music by leading a philosophical life. to die. After they die, they go to the Muses and tell each one of them over the heavens and all discourse, human and divine, and sing with the oldest among them, and Urania, the next after her, who preside Muses, according to the activity that honors each. And to Calliope, who have honored her by their devotion to the dance and thus make which mortals have honored her. To Terpsichore they report those diately burst into song, without food or drink, until it is time for them have no need of nourishment once they are born. Instead, they immethe sweetest voice, they report those who honor their special kind of dedicating themselves to the affairs of love, and so too with the other them dearer to her. To Erato, they report those who honored her by race of the cicadas came into being; and, as a gift from the Muses, they

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afternoon in sleep. There are many reasons, then, why we should talk and not waste our

PHAEDRUS By all means, let's talk.

just now: When is a speech well written and delivered, and when is it SOCRATES Well, then, we ought to examine the topic we proposed

PHAEDRUS Plainly.

have in mind the truth about the subject he is going to discuss? SOCRATES Won't someone who is to speak well and nobly have to

as judges. Nor again what is really good or noble, but only what will is really just, but only what will seem just to the crowd who will act friend, is that it is not necessary for the intending orator to learn what seem so. For that is what persuasion proceeds from, not truth. PHAEDRUS What I have actually heard about this, Socrates, my

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you just said, in particular, must not be dismissed. be cast aside";30 we must consider whether it might be right. And what SOCRATES Anything that wise men say, Phaedrus, "is not lightly to

PHAEDRUS You're right.

they stand while they gaze upon what is outside heaven.

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

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

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the incompetence of the drivers, and many wings break much of their plumage. After so much trouble, they all leave without having seen reality, uninitiated, and when they have gone they will depend on what they think is nourishment—their own opinions.

the arts and prone to erotic love. The second sort of soul will be put soul becomes a companion to a god and catches sight of any true thing, become a lover of wisdom<sup>22</sup> or of beauty, or who will be cultivated in into someone who will be a lawful king or warlike commander; the the fifth will lead the life of a prophet or priest of the mysteries. To the stands is that this pasture has the grass that is the right food for the best part of the soul, and it is the nature of the wings that lift up the be nourished by it. Besides, the law of Destiny is this: If any it will be unharmed until the next circuit, and if it is able to do this every time, it will always be safe. If, on the other hand, it does not see anything true because it could not keep up, and by some accident takes on a burden of forgetfulness and wrongdoing, then it is weighed down, sheds its wings and falls to earth. At that point, according to the law, third, a statesman, a manager of a household, or a financier; the fourth a trainer who loves exercise or a doctor who cures the body; e life of a poet or some other representational artist is properly assigned; to the seventh the life of a manual laborer or farmer; to the eighth the career of a sophist or demagogue, and to the ninth a tyrant. The reason there is so much eagerness to see the plain where truth is not born into a wild animal in its first incarnation; but a soul seen the most will be planted in the seed of a man who will the soul that has will be sixth the soul to

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Of all these, any who have led their lives with justice will change to a better fate, and any who have led theirs with injustice, to a worse one. In fact, no soul returns to the place from which it came for ten thousand years, since its wings will not grow before then, except for 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

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a shameful thing.

PHAEDRUS How could it be?

SOCRATES It's not speaking or writing well that's shameful; what's eally shameful is to engage in either of them shamefully or badly.

PHAEDRUS That is clear.

SOCRATES So what distinguishes good from bad writing? Do we need to ask this question of Lysias or anyone else who ever did or will write anything—whether a public or a private document, poetic verse or plain prose?

PHAEDRUS You ask if we need to? Why else should one live, I say, if not for pleasures of this sort? Certainly not for those you cannot feel unless you are first in pain, like most of the pleasures of the body, and which for this reason we call the pleasures of slaves.

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SOCRATES It seems we clearly have the time. Besides, I think that the cicadas, who are singing and carrying on conversations with one another in the heat of the day above our heads, are also watching us. And if they saw the two of us avoiding conversation at midday like most people, diverted by their song and, sluggish of mind, nodding off, they would have every right to laugh at us, convinced that a pair of slaves had come to their resting place to sleep like sheep gathering around the spring in the afternoon. But if they see us in conversation, steadfastly navigating around them as if they were the Sirens, they will be very pleased and immediately give us the gift from the gods they are able to give to mortals.

PHAEDRUS What is this gift? I don't think I have heard of it.

SOCRATES Everyone who loves the Muses should have heard of this. The story goes that the cicadas used to be human beings who lived before the birth of the Muses. When the Muses were born and song was created for the first time, some of the people of that time were so overwhelmed with the pleasure of singing that they forgot to eat or drink; so they died without even realizing it. It is from them that the

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PHAEDRUS How so?

Socrates "Resolved," the author often begins, "by the Council" or "by the People" or by both, and "So-and-so said" — 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?

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.

Socrates There's this too. What of an orator or a king who acquires enough power to match Lycurgus, Solon, or Darius as a law-giver<sup>29</sup> 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.

SOCRATES This, then, is quite clear: Writing speeches is not in itself

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regarded the things we now call real and lifted up its head to what is the things our soul saw when it was traveling with god, when it distruly real instead. tions together into a reasoned unity. That process is the recollection of speech in terms of general forms, proceeding to bring many truth cannot take a human shape, since a human being must understand from an animal to a human being again. But a soul that never saw the soul can enter a wild animal, and a soul that was once human can move ond lives, and each soul chooses the life it wants. From there, a thousandth year both groups arrive at a choice and allotment others are lifted up by justice to a place in heaven where they live in neath the earth and pay the full penalty for their injustice, while the once judged, some are condemned to go to places of punishment be-As for the rest, once their first life is over, they come to judgment; and, grow their wings back, and they depart in the three-thousandth year. last-mentioned souls have chosen such a life three times in a row, they the manner the life they led in human form has earned them. In the percepof sechuman

he has gone mad. This is the best and noblest of all the forms that poswhat is down below—and that is what brings on him the charge that is unable to do so; and he gazes aloft, like a bird, paying no attention to beauty; then he takes wing and flutters in his eagerness to rise when he sees the beauty we have down here and is reminded that he is possessed by god. Now this takes me to the whole point of my ordinary people think he is disturbed and rebuke him for this, unaware reminders of these things correctly is always at the highest, most realities by being close to which the gods are divine. A man w wings, since its memory always keeps it as close as possible to those discussion of the fourth kind of madness—that which someone shows be. He stands outside human concerns and draws close to the level of initiation, and he is the only one who is perfect as perfect can For just this reason it is fair that only a philosopher's mind divine; t perfect up, but of true ho uses grows

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session by god can take for anyone who has it or is connected to it, and when someone who loves beautiful boys is touched by this madness he is called a lover. As I said, nature requires that the soul of every human being has seen reality; otherwise, no soul could have entered this sort of living thing. But not every soul is easily reminded of the reality there by what it finds here—not souls that got only a brief glance at the reality there, not souls who had such bad luck when they fell down here that they were twisted by bad company into lives of injustice so that they forgot the sacred objects they had seen before. Only a few remain whose memory is good enough; and they are startled when they see an image of what they saw up there. Then they are beside themselves, and their experience is beyond their comprehension because they cannot fully grasp what it is that they are seeing.

with difficulty, the original of the likenesses they encounter here. But Justice and self-control do not shine out through their images down here, and neither do the other objects of the soul's admiration; the senses are so murky that only a few people are able to make out, gods), saw that blessed and spectacular vision and were ushered into who celebrated it were wholly perfect and free of all the troubles that were pure ourselves, not buried in this thing we are carrying around was radiant to see at that time when the souls, along with the glorious chorus (we23 were with Zeus, while others followed other the mystery that we may rightly call the most blessed of all. And we us in time to come, and we gazed in rapture at sacred revealed That was the ultimate vision, and we saw it in pure light because we that were perfect, and simple, and unshakeable and blissful. hich we call a body, locked in it like an oyster in its shell. awaited now, wł beauty ' objects

Well, all that was for love of a memory that made me stretch out my speech in longing for the past. Now beauty, as I said, was radiant 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,

than ever by those who are beautiful. If Phaedrus and I said anything that shocked you in our earlier speech, blame it on Lysias, who was its father, and put a stop to his making speeches of this sort; convert him to philosophy like his brother Polemarchus so that his lover here may no longer play both sides as he does now, but simply devote his life to Love through philosophical discussions."

PHAEDRUS I join you in your prayer, Socrates. If this is really best for us, may it come to pass. As to your speech, I admired it from the moment you began: You managed it much better than your first one. I'm afraid that Lysias' effort to match it is bound to fall flat, if of course he even dares to try to offer a speech of his own. In fact, my marvelous friend, a politician I know was only recently taking Lysias to task for just that reason: All through his invective, he kept calling him a "speech writer." So perhaps his pride will keep him from writing this speech

SOCRATES Ah, what a foolish thing to say, young man. How wrong you are about your friend: he can't be intimidated so easily! But perhaps you thought the man who was taking him to task meant what he said as a reproach?

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PHAEDRUS He certainly seemed to, Socrates. In any case, you are surely aware yourself that the most powerful and renowned politicians are ashamed to compose speeches or leave any writings behind; they are afraid that in later times they may come to be known as "sophists."

SOCRATES Phaedrus, you don't understand the expression "Pleasant Bend"—it originally referred to the long bend of the Nile.<sup>27</sup> And, besides the bend, you also don't understand that the most ambitious politicians love speechwriting and long for their writings to survive. In fact, when they write one of their speeches, they are so pleased when people praise it that they add at the beginning a list of its admirers everywhere.

PHAEDRUS What do you mean? I don't understand.

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

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

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

every part of the soul (long ago, you see, the entire soul had wings). wings. It swells up and aches and tingles as it grows them. But when and itching—that is exactly how the soul feels when it begins scabs to keep the sprouts from coming back; but as nourishment flows the wings once grew, places that were long ago closed off with hard into him through his eyes warms him up and waters the growth of his fear comes over him like those he felt at the earlier time; then he gazes ever, one who has seen much in heaven-when he sees a godli pleasure too, without a trace of fear or shame. A recent initiate, howeager to make babies; and, wallowing in vice, he goes after unnatural to be the most clearly visible and the most loved. Of course a man who It would awaken a terribly powerful love if an image of wisdom came when it is watered and warmed by this, then all its pain subsides and is cles flowing into it from his beauty (that is why this is called 'desire'24), it looks upon the beauty of the boy and takes in the stream of partiwhose teeth are just starting to grow in, and its gums are all Now the whole soul seethes and throbs in this condition. Like in, the feather shafts swell and rush to grow from their roots beneath wings. Meanwhile, the heat warms him and melts the places where to sweating and a high fever, because the stream of beauty that pours were the image of a god. Once he has looked at him, his chill gives way would think him completely mad, he'd even sacrifice to his boy at him with the reverence due a god, and if he weren't afraid or bodily form that has captured Beauty well, first he shudders and a call beauty here; so instead of gazing at the latter reverently, abruptly from here to a vision of Beauty itself when he sees what we was initiated long ago or who has become defiled is not to be other objects of inspired love. But now beauty alone has this privilege, through our sight as clearly as beauty does, and the same goes is the sharpest of our bodily senses, although it does not see renders to pleasure and sets out in the manner of a four-footed beast, to grow wisdom. e a child y as if he l people ike face l aching he surmoved for the  $\mathcal{C}$ d в 251

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helpless raving: in its madness the lover's soul cannot sleep at night feather is blocked in its desire and it throbs like a pulsing artery while landish mix of these two feelings-pain and joy-comes anguish and gates of desire and sets free the parts that were blocked up before. And is not at all willing to give up, and no one is more important soul despises the whole business. Why, it is even willing to sleep like get! That is because in addition to its reverence for one who has such by joy. When, however, it is separated from the boy and runs dry, then the openings of the passages in which the feathers grow are the feather pricks at its passageway, with the result that the whole soul is stung all around, and the pain simply drives it wild—but then, when or stay put by day; it rushes, yearning, wherever it expects to see the person who has that beauty. When it does see him, it opens the sluiceto it than the beautiful boy. It forgets mother and brothers and friends entirely and doesn't care at all if it loses its wealth through neglect. And as for proper and decorous behavior, in which it used to take pride, the anywhere, as near to the object of its longing as it is allowed to beauty, the soul has discovered that the boy is the only doctor for all dried shut and keep the wings from sprouting. Then the stump of each now that the pain and the goading have stopped, it can catch its breath and once more suck in, for the moment, this sweetest of all pleasures. it remembers the boy in his beauty, it recovers its joy. From the out-This it a slave,

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that terrible pain.

This is the experience we humans call love, you beautiful boy (I mean the one to whom I am making this speech). You are so young that what the gods call it is likely to strike you as funny. Some of the successors of Homer, I believe, report two lines from the less well known poems, of which the second is quite indecent and does not scan very well. They praise love this way:

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which are its natural route to the soul; there it waters the passages for the wings, starts the wings growing, and fills the soul of the loved one with love in return. Then the boy is in love, but has no idea what he loves. He does not understand, and cannot explain, what has happened to him. It is as if he had caught an eye disease from someone else, but could not identify the cause; he does not realize that he is seeing himself in the lover as in a mirror. So when the lover is near, the boy's pain is relieved just as the lover's is, and when they are apart he yearns as much as he is yearned for, because he has a mirror image of love in him—'backlove'—though he neither speaks nor thinks of it as love, but as friendship. Still, his desire is nearly the same as the lover's, though weaker: he wants to see, touch, kiss, and lie down with him; and of course, as you might expect, he acts on these desires soon after they occur.

When they are in bed, the lover's undisciplined horse has a word to say to the charioteer-that after all its sufferings it is entitled to a little fun. Meanwhile, the boy's bad horse has nothing to say, but swelling with desire, confused, it hugs the lover and kisses him in delight at pletely unable, for its own part, to deny the lover any favor he might beg to have. Its yokemate, however, along with its charioteer, resists such requests with modesty and reason. Now if the victory goes to the igned regimen of philosophy, their life here below is one of bliss and selves now that they have enslaved the part that brought trouble into the soul and set free the part that gave it virtue. After death, when they have grown wings and become weightless, they have won the first of three rounds in these, the true Olympic Contests. There is no greater good than this that either human self-control or divine madness can better elements in both their minds, which lead them to follow the asshared understanding. They are modest and fully in control of themoffer a man. If, on the other hand, they adopt a lower way of living, his great good will. And whenever they are lying together it is com-

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

255 6 together is nothing compared to that of this friend who is inspired by who is not pretending otherwise but is truly in the throes of love, and that all the friendship he has from his other friends and relatives put Now that he allows his lover to talk and spend time with him, and the by his ripening age and a sense of what must be to a point where he lets rejects the lover in consequence), as time goes forward he is brought man's good will is close at hand, the boy is amazed by it as he realizes others who say that it is shameful to associate with a lover, and initially ing him (even if he has already been set against love by school friends or because he is by nature disposed to be a friend of the man who is servnever friends with bad, while good cannot fail to be friends with good the man spend time with him. It is a decree of fate, you see, that bad is And because he is served with all the attentions due a god by a lover

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

> But because of his need to thrust out the wings Yes, mortals call him powerful winged 'Love'; the gods call him 'Shove'.25

love is as I have said, and this is how lovers really feel You may believe this or not as you like. But, seriously, the cause of

and he is ready to make a sacrifice of himself as well as the boy. cion that the boy he loves has done him wrong, he turns murderous, god with whom he took the circuit—then if he has the slightest suspiwill be able to bear the burden of this feathered force with dign if it is one of Ares' troops who has fallen prisoner of love—if that is the If the man who is taken by love used to be an attendant on Z ity. But eus, he

nature with their own resources because of their driving need found him and are in love with him they do everything to develop a talent for philosophy and the guidance of others, and once they have is a Zeus himself in the nobility of his soul. So they make sure those who are beautiful, and then treats the boy like his very own god, being can share a god's life. For all of this they know they have the inspired by him and adopt his customs and practices, so far as a at the god, and as they are in touch with the god by memory on their own. They are well equipped to track down their god's true they start to learn, using any source they can and also making progress that talent. If any lovers have not yet embarked on this practice, then Those who followed Zeus, for example, choose someone to love who building him up and adorning him as an image to honor and worship. that is how he behaves with everyone at every turn, not just with those can, so long as he remains undefiled and in his first life down here. And god in whose chorus he danced, and emulates that god in every he loves. Everyone chooses his love after his own fashion from So it is with each of the gods: everyone spends his life honoring the y way he human they are to gaze among he has

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effort to draw him into being totally like themselves and the god to the one they love in order to help him take on as much of 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 the boy they love and training him to follow their god's pattern and way their own god's qualities as possible. Hera's followers look for a kingly god's; and when they have got him they emulate the god, convincing if he follows that desire in the manner I described, this friend who has boy to thank, and so they love him all the more; and if they draw their ion from Zeus, then, like the Bacchants,26 they pour it into the character, and once they have found him they do all the same things for of life, so far as is possible in each case. They show no envy, no meanspirited lack of generosity, toward the boy, but make every possible whom they are devoted. This, then, is any true lover's heart's desire: 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: inspiratic soul of

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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 of the good horse or the badness of the bad. Let us do that now. The good, the other not; but we did not go into the details of the goodness with a high neck and a regal nose; his coat is white, his eyes horse that is on the right, or nobler, side is upright in frame and well 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 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 enjointed, with a

254 q 9 and the goading of desire. As for the horses, the one who is obedient to the charioteer is still controlled, then as always, by its sense of shame, ever, no longer responds to the whip or the goad of the charioteer; it back to the real nature of Beauty, and he sees it again where it stands on quite unwilling. They pull back a little further; and while one horse once it has recovered from the pain caused by the bit and its fall-bursts into a torrent of insults as soon as it has caught its breath, accusing its charioteer and yokemate of all sorts of cowardice and unmanliness for shame at all. The charioteer is now struck with the same feelings as and its charioteer, trying to make them go up to the boy and suggest to him the pleasures of sex. At first the other two resist, angry in their At last, however, when they see no end to their trouble, they are led forward, reluctantly agreeing to do as they have been told. So they are close to him now, and they are struck by the boy's face as if by a bolt falls over backwards awestruck, and at the same time has to pull the reins back so fiercely that both horses are set on their haunches, one abandoning their position and their agreement. Now once more it tries rives, and they are pretending to have forgotten, it reminds them; it struggles, it neighs, it pulls them forward and forces them to approach the boy again with the same proposition; and as soon as they are near, and so prevents itself from jumping on the boy. The other one, howleaps violently forward and does everything to aggravate its yokemate of lightning. When the charioteer sees that face, his memory is carried falling back voluntarily with no resistance, but the other insolent and to make its unwilling partners advance, and gives in grudgingly only when they beg it to wait till later. Then, when the promised time arit drops its head, straightens its tail, bites the bit, and pulls without any ire soul is suffused with a sense of warmth and starts to fill with tingles belief that they are being made to do things that are dreadfully wrong. the sacred pedestal next to Self-control. At the sight he is frightened, drenches the whole soul with sweat out of shame and awe, the other—