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Alexandronicus

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Alexandronicus

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ALEXANDRONICUS

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A Chorus: These songs sung to the world as words from the ether! The words become flesh, just as all things in existence were once only sounds! To you, dear reader, we hope these words clash as symbols in your mind! And gazing at yourself again in the mirror you come to ask yourself as Philip here, "Is the rhetoric truer than my reflection?"

The Song of Philip

Oh! Almighty Gods beyond my sight I sing loudly to you!

Across this gulf of darkness and into your places un-seeable!

I sing to you and to your spirits! To your Essences! To your Forms!

I sing loudly to you so that I may know you!

Oh! Almighty Gods! Though I cannot see you I can know you in my mind!

Through my reason I may know you!

All around are your miracles for me to see!

There are those who say I can know nothing of you, who lie beyond my sight!

They say that what I see around me means nothing!

They say that what I see around me says nothing!

They say that what I see around me cannot be known!

To them I say as the German, who looked unto you and said "Yay! I know through reason that you are there, though I cannot know you here, nor even that you are caused, nor what causes you!"

So I say that you are here with us and beyond us Gods! You Noumenal Gods! Be you one or many!

So I sing to you with my immortal soul bound to eternity!

Because of your Lamplight I know I must do right, I must stop wrong, and I know both!

Without you Gods we are nothing and we have nothing,

How can we live without you?

Because of this we are in your debt,

We are guilty and owe you our lives,

We ask only that you forgive us for being unworthy and take our thanks,

This we ask to you

I sing then for knowing beyond the knowable, though I do not know it!

I sing that we nation of thinkers, we Macedonians, we Greeks, we of the Occident may know

Truth,

We may know Truth and know all!

I sing because that truth will bring happiness to us!

I sing because that truth will release us from our bondage!

The truth will set us free!

The Truth! The Truth! I Sing to you! The Unknowable Truth!

A Chorus: From a single sound the universe began; even the Gods know this! From these notes and rolls of the tongue do whole words come into being, and into this world a mother may sing her child into life! So powerful are songs that only they have the power to create; even as the philosopher knows the word may yet become the thing, and there is much power in the word. It was God's fear of man that caused him to scatter the tongues of men; for if any two men

knew the true soul of the other, each would know that he was God also! So sings this mother to her yet unborn son; where the words are but small crests, like islands on the ocean—there is so much below!

The Song of Olympias

Alexander, Alexander, My sweet Alexander,
I sing to you my unborn son,
I sing to you with my hopes,
I sing to you with my desire,
I sing to you to overcome!

Alexander, Alexander,
Zarathustra told of your conception!
Man is something to be overcome!
And you are here Alexander!
And one day you will overcome!

Alexander, Alexander,
How I love you little Alexander,
You will cast the Gods from heaven,
You will smash the temples of illusion,
You will dance! You will dance!

O! Alexander my little love!
To give birth to a dancing star,
I have this chaos in my womb!¹
Alexander you will dance,
You will fly and annihilate!

Prosperity, prosperity!
Hallowed laws upon hoary tablets!
Such will break by your hand!
For all ancient codes shatter,
Before new freedoms.

The world is redeemed!
The blood! Your blood! Your holy blood!

¹ Can it ever be said that a child is orderly? What kind of mother would wish for a completely well behaved boy devoid of precocious life?

It is by the blood that we redeem,
Your blood my little boy,
Your blood belongs to the world.

Alexander, I must tell you little boy,
Before I conceived, you were willed!
There was your will in me! In the world!
Then there was you my sweet, sweet boy,
The will became the blood, Zeus became you!

Your will is bound to your blood my son,
Bleed your blood, write your word upon the earth,
For Zarathustra says: "I love only what a man has written with his blood.
Write with blood, and you will find that blood is spirit."
Your spirit will overcome the earth!

Oh my sacred love!
Words fail to tell you my son,
That unspeakable humor I hold with you,
How strong you will be of me,
For all who give to create feel this evil.

O! Evil little Alexander growing strong,
It is truly evil to be one who changes,
The power to change is evil,
Any man who thinks not is truly a coward!
The saintliest men will condemn you my son.²³

Sadly my dear boy I cannot tell you,
The slings and arrows of this tragic life,
The words and poison, and lovely snakes,
You must walk in suffering joy,
To know the world and yourself.

Alexander, Alexander,
You will overcome!
You will overcome even yourself!
A creator's job is never done, love,
And so shall your will go eternally!

² Is it that she thinks her son is evil? Or is it that she believes others will feel he is evil? History is littered with the bodies of "Evil" men who became the saints of the next generation. Even Christ was crucified and reviled by the Jews and Romans of his time—even Peter disowned him.

³ Does this mean that Alexander is being compared with Jesus?

Love! Love!
Alexander, my sweet overchild!
My son of Zeus, you are divine!
Alexander, Alexander,
All words fall away.

I shall love you,
I shall hold you forever in this place,
Here and again, eternally,
I will hold you in my body.
O! Alexander, my little forever love!⁴

A Chorus: Here, O! Dear reader we ask you: what sort of son could this mother produce? As a child grows does it not consume? As a boy grows strong does not his strength wish to be shown? Can there be strength without the act? Can there be knowledge without the knowing? And here in our story we wonder: Can there be a history outside the mind? Go forth young child of Olympias! Conceived by the word in darkness and baptized into a violent and indifferent world; yet this little boy received the tutoring of Aristotle. Through painful soil this plant did grow, fertilized with knowledge and the blood of his father—ever east did this plant turn toward the rising sun.

Logos

It was twenty years later, in the hills above the Granicus River in Persia where Alexander and Ptolemy walked. In conversation they discussed all things. Spears in hand, they spoke and watched the campfires of the Persians across the river.

“Alexander, what truths are you pondering tonight?” asked Ptolemy.

“Nothing touches my mind now friend,” Alexander said.

⁴ This is not our conception of love at all. Very challenging.

“How can that be? Hegemon, what truths do you believe have propelled you here, to the banks of Granicus to the shields of Persia and spears of Satraps?⁵ Tell me, was it the divine reason of your father or the furious will of your mother who spurned you here? Perhaps the Logos of Aristotle as he taught us in Thessaloniki? For as The Philosopher said it is our truth that must be greater should we win against others in struggle.”

Alexander paused and stared Ptolemy in his eye.

“If it is truth how can we know?” he said surely. “When one lion bests another can one be said to have more truth? Perhaps you think lions do not have truth, but to lions their truth is life or death.

“Indeed it is logos Ptolemy! It is! But what kind? I stand before you logos! My logos lies there on the opposite bank of the river! Memnon of Rhodes; and his bloody body, made lifeless by my spear shall be my written work—my Metaphysics, my De Anima!⁶⁷⁸

“Aristotle spoke and established a school for speaking! What is speaking? These words echo of hollowness and cowardice. He who knows does not speak in words but in actions. One knows truth in oneself, in one’s soul—it is fear of others that prevents men from doing as I do now, and I will do. I will do! My doing from my will!

“Yes it is logos! Aristotle spoke of logos as if speaking were enough, as if his words, embedded with imminent truth would instill a triumph in the listener, his casual whispers full of something—those which he speaks and causes us to know, to feel the truth, only inspire the

⁵ Hegemon was the traditional title for the leader of the combined armed forces of Greece.

⁶ The word written in blood—the blood is the spirit. One who writes with the blood writes with the spirit.

⁷ These were works of Aristotle contemporarily published just prior to Alexander’s historic invasion of Persia.

⁸ Memnon of Rhodes was the historic Satrap of western Persia, of what is now Turkey. This is where Alexander fought his first decisive battle in the historic invasion. Memnon of Rhodes was the opposing general in the first battle fought on Persian soil.

listener to search his own soul and know his own self. These words are ambiguous enough to let us see ourselves in them.

“Yes it is logos, but it does not cause me, I cause it Ptolemy—and if I did not, as my father thought and struggled with it would make no difference, for we see men for their actions, not because of them.”

Alexander gripped his spear and poised it, then thrust it definitely and defiantly, *he* thrust it at the Persians camped far away.

“This Ptolemy is MY logos! My word that shall be written in the blood of kings.”

He withdrew his spear and Ptolemy was greatly stunned—as all who see the truth are chilled. It is a cold animal that must endure the great and terrible thoughts of nothingness which exist beyond our ethics, he thought.

It is a cold and dangerous animal indeed who sees through the blind resilience and dogmatic stubbornness of conventional wisdom—the collective memes that make a people behave as a herd of cowed beasts, and declaw themselves.⁹

Alexander continued:

“It is not by grace that I am master of myself. I am because I must be, for the consequences of which are dire. It is because of the alternatives that men live as we do, because things too great to face will befall us—it is by fear; fear is the great leader and fear that is our master, our challenger.

“A man is known for his greatness by the size of the challenges he overcomes. Great kings are not remembered for their inheritance, but only if they have built castles with it. Fear is

⁹ Who is this who is narrating?

our greatest challenger as men, Ptolemy. I knew fear from the threats of my drunken father, the poison of my mother's snakes and words; only one who knows fear may be great, and fear is only the fear of death—death is the only fear we have, the one and only fear: all other fears are illusions of the cowardly mind.

“Darius knows no fear I believe; his inheritance was his kingdom—he gained nothing through his own endeavors and therefore owns nothing. He risked nothing. In his ignorance Darius did not take Memnon's advice to destroy his own land—how great his hubris! Our armies would've starved! But, Darius knows no fear of me—Memnon had fear, Memnon has fear!

“We are lions friend! We stalk our prey! A man is a lion who has become a lion, and those who are not must only cower at night!

“To a man who is not a lion his logos is language, a language of words only. Socrates knew this, and he wrote nothing. His canon came as hemlock. Each man must make his own logos—it is as my spear, as a lion's claws, as its roar.”

The two ruminated for a moment on the words—manifesting from Alexander as winds do from nature, then a rider came. It was Parmenion, who wished for Alexander to wait one more day. Alexander gave the order to attack immediately.

A Chorus: Alexander, what is it you wish? To be a hero to Macedon? To your mother? To yourself? This chorus cannot condone these acts of yours. But who are we, who sit outside the story and critique these lamentable events? Shadows and tinted glass are all we are to ourselves. So easy it is to sit outside, but the man in the arena is dying. So easy it is for us who

are not dying to say “this is evil” or “that is lamentable,” but perhaps when it is our blood that is spilt we may speak differently, or not at all.

Narrative

The dead littered the banks of the Granicus, the water ran red. Above the Persian and Macedonian dead stood Parmenion and Alexander, among troops.

“I will send messengers back to Greece to tell of our victory here Hegemon, all Greece will know of the details of this battle, and how hard fought it was,” said Parmenion.

A silence went through the host upon hearing this message—for the Macedonians understood how many of their number had died the day before. Where Alexander’s crossing of the river and immediate attack had cost them.¹⁰

“Send no word of this Parmenion,” said Alexander. “Send no word of our failures, of my failures. For a mind is bound by the story it hears; would Greece doubt me this Persian enterprise would fail. Instead let the story be told in the Lyceum, in Athens, in Thessaloniki; let it be told that it was into the jaws of death that we valiantly sprung—to take the bull by the horns. With abandon we went unto death and dared greatly—let them know that we are bold, and that fortune favors us.”

Parmenion did so and sent messengers with false record of the battle—that it was Alexander’s swift immediate attack that won the day.

Later the two met in Alexander’s tent as the Hegemon cleaned his wounds.

Parmenion said: “It does not abide well in me these messages we sent to Greece, for lies do not beget truth.”

¹⁰ The historical accuracy of this event is meaningless to the argument.

“True Parmenion,” said Alexander. “Lies do not beget truth—but truth and lies are mere words.¹¹ We have won the day and triumphed, we have taken the Satraps and defeated Memnon. These things are true—they are true because we have made them so, and for no other reason.”

“Had you taken my council and waited Alexander, we may have secured our victory without bloodshed, but instead have only triumphed by fortune.”

“Fortune my friend! This is what men only triumph by! You are correct Parmenion, it was a mistake, an eagerness that I gave the order which nearly cost us this enterprise. But, our will is greater.”

“Our will? Our will may be great but the facts, the truth, the cold hard reality was our near defeat!”

“No! Such is not the case! The facts, as you call them, may be that there was such a time, that we recall by memory, where the steel of the enemy may’ve pierced our belly—where the cold hard reality may’ve been that our troops could’ve been routed! But such was not the case, and now, in the aftermath our conception of the past is only a story, much as the old men tell of their days!

“We cannot know the things outside us for certain, as my father believed, Parmenion, but we must act, we must! So to help us understand them we have stories, and our thoughts, our actions are bound into understanding by those stories. Even now you have approached me with a story in your mind, with unspoken assumptions critical of my judgment and the Macedonian position—you feel insecure, and for your emotion you’ve found reasons

¹¹ Perhaps more true as signifiers than concepts.

“My father was eluded by this external reality Parmenion, though he wanted to know it, he could not. None can! Reason fails to grasp all! One begins to try to grasp all by reason when one falsely believes that reason can understand all things—can your hand grasp all things Parmenion? Can your eyes see all things? No, nor can reason understand all things.

“But you feel Parmenion, as the Greeks at home feel—they need not know the truth because there is no truth, the truth is what we create. We create with fortune.

“We must ask ourselves this: to what purpose is this question if answered? If the Greeks knew that we were nearly routed then they may doubt, and if they doubt then they may not support us, and if we are not supported we may not succeed. To what end is answering that question with *truth*? To an undesirable end—so then, can it be expected for all questions to be answered with truth when truth serves only to unwanted ends?

“Friend, your speculation is right—by all means doubt. However, when it comes time for one to act, as it always does, one must. Your reluctance comes from the fear you have—the fear that we may fail and be answerable for our actions—You presume our actions are wrong, and they will be seen wrong, but by whom? We are not solitary animals Parmenion, and we live with others. Your thoughts have been clouded by considering others as ends friend, not means. They are both! I would not wish to have lies told to me, I would want to decide, but because that is my want does not mean that another must be treated likewise!

“Consider friend if Memnon had told lies to Darius—wild lies about our forces, about us having millions of men and engines of war instead of informing Darius of the truth. Darius may’ve burned the earth before us and starved our men—thereby destroying us and confounding our conquest. A great conflagration would’ve resulted in our turmoil and downfall.

However he did not do this—and our will overcame. Men and horses, blades and shields can be counted, but wills are unbound to numbers. Would one lie if they spoke of my will? We couldn't know. Mathematics give the illusion of final truth, but know that a number is abstract, and this is a dirty world of imminent realities, not abstractions.¹² For I may number one man, but by my logos I have today reviled a nation—perhaps lies should've been told. Would you not agree?"¹³

Parmenion stood silently, exhausted from battle and sleeplessness. His strategic mind thought quickly to retort.

"But your thoughts too occur in a story, a past-tense narrative. Should things be different today your story would be different too! How can I know truth in either of these things?"

"Such is life Parmenion, all day can we ponder the abstract rightness or wrongness of something, but sooner or later we must make a judgment upon it—and therein is the rub of our actions. Those beliefs which demand our actions occur in a story with characters, ourselves and others, and removing all human elements from them make those mathematical facts abstract and distant. So write books if you'd like, wail and disagree with my choices if you wish—but I did win today, and I will win tomorrow, and you cannot argue with success. If I have goals and meet them, then by fortune and my story we must agree there is something right, mustn't we?"

Parmenion felt his anger—his anger that there was no sure way to argue save abstracting further. Any argument he would level would be rooted in a story, and any story he

¹² This seems to be the exact opposite of the argument he was making earlier. In this case he's taken Parmenion's argument and turned it around on him. Much in the way of Socrates in Plato's Dialogues.

¹³ All the arguments above are meaningless rhetoric. So do not be disturbed by how morally ambiguous and challenging they are to your more advanced and modern sense of ethics. In Alexander's position you most definitely would've told the truth.

created did in fact not occur.¹⁴ He saw that Alexander was right, and that one's actions did not occur in a story, but in a vast and chaotic pool of things that he could not firmly stop. How one saw the 'facts' was what the facts were. He bowed and left Alexander's tent. Language failed, and stories also failed—each could be undone by another.

A Chorus: Such is the turn of the screw. The enterprise must not fail. We must ask ourselves the same: Is our telos a higher calling than our ethic? Do the ends justify the means? How many bridges must we burn in our own soul to live? Some questions perhaps answer themselves in the asking. The campaign continued, and Alexander chased his enemies far into uncharted lands, and to the places where things do not have names.

Love

The skies above Bactria bolted of lightning and things felt undone. A great tumult was heard over the land and all men were afraid. The sun hid its face and the land grew dark. Soon a torrent began.

"The earth's heart is breaking," said Alexander. Cracks of thunder split the ambient air, and Alexander was afraid.

"I see the earth and pity it, for its sadness. I pity lovers because all that one loves only passes away, or one loves the passing. So all that one loves is ending.

"And when love ends the lover must end also. So when one's heart is broken one is also broken. A man who loves and becomes broken must destroy himself. He is bound to it! So too is the earth bound to destroy itself.

¹⁴ But, how can we even be sure that the events that did occur did really occur? How can you be sure, reading this line that you really began reading this paper some minutes ago?

“None would choose this fate, so it is no choice at all. For all love affairs in life, truly, there is a time when love dies and must be replaced.

“How tragic it is that all life is love, and all love is dying. Both lovers change; the earth changes, and those on it change. I am changing the earth, and those on it, so the earth is bled by my hand.”¹⁵

At this Ptolemy was confused and spoke up: “Alexander then why do you do such? The sky cracks and is ripped! The earth dies! Who are we to live on it such? To make another do this or that? To take the life of the earth, or another, who are you?!”

“What else have we been doing all this time?” said Alexander. “A will has me, I am gripped by passion and I have fallen in love with making my dreams happen. I will be destroyed; I will be reborn! Does the world care for you in its love? It may love you, but it loves through you, so I love the world, so I love through the world.

“Woe to all things that pass away such as love, such as life. If I love anything I cannot be myself. Yet it is in love that I must do all things!

“One must will through love alone, for love alone is the final element! As Plato spoke of the forms so now I see the earth annihilate itself and know that it is love, so now I speak of love!

“I say this word but it says little. The skies crack, the heart breaks, tears fall, things fall apart and all oaths become broken, powerful souls wail and cry, separation destroys all bonds! The word says nothing! The word love says nothing but encompasses everything!

¹⁵ The question: How much of the world is a reflection of the subject?

“Were all the wise men in all the ages to meet in one place and through conflict and disagreement know exactly what love is, what it materially is, still they would not be able to speak the feelings of love within one’s heart! Woe, O! The lover! Those unspoken chains that bind mother to child and man to woman, brother to brother, the earth to its people, me to my will, my will to my spirit, and my spirit to my dreams! I am in love with my dreams as a mother is to a child before its birth!¹⁶ So sad that man does not know the birth pains, for our love to create life is there; but alas! We can only destroy!¹⁷”

“The world aches as I ache, as my heart aches to be one with my love—this truly is suffering! And only those who love greatly know suffering! Only the joyful pain of existence can through torture and ecstasy grip me as a passion of the soul and tutor me in a school of senses!

“Woe! Oh woe to all! I see as lightning cracks the earth that the great tragedy of life is that all must pass away! Oh! Horrid terrible nothingness that lies at our center and patiently sorrows itself between us! Only once when mother and child were one did we know true love! All life then we search in vain as a blight upon the earth the object of our affection and long to be one and sire infants, but what a cruel joke it must be that from a joining of two comes a third! O! What purpose are you terrible love? From my hoary and cold breath I cannot scream loud enough to lose you, nor can I embrace you powerfully enough to keep you!”

With this Alexander let out a terrible roar and collapsed. His generals and companions raced to help him but were afraid. Tears smote his eyes, and he wailed. Enraged, his fists

¹⁶ Terrifying considering the song of his mother to him as an unborn child.

¹⁷ Perhaps that destruction, by removal, creates something new in the world. In this way man loves and wishes to create but cannot give birth, so men must simply destroy things that others have created. By entering Persia, the creation of another, and wishing to forge a new empire, perhaps Alexander is wishing to give birth.

pounded the earth and he cursed the sky. Heavy rainfall soaked his frock and horsehair helm, but he had lost all care.¹⁸

“I hate you love! I hate you! For I can do nothing against you but accept your pain and joy! I can be master of all the earth, I can declare war upon the skies and raze the fields, I can control the hearts of women and stir the souls of men, but I cannot command thee! In the kingdom of the heart there is but one master, and that is love!”

At this the storm became violent and sorrowful. Hephaestion fell upon Alexander and embraced his master, held him tight and shed tears for him.

“Alexander my friend!” said Hephaestion. “I grieve for you! Oh my lord, forgive this trespass and embrace but I cannot see you this way and not weep because through all your masks I see your soul and know now that you are a man who feels and is vulnerable. Alexander I weep but am glad, for I see that you have opened those deep parts of yourself that you locked away from your father long ago, and now, at the end of the earth you have opened them again!

“Joy be to you Alexander! For you know what lies beyond words of man and can now read words of the heart!”

And the two men wept and felt their own being together, and though the other generals did not understand beyond the words, the two men did.¹⁹ Much can be said by wise men on matters of the heart, they can speculate and formulate, and use their mathematics to read the geometry and physic of love, and exhaust their whole being in the formula; but to a man who

¹⁸ So melodramatic, he’s clearly a prima donna and faking.

¹⁹ In real life Hephaestion was Alexander’s best friend and supposed lover. But does that change this passage at all?

feels the weight of the world upon his heart no formulas or speculations matter, he is left only with those feelings, which are more real to him than any distant sciences can ever wish to be.

The two men embraced and the storm began to break.

“Oh Hephaestion,” said Alexander as he wiped the tears from his face. “My friend you must never apologize for love.

“So passionate are our souls, we men, that we turn away from our feelings. For if I was to feel all I would only weep in joy and sorrow for all creation because there is nothing but love, and love is the greatest thing!

“What perennial questions cannot be answered by love? I ask. None. Love is the answer to all questions, the strong, determining, manly parts of love that extend into the world and then become receptive. There are truly two, man and woman, and each has a love, and the world needs both. Love conquers all things, for though I wail and cast away and decry, I do so from love, and because I am ignorant.

“Let all who can hear know that I love them, friend or enemy! I wish them good tidings though I may oppose them! This I command today to my host—let us mourn now all our good foes who have given us their great challenge, and weep for Darius because he knew not of these great passions as we Macedonians do.

“I may hate, but I cannot hate if I do not love. Any man who hates without love cannot truly hate, but is a coward. For what could be more cowardly than combating another without seeing his love?

“Truly, there are times to kill, and times to mourn. When the time to kill has ended and passed then it is time to mourn. One time cannot be another time. One must at moments do

things that are sad, but one must also know that those things must be done. For our purposes are greater than our morals. Yet even that I suspect shall in its time fall away.”

The men heard Alexander and some understood, but some did not. The storm passed and in camp there was an unspoken energy that confused some, and ennobled others. Some men embraced Alexander, and some avoided him, each had to search his own heart; but all, including Alexander, sensed that something had changed.

A Chorus: So the love that you now realize Alexander, does it do you any good? Who is the friend that you embrace? We cannot believe your transformation Alexander, we are so far from you here, in our time. Like through a looking glass we cast our eye upon you. We cannot feel you, but see your feeling—can we believe it? Let us ruminate.

Friendship

One evening Alexander and his companions ate the day’s final meal together in a grand tent, as dancers entertained them the men regaled one another with stories and boasts of strength.

“How lucky we are that we may meet here together and share in each other’s company,” said Parmenion. All agreed and toasted. Parmenion toasted: “I say here that no merrier was there ever a group of friends, whose company emboldened their own individual selves through fellowship!

“I say that though days may pass and smiles fade, though hard work and rugged tasks are set upon us, we may in our hearts always enjoy the memories and happy tides of thought that remind us of you, our friends!”

With this the host cheered and drank—they imbibed themselves and drank wine like collective blood that now ran through their veins.

“I do say this,” said Ptolemy. “I say that as we feast upon this wine, and this deer captured by our arrows, that as these elements digest and find their matter within us, that we are the same because of it. For now I eat this meat as you do I know that it becomes me as it becomes you, so there will always be those things in us that bind us together. Such I believe is friendship.”

“Friendship!” said Alexander. “Friendship is a warm respite from this dark world, I think. We bold men know that deep and terrifying things lie in our minds and in the world, such a dangerous place it is that it spurns one to conquer! For if one does not push upon the world then the world pushes.

“One can only fight in the arena for so long before one’s muscles become fatigued and tired; one can only swing one’s sword in anger so long before it becomes too heavy to lift. This is the time then that I need my friends; my companions to encourage and challenge me.²⁰

“The philosopher may speak of many things but normally not friendship. But he should! For I ask my host, who does not have friends? Perhaps one wishes not to seek in the mind the meaning of friendship—such a search could only lead to nothing, for friendship happens in the heart, not in the mind.

“I have known many friends, but never such good friends as my enemies. Indeed a man craves a challenge, and the greatest challenge between two men is to hold he who challenges you dear as a brother. Two men may be born of one mother, and each may see the other as a

²⁰ Can all things be reduced to metaphors and explained this way? It may be entirely possible that Alexander’s pension for constant violence has no application to personal relationships. One thing is not another thing.

friend, but two brothers cannot see one another as friends when friends become brothers. I readily embrace my brother, but I am always wary of my friend, even as I hold him as family.

“I remember Aristotle speaking of the good life, and he said friends were as important as virtue. Friends are good, but the virtue of friendship may be better! I can be virtuous as a friend, I can be a virtuous friend, but far better I think is it to have the virtue of friendship between companions.

“I wonder sometimes on the nature of my friendships, whether my friends are lovers, or brothers, or those I simply share something with. I wonder if two wrestlers met in an arena and did not know one another, would they be friends? Would we call them such? Would they call themselves such? We can never know I think, because the boundaries of friendship do not exist in the mind, they exist in the hearts and actions of fellows.”

“I wonder also,” said Ptolemy. “I wonder if what we call friendship, what that is that we would recognize as friends between other men, would not be what women would call friends. For I have powerfully noticed a difference between the women I know and their friends. I have never known womanly friendship, though I have friended women.”

“I wonder this too,” said Alexander. “I see that there is a difference between the sexes in this way, and I will warn you as my father warned me: ‘be intrigued by them, but never seek to be them.’

“I believe that unrecognized tragedy begins when one sex makes the other out to be the same. I say that if boys were raised as girls then the manliest parts of them would die, and they, silently mourning, could only wonder at the pain in their life but never touch it for lack of courage.

“I believe that a woman can have courage as well, but it is womanly courage. I do believe this: the worst thing to do is assume that all things between men and women are the same—male justice is female justice, male courage is female courage. Each has its own I believe, as each has its own friendship as well.”

“Consider our enemy Hegemon,” said Parmenion. “Is he your friend?”

The group was greatly interested in Alexander’s answer, for he sometimes spoke in parables and could say things that challenged the minds of an audience.

“Darius, Parmenion,” said Alexander. “He is our greatest friend. For though I wrote to him and killed his messengers, there is no truer friend than he who is a step upon which I tread. He is my best friend of a kind, I think, a kind that I must have in my fold. So much do I desire it that I combat his empire to have him.

“I will answer your question with another, quick Parmenion: Imagine a woodcutter who owns but one axe. He cuts wood and supplies it to build houses; this is his trade. He uses this axe for years, and by its steady handle he chops enough wood for an empire. One day his axe breaks and he weeps. Can it be said that he and his axe were friends?

“Darius is my axe I believe, used to build my empire. He is my friend. You are also my friends.

“What are we?” asked Ptolemy.

“You, my friends, are my hands—closer than family, I believe you are part of me.”

The men couldn’t hide their smiles and felt endeared by Alexander, who also felt fellowship with his friends.

A Chorus: Is this a soft spot in the otherwise armored man? As he lurches his host through the desert he must be careful not to let that weakness grow, for he steps against an uncommon enemy. Let us never forget here how deplorable a thing he is doing: marching across the continent burning and pillaging, killing and raping, committing such atrocities of the age. Never would we do as him, never would we allow such things to occur. We are civilized.

The State

It came to pass that Alexander, with his host, advanced through western Persia, liberating and conquering the settlements as they went. Memnon, Satrap of Armenia, was defeated and at Issus Alexander had stared Darius, King of Persia in his eyes, face to face upon the battlefield. Now his campaign turned south across Syria and to the cities of Sidon and Tyre. Tyre resisted bitterly; the island city-state threatened Alexander's advance south to Egypt with its powerful navy, which had joined with the Cyprian navy, and grown to a formidable size. Alexander knew he couldn't advance beyond this stronghold, for doing so would allow a rallying point for his enemies in his rear, and leave him open to attack. Tyre needed to be conquered.

Before turning to violence, Alexander sent a single small ship to the island with a messenger and asked for an audience with an official of the state. The Phoenicians agreed and sent someone to discuss with Alexander. His name was Baldassare, which meant "Lord protect the king." The two met across the strait from Tyre, in a tent of Alexander's.

"I, Baldassare, come at your request Hegemon of the League of Corinth, charged with the authority of my master, King of Tyre," said the ambassador.

"You have my thanks, and thanks to your king as well," said Alexander. "Let us talk of this matter, your Tyre."

“My master knows well your intentions,” said Baldassare. “He was reluctant to send me but did to tell you that he intends nothing but to resist you to the last. Tyre and all she encompasses are his, and he will not give them up.”

“Let me ask you then Baldassare, what does your king fear? Does he fear the loss of his throne? Does he fear the loss of his subjects? Or is it his pride that keeps him from letting go of this city?”

“Sir, I see you are seeking to understand his reasoning so you may seek to exploit it, but such cannot be done. He loves his city Tyre and her subjects with all his heart; it is by this that he resists you. Not just his love, but the love of the people of Tyre for the state! For their home they would sacrifice their lives.”

Alexander pondered for a moment. Finally he said: “And you, would you sacrifice your life to Tyre?”

Without hesitation Baldassare answered: “I would, I did not expect to see my wife or child again as I came to speak with you today.”

“This is Tyre to you? A place that asks you to lose your life, and your wife, and child to it? There are other cities that have willingly turned over to me, and unto them I have shown nothing but mercy, letting their kings become my satraps, letting their people remain whole and together. Why does not your king take this offer? Does he not know the consequences of resisting?”

“We have heard the consequences of resisting you, those cities in Armenia that were flattened, their people slaughtered, their crops razed, their livestock killed, their wells poisoned

or filled with sand, their fields salted and their names erased from the earth.²¹ We have heard these stories, and know your determination. Sir we know! But we are prepared and determined also.

“To those who live in her, Tyre is a mother. She provides and nourishes. To those who hail from Tyre, and stand to be counted among her people, that spirit is a father. And he teaches our sinews to be strong—this king resists you at the call of his father Tyre, to protect his mother Tyre.

“So the king resists you because he does not fear you. He resists you not because he thinks he may win, but like every man in Tyre, he resists you because he has already won.”

Something moved deeply in Alexander and he was not himself for a moment. The wind upon the Syrian shore picked up and blew through the tent. Baldassare watched as Alexander’s face changed, much was said upon it.

“You, Hegemon of Greece, you say much, and you have much to say, but I wonder if those words you speak don’t come from a place in you that is lacking. Those words you speak, that philosophizing, are only images of furies inside that you wish to turn away from. A separation within.”

Alexander could not look upon the man for a moment. Finally he spoke: “This Tyre father you speak of, this is the state is it not? That spirit which one man lacks but many have together?”

The messenger answered: “The state indeed is a corporation of people who may lean upon one another where they feel pain and lacking. The king of Tyre is not Tyre, though you

²¹ This is historically accurate. History has lost the names of these two cities that resisted Alexander’s advance across Armenia.

may defeat him and kill him, the state of Tyre does not end with him. I have been sent here to tell you that.

“When the blood of one man is bled that man dies, but the state continues for it exists not in the heart, which can stop beating, but in the soul, which continues through and beyond death. That is the realm of Ba’al.”²²

“Ba’al you say!?” said Alexander. “Yes that is what it comes down to I think! Your state is a collection of your spirit, and when two states fight they contest wills and spirits; my spirit against yours! There may be laws and codes, there may be doctrines and oaths, there may great temples to those documents that anchor them to life, but these are relics of a spirit of one kind or another.

“A people have a spirit and it can be felt I think. I feel your spirit resisting me! It is there the contest is most fought, with the spirit, and it is there won or lost first!

“Go back to your king and tell him this: His spirit is weak to hide behind his people, and their spirit will be broken! To you I will be like a father to his wayward child; teaching you right!

“Your island floats beyond the land like a cloud above the earth, and you too think you are above the suffering reality of the earth! You think you are the sky! No one is the sky and the sky hates the earth! It is so distant we can never touch it! And you! You think you are untouchable!

“I will after all spare your life and send you back to your king, but only to see your world end! Your walled island will be brought back to the earth; this is the spirit of my state!”

Baldassare stood and bowed to Alexander, then left the tent.

²² The historic God of the Phoenicians in Tyre.

Alexander sat silently and angrily for a moment and pondered his state. He called for Parmenion and Ptolemy and the other generals. In his mind he saw an image of chaining the sky, and bringing it to him in the earth, and making the two one.

A Chorus: Here is his image—his state. Uniting earth and sky. And what is in between? This man follows his vision.

The Nothingness

Tyre had fallen and the populace sold off into slavery. Alexander's host moved the earth and created a land bridge between the island and the mainland, and built upon it two great siege towers that stretched up to the sky. From there they laid siege to Tyre and destroyed its walls, and then Alexander's army ravaged the city.

During the sacking a group of citizens, including the king, sought refuge in the temple of Herakles, at this Alexander felt he could not fault them, and pardoned them.

Walking the streets of the city, Alexander found Baldassare, in chains being led to the slave ships.

"Baldassare!" Alexander said. "Do you see now that I have conquered you! I have moved the earth and brought your sky-kingdom back into the fold, and now you are mine."

The man said nothing, but nodded at Alexander.

"What have you to say now? Now that your spirit has been broken by something stronger?"

Baldassare answered: "I hear you sir, but you must know that nothing can break a spirit that is free."

Alexander was stunned at the man, and did not know what to say. Baldassare was led away toward the ships. Alexander continued his walk, but the issue did not leave his mind. That night, he climbed to the top of the highest citadel in Tyre and sent his servants away. In darkness he sat and contemplated the words.

“There is I feel something great and nothing before me, as a wall of void that separates me from something, but what I do not know. Baldassare, that messenger, he speaks of freedom as if he understood it!

“What sort of a man can be free but in bondage? I am greatly troubled because it is a strong man who is free, set free from his fetters by strength of one kind or another. For a man who is a slave must have a master, mustn't he? That master is only the master because he is stronger, whether that strength is physical, intellectual, or spiritual.

“So am I by that logic master of Baldassare! I am his master, but his words resonated true within me, that he is freer now than when I spoke to him months ago. This freedom eludes me, so I know that I have a master, but who is this master?

“All knowledge then must free man from bondage because that which he does not know controls him! I find though that there is more than one type of knowledge, for though I may know something with my mind there may be a different knowledge yet also, an irrational knowledge that doesn't conform to my mind and words.

“I feel this knowledge and know that feeling, that knowledge is felt, sometimes emotionally I think. But there is something beyond it yet! There is something yet beyond this wall of things that my mind cannot go into to pick apart! A vast dark river flows forth now I can see, and things wind down in from darkness and into sight.

“But from where do they come? It is a nothing I think, a nothingness; there is a place I can feel between the sky and earth in myself that there is nothingness. It is not a dark place, it is not a place filled with anything! Evil cannot touch it, good cannot touch it; it is beyond both! I cannot actually say ‘beyond’ because the nothing is nothing, and cannot be beyond, above, below, or even set apart.

“This nothingness that defies words through not doing is indescribable I think. Only through meditation beyond words, when I sit here and rhyme to myself can I get close to it! It is only through forgetting all that one knows truly this nothing, which is all things! It is only when I forget God that I understand God.

“Baldassare! He has forgotten his freedom, he has forgotten all of it and now lives freer than I! In chains all decisions that one makes are made for him, to get up, to walk, to eat, to sleep, all decisions are made for the man in chains; so it is that he decides nothing, he is free. The word freedom is not strong enough to describe his freedom—it is a freedom of the heart and of the soul: A freedom of the nothing!²³

“Truly one must know though that this freedom, which comes only in bondage, must come only after one is unfettered in life. I see now that I was born a prince, but baptized in violence and indifference I was again fettered, when I became king I was unfettered, but I was still in bondage! The nothing of me demands I eat the ashes of empire to become unbound—and any boy-king must to become such. The dirty ashes that now Baldassare tastes; may he live a thousand years he knows more freedom than I.

²³ The Biblical evangelist Paul may be an example of this type of freedom. In prison in Tarsus, Paul could be said to be freer than at any other time in his life perhaps.

“This Mediterranean wind that blows into the east carries with it the sublime truth that is nothing. My father, long in his study would muse at the nothing and mistook it for something. He would say ‘I seek you truth, which I cannot know for certain, but know through reason.’ But reason fails as all tools do at tasks too great for their metal!

“O! Nothing, a great and tragic joy I have for you because I see that though I now hold you in my mind you are nothing and cannot be held, and when I try and keep you I will lose you. Nothing, I must forget and then be reminded. It is a coming and going, like an ocean that ebbs and flows, I must forget and remember, be bound and unbound. It is a circle that comes and goes and returns. It emerges, as Dionysus from Zeus.²⁴

Alexander paused and watched the stars above. The soft wind blew across his face as he stared out onto the sea and saw a reflection of the moon in the water, like a long road of shifting light upon the waves. As he sat he contemplated his father’s words on truth from long ago.

“O! Father!” he said. “How sad am I that you are gone and that the nothing between us is now permanent; for though I felt the separation still when you embraced me as a child, it would be far easier to feel atonement with you now if you had not passed. I might now then question you to know the truth of which you spoke, and known from your lips what it was; but alas, I am only left with those words you scrawled upon papyrus for the west to know. They have now been claimed by the nothing.

“Perhaps though there is more than one truth, there is my truth in bondage, my truth in freedom, my truth on the threshold. Perhaps in wondering I find truth. I cannot know, and in

²⁴ This is to say, one condition is an emergent property of the other.

the end when one knows one only succeeds in asking more questions. I have wandered far from our canon, and there will be no maps for the territories I will explore. So every step I take I take into darkness and must bring a light with me. So terrifying and exhilarating is this trek, to feel always on the threshold of a new land. So terrifying. I wish my father to show me, but he is gone, and has always been so.

“The nothing I knew growing up I see, in the absent throne of my king, my father. The nothing was evil only by the hand of my mother who filled it with love which was wicked by omission of my father. O! World you know not of what I speak! But I long to stride onto this water and walk the path of light down to the moon, and be at the horizon when the sun rises! To feel its warmth and know it!

“Atonement I seek with the nothing, to draw it back and find the knowledge which we all have forever lost in the world. My father, his father, his father, and on! Perhaps then all the wizened prose of philosopher kings will fall away like obsolete myths and the world will rejoice! I pray it may be true; but such things only happen as the tide does, coming up in long dark waves that cover the beach, but then pull away to reveal new life.

“You nothing I can meditate on always and find newness in your absence. Sitting in shadow and light, you nothing can inspire and repress, open and close. I long to forget you and find you again—as always must happen. Thanks be to God.”

And Alexander sat long until morning in silence and contemplated sometimes. He was alone. In the morning a servant arrived to wake him and found him still wide-eyed and looking west, the sun rising behind him. The servant was afraid to disturb him and called on his friend Ptolemy.

“Alexander, are you alright?” Ptolemy said.

“I am fine my friend, and deep in thought,” he replied. “I have a command for you.”

“Anything Hegemon,” Ptolemy said.

“Go to the docks and find a ship of slaves and among them a man named Baldassare. I order you to present him with his freedom and a bag of talents. You may give him the choice to stay in bondage, or to go to Carthage and his family—do not tell him to do either! Go and do this now.”

Ptolemy nodded and helped his friend rise, then asked if he could perform any other duties.

“Yes,” said Alexander. “You may never tell me what this man did, whether he went to his family or not—I must never know this, and you yourself must forget it as soon as it happens, so that if you meet him again you will imprison him or greet him as a king, whatever the circumstance happens to be at that meeting.

“Then, when you are done, go to the temple of Herakles and force everyone out; the priests and monks also. Do this and answer no questions. Tomorrow the temple will be reopened and Herakles will be praised as normal, but for today all will forget there is such a god. Do this and return to me. We today will forget together my friend.”

Ptolemy nodded and was confused; as was Alexander, though he did not say it.

A Chorus: It is here we must take our leave. From here out Alexander enters the smoky annals of history, and the dark recesses of our minds. He steps back and outside the conscious as a man, and into the blue pool as a figment. This warrior-king, like a pillar in the basement of

history, is no more real to us than the edge of the universe. Such a thing may pad the edges of our mind and thoughts, but there it must stay. So this chorus, which has sung to you Alexander, must sing itself away now. As one song ends another must begin. Sing away . . .

Pneuma—Gnosis

I sat typing at my desk the last few lines to Alexandronicus. My fingers clicked away at the keyboard, spinning into existence the last sentence of the work. As I tapped the period to end the final sentence, I felt a subtle notion that there was something missing in this work—something I wanted to say, something nearly inexplicable but yet palpably true in my mind. Some sort of gossamer truth that danced just outside of my ability to explicate it; something immanent and yet distance, an ephemeral presence. Such things, I thought, were the realm that true philosophers wrote about, whether those philosophies were discursive, creative, poetic or interpretive. It was most probably the sublime truths, which occupied a twilight space of one's brain that were, or are, the "truest" truths; those things that sound, to the uninitiated, like jargon and nonsense, but to those who have drunk the elixir of experience sound like great sighing breaths that resonate in the chest and give life again.

Something was at the deep center of this piece I was writing that wasn't being touched on. A part of me was terrified for a moment that perhaps it couldn't be, and I would end up like Hegel, with a giant volume of prose like dense volcanic that puzzled rather than enlightened. I wondered if I was like the Philip of my own work, singing songs to truths that existed beyond words, and if my metaphysic would look to others like nothing but painted glass with nothing behind it—and I an idiot who insisted there was. I imagined that the subtle sense of anxiety I

felt was the same as the lamplighter who declared in the city streets that God was dead—all reality would shatter if he could but extend his reach a few more inches and crack this glass.

I called up Alexander from my own mind. A historical figure is a canvas of projection for the deep psyche. If history is simply a mentally constructed narrative based on observed evidence and our assumptions about that evidence, then we can form whatever conception we'd like to explain our lives currently. There is a certain freedom in that. But if this is also true, then history is an ocean of our thoughts that we are ships upon; and any subtle motion in the sea could become a tsunami closer to shore. I called to Alexander again.

He stepped into the room quietly and sat himself silently in a chair across from my desk. He was dressed as I imagined him—wearing a Corinthian helmet crowned with horsehair, wearing a cape and carrying a spear and shield, which he laid next to him against the chair, he placed the helmet upon the coffee table before him. For a pregnant moment neither of us spoke.

“So,” I said to him. “Why have I chosen you to write about?”

“Something resonated with you when you looked at my life,” he replied. “Your longing for importance, your want of proof of your own significance was not unlike mine. We are the same age, you and I, and I achieved what you perceive as significant. It’s the same I felt when I read the stories of Achilles. Each is a narrative isn’t it? Mine and Achilles. To those who live in the present the truth of the past and myths are one and the same. Julius Caesar thought the same when he looked upon my statue in Alexandria as a young man.

“The distance you feel from your own family you imagine true of me as well. My father was a distant drunk who never showed affection for me and then died, making the distance

concrete. My mother raised me to be the husband she never had—full of glory and ability to provide; a great lover and significant presence. My life co-opted by others I felt nothing of my own and longed to create a world that had no choice but to show me my own significance. The failure of my father to initiate me left me alienated from other men, even my closest friends. The feelings you feel when looking at my story are feelings of jealousy, for my ability to handle these things—I wanted women and I got them, I wanted a country, I made it, I wanted to inflict my presence on others, and they acknowledged me or perished.”

“I see,” I said.

“Perhaps, but what you don’t see is what you’ve written yourself. You have locked away your own heart, those parts of yourself that hurt and cause you pain—the pain of living! Indeed life is pain and suffering. Ecstasy and suffering, joy and sorrow, they are united. You cannot take Eros without Thanatos. And I myself, as I struggled east and left not but smoldering ruins in my wake longed only to reconcile the dark parts of myself. There can be no light without a shadow, and willing your feelings away behind closed doors rids your life of both happiness and sadness. But running in life from those pains of your existence, and hiding the wounds you have been dealt lead to a life of running only. You will walk as a golem, forever responding only to those tidal waves within you and never sailing your ship to shore. You can never be a man, an individual until you’ve faced those demons within you. Those foreign gods—I tell you! You cannot be a man until you kill gods!”

“What are my gods?” I said.

“You know your gods well, you know them in waking and in sleep. Your gods are those things in your life that you fear to one degree or another. Fear and avoid, change yourself to avoid,” he replied.

“Why are things so difficult?” I said.

“You live in a world vastly different from mine. I don’t know if I would’ve reached the heights of power I did in my life if I lived here, now. This world is extended and complicated. There are so many more people here, so many more rules, so many larger and more complex systems. In this world’s many things’ fingers are into one another. You’re missing the point though. This world has forgotten itself! Forgotten its ocean! In a mad rush forward it has dissolved itself and fallen apart! A will in this world is overwhelmed by the ocean. The courage to act in this world is stifled. Living with imminent death as I did, with no guarantees for life was freedom.

“Men live and have lived for millennia in worlds of struggle, danger, and violence, we have grown to be what is necessary to live and provide in these worlds. In your world, in your time, those things have been gotten rid of. You’ve distanced yourselves from things that are imminent in you—death, sex, violence, pleasure, love, pain, rage—and instead upheld virtues that are appropriated rather than imminent—mercy, security, forgiveness, amiability. This world takes a man-animal, a beast built for terror in another era, and made him declaw himself. You feel this! You know you write about me for these reasons. Longing to look into the deepest parts of your own ocean and see what beasts lie below!

“Terror and Love are the only ways to approach the world. You must embrace them and never forget. In a world built on security and amiability, fear and loneliness become the

greatest enemies. These two demons drive your world and kill passion. Having destroyed nature and built a marketplace in its stead you are now slaves to working it. Your lives of foraging and hunting have become distended and appropriated—like your fiber are bleeding long away from yourself. A slave to the market, your only master is yourself, because you cannot hold anyone accountable for this choice except yourself for accepting it, and a generalized other called 'society' for deceiving you into feeling that this was your only choice. In fact it is!

“The longings of your heart are simple, and the things you do to fulfill those longings so complicated! You wish to feel loved, feel strong, and sexually gratified. But as this world is a competition you must beat out other men. It is a cold world indeed that one must step on another to ascend the mountain! You sit there questioning these claims of mine but they are your words indeed—written upon the very breaths of being! The greatest demons of the world enter through truths that none want to acknowledge, for they wish to live in idiotic and ignorant fantasy. Truth resonates! However dark and misunderstood it is, it still resonates!

“You write about me because you cannot extricate yourself. Sitting there in your chair, walking through your streets you are unable to pull yourself free from the waters of your ignorance. Indeed you must search the prose, the narratives of a different time to even attempt to understand yourself from a different perspective.”

“As Hegel said,” I replied. “The self-consciousness seeks to understand itself.”

“God created man to understand himself. We are as thieves cast down into the black pits—spinning through darkness and into even deeper darkness. The tragedy is that you cannot know another consciousness, such a thing is a construction in your mind, I think. So creating me

is as appropriate as meeting a real live, breathing other. Like a person who goes to God you have created me in an attempt to grasp something as you tumble through the stars, reeling and afraid.”

I could take it no longer.

“Then are we cursed!? Are we cursed as Nietzsche said to this nihilism? The answers of the past break and die as technology rolls over the myths of the past? Who could live in such a world and not take their own life? You come here and declare these horrors but offer nothing in their place! How dare you?” I screamed.

“My mouth is your mouth,” he replied. “These are nothing but deep thoughts of your own mind. Your culture has destroyed God, destroyed the divine soul of man, and smashed all his sacred spaces, this competition I spoke of earlier, of one man to overcome another man to be secure in order to reproduce, has caused what will be the destruction of your world. Your natures are innate and built into the plates that inform your being as animals. So unspoken and close are these truths that you don’t realize them. Indeed, the next cataclysm is upon us soon. What solace can one offer in such dark times?”

“None,” I said. We sat in silence. “So then if these things are true, and all things must fall away then now things don’t matter so much do they?”

“Not at all,” he said. “Accept this death. Accept this passing, and though it is sad and tragic, those are simple words. As a context such things are disappointing—they shatter the myths your culture has today. They shatter the illusion that you will live forever, they shatter the illusion that all problems can be solved, they shatter the illusion that you can all get along and share. Your temples, built to sanctify these spaces in your mind and bind them to your soul

are shattering with my words. Your choices are weep in sorrow and pass away with the world, or weep in joy and dance.”

“My God you’re right,” I said. “The hardest things to face, those things which seem the most impossible, that our psyches won’t allow us for a moment to admit are true, are the most true. We place these things in shadow and make believe that they have disappeared or were never real in the first place, but in reality those things most hidden to ourselves are the truest. And I see that nothing can be done to save this world, the world of values and morality, decadence and machinery. The answer, the one way that humanity will continue and save itself is to turn away from all our natural impulses and pursue a contrived system of life; but this cannot happen, because it goes against our very nature. The illusions that we’ve bought into because we’ve gone soft are wearing away, and what is left is an indifferent world; where pain and ecstasy exist only because we find them from time to time. In an attempt to change our environment and seek only ecstasy we’ve set the world on a course with certain destruction. We can only lament because the peak has already occurred.”

“How do you think?”

“Well, it makes sense that the point at which human cultures values and morals and beliefs about social life are the most out of touch with the dark reality of things must be the point at which that culture is furthest from the reality. I can’t imagine a time like that more than the last fifty years in America. It seems only now that we’re emerging from this fog, but I believe it is too late.”²⁵

²⁵ This is to say that the “reality” in question is the stark truth that human civilization must necessarily live in a hunter-gatherer like situation by necessity, if we want a “natural” sort of living. The “realities” of life in terms of violence, emotional anger, and reactions of this nature, are more imminent to our selves than rationality or some

Again we paused, and sat silently knowing for some time. Then I thanked him and he was gone, walking back out of my room and into the ether. I sat contemplating for a time and finally decided to write one more section in the piece.

But I didn't know how to end it; should I leave it hopeful or sorrowful? Should the piece be a tragedy or a comedy? I couldn't know, for these things felt like only words that through implication let those who read them believe in fantasies. Like a sighing breath, I wanted the ending to be, that gave a silent and sublime knowing to the reader. A breath of knowledge.

The Song of Alexander

Childlike love, I sing you into the world,
Like a small fire into the darkness
I sing you,
Through torturous winds
You flicker happily.

Wilderness child of truth,
I sing you unfetter yourself!
And fly into the sky dancing!
Through tablets of death and apostasy
Dance without care.

Envious I am of you,
Who dance with God without care,
As I long to dance with you,
But my feet are upon this ground,
My cold and tired feet.

other type of sublimating behavior. The fact that in the most civilized societies there is still a plague of unwanted situations such as the following is evidence that our natural impulses are not to be "civilized": unwed teenage pregnancy, murder, theft, rape, lying at the highest levels of society, the list goes on. It is my conjecture in this piece that these social phenomena do not represent an anomaly, but rather the most imminent truth to human kind. Civilization is the anomaly. It is natural in the way that all things are "natural"—nothing in life is "unnatural"—but forgetting that humans are at their most imminent capable of any moment of these "atrocities" is a horrible mistake. Morality and an ethical code are an evolutionary development that allow humans to live in a "civilized" way—but the definition of what is civilized is anything that follows that code of ethics and aesthetics. It is a circular definition. The moral codes are arbitrary—they require only that a person buy into them and nothing more. So here, the argument is this: These arbitrary moral codes have allowed people to flourish, but in doing so have caused us to destroy our environment and now inhibit us—morals are not special, no more so than anything else. As the Bible says: If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

Tired eyes from sunlight,
Straining in darkness
I watch you dance in the sky,
Your dance!
I weep from your dance!

I, in all my wealth and title
Cannot dance with you,
For they wear upon my heart,
And make me weep,
To follow you, little dance.

I cast them off!
I cast them off!
Unto the earth littered with souls,
I cast and wake with bright eyes,
Upon the setting sun.

There I escape,
Away from myself,
Away from the reasons,
Away and hiding in the sky
Dancing the stars!

Singing and singing,
I sing the life unfettered,
I sing authentic freedom
Through irrational bondage,
This irrational bondage I sing!

Cast away my soul,
Childlike love,
Cast away my terrors,
And let me weep and dance,
For all will fall away!

In this place I am not alone,
For the spirit is with me,
And longing to embrace it I fade away
I fade away and into shadow,
The shadow of life.

I fade away,

I fade away,
I fade away in the dance
And the tears,
And happily into the new life.

Into the next life I create,
With distant shores and green fields,
And beasts as myself,
Who embrace in combat,
And kiss the sky.

And the song I sing,
Co-opted from the ether,
I sing and spin into the sky,
Leaving morality behind,
I fade away.

A Chorus: And there were no more words.