds the priests to the list of all the souls of submission. Calling the submissive feminine is not ideal, the author was a product of his time, worth noting that Blessed Selfishness in this entire passage was of feminine tense. In any case the cowardly of humanity have played games with Blessed Selfishness and abused her with it. Perhaps one should imagine a well made doll being broken slowly in reckless games by small girls and grown men. Next line,

[3_54:48] And precisely THAT was to be virtue and was to be called virtue—to abuse selfishness! And “selfless”—so did they wish themselves with good reason, all those world-weary cowards and cross-spiders!

They create a value system that entrenched their power. Teach their congregations that blessed selfishness is vile and they can control them. The reference to cross-spiders we have seen in section 52. The image of not a hunt but a spider building its web to catch flies under the cross. To Zarathustra virtue for this class is self-serving, lower humanity and ride on top of those lowered. Next line,

[3_54:49] But to all those cometh now the day, the change, the sword of judgment, THE GREAT NOONTIDE: then shall many things be revealed!

This feels very fire and brimstone, matches with a theme we are seeing in the book that after Zarathustra encounters someone he begins to match their tone. He just heaped on two passages on priests and now is beginning to talk like one. If you follow the events the story begins at dawn and Zarathustra notes the noon is coming. Noon is when the shadows are smallest and everything is visible. Not the time for nightshade the time for proper flowers that bees will gather from to make honey. Possible allusion to the sword being next to sunlight in the passage,

the link between swords and light is found in western stories. Indicating that Zarathustra or the one he inspires will be what the priests could never be, the bringer of the light. Next line,

[3_54:50] And he who proclaimeth the EGO wholesome and holy, and selfishness blessed, verily, he, the prognosticator, speaketh also what he knoweth: “BEHOLD, IT COMETH, IT IS NIGH, THE GREAT NOONTIDE!”

And he, not Zarathustra not a particular person, not a state, anyone, anyone at all that declares the self as blessed is already a prophet of the coming era. Not the speaking, it isn't a vague thought it is proclaimed. What is the coming era? The noon-tide the new table of values being forged. Zarathustra lists 3 virtues but he singles out one here. Eros which just happens, passion for power which is part of the universe, but blessed selfishness is not a given. It had to be brought in. The section as a whole follows a very traditional form of sermon. A beginning of claiming authority, an announcement that reality is not what you think it is, the listing of sins and virtues, visions of heaven and hell presented, and here a reminder that the current state is temporary. Zarathustra uses the structure of a sermon to sneak in a new system. Next line,

[3_54:51] Thus spake Zarathustra.

Traditional ending of the section.

As a side note there are references to Buddhism throughout this section at the same time there just is not the evidence to suggest that the author was intending a non-European audience for this work. While he used the imagery of the east if he was interested in speaking to them we have no indication. The man himself was a bigot and thought provincially. Using Buddhism was likely just an exotic spice and not an attempt to reach out to say the people of Cambodia. However, trees do not decide where their seeds land and all seeds grow towards the light.