Journal 1-26

* “The traveler knew what was going to happen, but felt he had no right to interfere in any way”

The traveler suspended his ethics to participate in the group, and this seems to be a common theme throughout our reading. Conformity to the whim of the crowd is a powerful force and often turns brave people into cowards.

* “What the others had found in the machine the officer had not found…his lips were pressed together, the eyes open, calm and full of conviction, through the forehead came the point of the big iron spike.”

The officer was so convinced he was right that his beliefs comforted him until his last breath. Judging by the image I can only image that he didn’t have the time to contemplate his life and lament his short comings or life choices. There is some tranquility in a death like that.

* “Why stop after only forty days?!? Why should they take from him the glory of fasting even longer, of surpassing even himself to reach unimaginable heights, for he saw his ability to go on fasting as unlimited!”

This is another example of a person’s convictions being able to override their sense of ethics or care for their life. His belief and pursuit of glory will shield him from dwelling on his life as literally wasting away in a cage.

* “Some kind-hearted person would try to explain that his depression was the result of the fasting, he would sometimes fly into a rage and begin rattling the bars of his cage like an animal.”

A common theme of our readings has been the perception of sadness as a bad state of being, instead of the transformative experience it usually is. The loss of interest seemed to weigh on him since his glory was tied to the praise of others who began to slowly fade away and doubt him.