

## THE NIGHT SONG

(From Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*)

It is night: now do all leaping fountains speak louder. And my soul too is a leaping fountain.

It is night: only now do all songs of lovers awaken. And my soul too is the song of a lover.

Something unquenched, unquenchable, is in me, that wants to speak out. A craving for love is in me, that itself speaks the language of love.

Light am I: ah, that I were night! But this is my solitude, that I am girded round with light.

Ah, that I were dark and obscure! How I would suck at the breasts of light!

And I should bless you, little sparkling stars and glowworms above!—and be happy in your gifts of light.

But I live in my own light, I drink back into myself the flames that break from me. I do not know the joy of the receiver; and I have often dreamed that stealing must be more blessed than receiving.

It is my poverty that my hand never rests from giving; it is my envy that I see expectant eyes and illumined nights of desire.

Oh wretchedness of all givers! Oh eclipse of my sun! Oh craving for desire! Oh ravenous hunger in satiety!

They take from me: but do I yet touch their souls? A gulf stands between giving and receiving; and the smallest gulf must be bridged at last.

A hunger grows from out of my beauty: I should like to rob those to whom I give—thus do I hunger after wickedness.

Withdrawing my hand when another hand already reaches out to it; hesitating, like the waterfall that hesitates even in its plunge—thus do I hunger after wickedness.

Such vengeance does my abundance concoct: such spite wells from my solitude.

My joy in giving died in giving, my virtue grew weary of itself through its abundance!

The danger for him who always gives, is that he may lose his shame; the hand and heart of him who distributes grow callous through sheer distributing.

My eye no longer overflows with the shame of suppliants; my hand has become too hard for the trembling of hands that have been filled.

Where have the tears of my eye and the bloom of my heart gone? Oh solitude of all givers! Oh silence of all light-givers!

Many suns circle in empty space: to all that is dark they speak with their light—to me they are silent.

Oh, this is the enmity of light towards what gives light: unpitying it travels its way. Unjust towards the light-giver in its inmost heart, cold towards suns—thus travels every sun.

Like a storm the suns fly along their courses; that is their travelling. They follow their inexorable will; that is their coldness.

Oh, it is only you, obscure, dark ones, who extract warmth from light-givers! Oh, only you drink milk and comfort from the udders of light!

Ah, ice is around me, my hand is burned with ice! Ah, thirst is in me, which yearns after your thirst!

It is night: ah, that I must be light! And thirst for the things of night! And solitude!

It is night: now my longing breaks from me like a wellspring—I long for speech.

It is night: now do all leaping fountains speak louder. And my soul too is a leaping fountain.

It is night: only now do all songs of lovers awaken. And my soul too is the song of a lover.

Thus sang Zarathustra.