

238 SOCRATES Don't you know that the first thing politicians put in their writings is the names of their admirers?

PHAEDRUS How so?

SOCRATES "Resolved," the author often begins, "by the Council" or "by the People" or by both, and "So-and-so said"²⁸—meaning himself, the writer, with great solemnity and self-importance. Only then does he go on with what he has to say, showing off his wisdom to his admirers, often composing a very long document. Do you think there's any difference between that and a written speech?

b PHAEDRUS No, I don't.

SOCRATES Well, then, if it remains on the books, he is delighted and leaves the stage a poet. But if it is struck down, if he fails as a speech writer and isn't considered worthy of having his work written down, he goes into deep mourning, and his friends along with him.

PHAEDRUS He certainly does.

SOCRATES Clearly, then, they don't feel contempt for speechwriting; on the contrary, they are in awe of it.

PHAEDRUS Quite so.

c SOCRATES There's this too. What of an orator or a king who acquires enough power to match Lyncurgus, Solon, or Darius as a law-giver²⁹ and acquires immortal fame as a speech writer in his city? Doesn't he think that he is equal to the gods while he is still alive? And don't those who live in later times believe just the same about him when they behold his writings?

PHAEDRUS Very much so.

SOCRATES Do you really believe then that any one of these people, whoever he is and however much he hates Lysias, would reproach him for being a writer?

PHAEDRUS It certainly isn't likely in view of what you said, for he would probably be reproaching his own ambition as well.

d SOCRATES This, then, is quite clear: Writing speeches is not in itself a shameful thing.

a source. This then is why a self-mover is a source of motion. And *that* is incapable of being destroyed or starting up; otherwise all heaven and everything that has been started up would collapse, come to a stop, and never have cause to start moving again. But since we have found that a self-mover is immortal, we should have no qualms about declaring that this is the very essence and principle of a soul, for every bodily object that is moved from outside has no soul, while a body whose motion comes from within, from itself, does have a soul, that being the nature of a soul; and if this is so—that whatever moves itself is essentially a soul—then it follows necessarily that soul should have neither birth nor death.

b That, then, is enough about the soul's immortality. Now here is what we must say about its structure. To describe what the soul actually is would require a very long account, altogether a task for a god in every way; but to say what it is like is humanly possible and takes less time. So let us do the second in our speech. Let us then liken the soul to the natural union of a team of winged horses and their charioteer. The gods have horses and charioteers that are themselves all good and come from good stock besides, while everyone else has a mixture. To begin with, our driver is in charge of a pair of horses; second, one of his horses is beautiful and good and from stock of the same sort, while the other is the opposite and has the opposite sort of bloodline. This means that chariot-driving in our case is inevitably a painfully difficult business.

c And now I should try to tell you why living things are said to include both mortal and immortal beings. All soul looks after all that lacks a soul, and patrols all of heaven, taking different shapes at different times. So long as its wings are in perfect condition it flies high, and the entire universe is its dominion, but a soul that sheds its wings wanders until it lights on something solid, where it settles and takes on an earthly body, which then, owing to the power of this soul, seems to move itself. The

c with ambition in place of philosophy, then pretty soon when they are careless because they have been drinking or for some other reason, the pair's undisciplined horses will catch their souls off guard and together bring them to commit that act which ordinary people would take to be the happiest choice of all, and when they have consummated it once, they go on doing this for the rest of their lives, but sparingly, since they have not approved of what they are doing with their whole minds. So these two also live in mutual friendship (though weaker than that of the philosophical pair), both while they are in love and after they have passed beyond it, because they realize they have exchanged such firm vows that it would be forbidden for them ever to break them and become enemies. In death they are wingless when they leave the body, but their wings are bursting to sprout, so the prize they have won from the madness of love is considerable, because those who have begun the sacred journey in lower heaven may not by law be sent into darkness for the journey under the earth; their lives are bright and happy as they travel together, and thanks to their love they will grow wings together when the time comes.

These are the rewards you will have from a lover's friendship, my boy, and they are as great as divine gifts should be. A non-lover's companionship, on the other hand, is diluted by human self-control; all it pays are cheap, human dividends, and though the slavish attitude it engenders in a friend's soul is widely praised as virtue, it tosses the soul around for nine thousand years on the earth and leads it, mindless, beneath it.

So now, dear Love, this is the best and most beautiful palinode we could offer as payment for our debt, especially in view of the rather poetical choice of words Phaedrus made me use. Forgive us our earlier speeches in return for this one; be kind and gracious toward my expertise at love, which is your own gift to me: do not, out of anger, take it away or disable it; and grant that I may be held in higher esteem

mortals reach the top, they move outward and take their stand on the high ridge of heaven, where its circular motion carries them around as they stand while they gaze upon what is outside heaven.

The place beyond heaven—none of our earthly poets has ever sung or ever will sing its praises enough! Still, this is the way it is—risky as it may be, you see, I must attempt to speak the truth, especially since the truth is my subject. What is in this place is without color and without shape and without solidity, a being that really is what it is, the subject of all true knowledge, visible only to intelligence, the soul's steersman. Now a god's mind is nourished by intelligence and pure knowledge, as is the mind of any soul that is concerned to take in what is appropriate to it, and so it is delighted at last to be seeing what is real and watching what is true, feeding on all this and feeling wonderful, until the circular motion brings it around to where it started. On the way around it has a view of justice as it is; it has a view of Self-control; it has a view of Knowledge—not the knowledge that is close to change, that becomes different as it knows the different things which we consider real down here. No, it is the knowledge of what really is what it is. And when the soul has seen all the things that are as they are and feasted on them, it sinks back inside heaven and goes home. On its arrival, the charioteer stables the horses by the manger, throws in ambrosia, and gives them nectar to drink besides.

Now that is the life of the gods. As for the other souls, one that follows a god most closely, making itself most like that god, raises the head of its charioteer up to the place outside and is carried around in the circular motion with the others. Although distracted by the horses, this soul does have a view of Reality, just barely. Another soul rises at one time and falls at another, and because its horses pull it violently in different directions, it sees some real things and misses others. The remaining souls are all eagerly straining to keep up, but are unable to rise; they are carried around below the surface, trampling and striking

before, only worse, and he's falling back as he would from a starting gate; and he violently yanks the bit back out of the teeth of the insolent horse, only harder this time, so that he bloodies its foul-speaking tongue and jaws, sets its legs and haunches firmly on the ground, and 'gives it over to pain.' When the bad horse has suffered this same thing time after time, it stops being so insolent; now it is humble enough to follow the charioteer's warnings, and when it sees the beautiful boy it dies of fright, with the result that now at last the lover's soul follows its boy in reverence and awe.

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And because he is served with all the attentions due a god by a lover who is not pretending otherwise but is truly in the throes of love, and because he is by nature disposed to be a friend of the man who is serving him (even if he has already been set against love by school friends or others who say that it is shameful to associate with a lover, and initially rejects the lover in consequence), as time goes forward he is brought by his ripening age and a sense of what must be to a point where he lets the man spend time with him. It is a decree of fate, you see, that bad is never friends with bad, while good cannot fail to be friends with good. Now that he allows his lover to talk and spend time with him, and the man's good will is close at hand, the boy is amazed by it as he realizes that all the friendship he has from his other friends and relatives put together is nothing compared to that of this friend who is inspired by a god.

After the lover has spent some time doing this, staying near the boy (and even touching him during sports and on other occasions), then the spring that feeds the stream Zeus named 'Desire' when he was in love with Ganymede begins to flow mightily in the lover and is partly absorbed by him, and when he is filled it overflows and runs away outside him. Think how a breeze or an echo bounces back from a smooth solid object to its source; that is how the stream of beauty goes back to the beautiful boy and sets him aflutter. It enters through his eyes,

the soul of a man who practices philosophy without guile or who loves boys philosophically. If, after the third cycle of one thousand years, the last-mentioned souls have chosen such a life three times in a row, they grow their wings back, and they depart in the three-thousandth year. As for the rest, once their first life is over, they come to judgment; and, once judged, some are condemned to go to places of punishment beneath the earth and pay the full penalty for their injustice, while the others are lifted up by justice to a place in heaven where they live in the manner the life they led in human form has earned them. In the thousandth year both groups arrive at a choice and allotment of second lives, and each soul chooses the life it wants. From there, a human soul can enter a wild animal, and a soul that was once human can move from an animal to a human being again. But a soul that never saw the truth cannot take a human shape, since a human being must understand speech in terms of general forms, proceeding to bring many perceptions together into a reasoned unity. That process is the recollection of the things our soul saw when it was traveling with god, when it disregarded the things we now call real and lifted up its head to what is truly real instead.

For just this reason it is fair that only a philosopher's mind grows wings, since its memory always keeps it as close as possible to those realities by being close to which the gods are divine. A man who uses reminders of these things correctly is always at the highest, most perfect level of initiation, and he is the only one who is perfect as perfect can be. He stands outside human concerns and draws close to the divine; ordinary people think he is disturbed and rebuke him for this, unaware that he is possessed by god. Now this takes me to the whole point of my discussion of the fourth kind of madness—that which someone shows when he sees the beauty we have down here and is reminded of true beauty; then he takes wing and flutters in his eagerness to rise up, but is unable to do so; and he gazes aloft, like a bird, paying no attention to

boy to thank, and so they love him all the more; and if they draw their
 inspiration from Zeus, then, like the Bacchants,²⁶ they pour it into the
 soul of the one they love in order to help him take on as much of
 their own god's qualities as possible. Hera's followers look for a kingly
 character, and once they have found him they do all the same things for
 him. And so it is for followers of Apollo or any other god: They take
 their god's path and seek for their own a boy whose nature is like the
 god's; and when they have got him they emulate the god, convincing
 the boy they love and training him to follow their god's pattern and way
 of life, so far as is possible in each case. They show no envy, no mean-
 spirited lack of generosity, toward the boy, but make every possible
 effort to draw him into being totally like themselves and the god to
 whom they are devoted. This, then, is any true lover's heart's desire:
 if he follows that desire in the manner I described, this friend who has
 been driven mad by love will secure a consummation for the one he
 has befriended that is as beautiful and blissful as I said—if, of course,
 he captures him. Here, then, is how the captive is caught:

Remember how we divided each soul in three at the beginning of
 our story—two parts in the form of horses and the third in that of a
 charioteer? Let us continue with that. One of the horses, we said, is
 good, the other not; but we did not go into the details of the goodness
 of the good horse or the badness of the bad. Let us do that now. The
 horse that is on the right, or nobler, side is upright in frame and well
 jointed, with a high neck and a regal nose; his coat is white, his eyes
 are black, and he is a lover of honor with modesty and self-control;
 companion to true glory, he needs no whip, and is guided by verbal
 commands alone. The other horse is a crooked great jumble of limbs
 with a short bull-neck, a pug nose, black skin, and bloodshot white
 eyes; companion to wild boasts and indecency, he is shaggy around
 the ears—deaf as a post—and just barely yields to horsewhip and goad
 combined. Now when the charioteer looks in the eye of love, his en-

among the other objects; and now that we have come down here we
 grasp it sparkling through the clearest of our senses. Vision, of course,
 is the sharpest of our bodily senses, although it does not see wisdom.
 It would awaken a terribly powerful love if an image of wisdom came
 through our sight as clearly as beauty does, and the same goes for the
 other objects of inspired love. But now beauty alone has this privilege,
 to be the most clearly visible and the most loved. Of course a man who
 was initiated long ago or who has become defiled is not to be moved
 abruptly from here to a vision of Beauty itself when he sees what we
 call beauty here; so instead of gazing at the latter reverently, he sur-
 renders to pleasure and sets out in the manner of a four-footed beast,
 eager to make babies; and, wallowing in vice, he goes after unnatural
 pleasure too, without a trace of fear or shame. A recent initiate, how-
 ever, one who has seen much in heaven—when he sees a godlike face
 or bodily form that has captured Beauty well, first he shudders and a
 fear comes over him like those he felt at the earlier time; then he gazes
 at him with the reverence due a god, and if he weren't afraid people
 would think him completely mad, he'd even sacrifice to his boy as if he
 were the image of a god. Once he has looked at him, his chill gives way
 to sweating and a high fever, because the stream of beauty that pours
 into him through his eyes warms him up and waters the growth of his
 wings. Meanwhile, the heat warms him and melts the places where
 the wings once grew, places that were long ago closed off with hard
 scabs to keep the sprouts from coming back; but as nourishment flows
 in, the feather shafts swell and rush to grow from their roots beneath
 every part of the soul (long ago, you see, the entire soul had wings).
 Now the whole soul seethes and throbs in this condition. Like a child
 whose teeth are just starting to grow in, and its gums are all aching
 and itching—that is exactly how the soul feels when it begins to grow
 wings. It swells up and aches and tingles as it grows them. But when
 it looks upon the beauty of the boy and takes in the stream of parti-