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To the Class of 1994:

Ed Bruch

I flew too far into the future: dread overcame me, and when I looked around, behold, time was my sole contemporary. Then I flew back toward home, faster and faster; and thus I came to you, O men of today, and into the land of education. For the first time I really had eyes for you, and a genuine desire; verily, it was with longing in my heart that I came.

But what happened to me? For all my anxiety I had to laugh. Never had my eyes beheld anything so dappled and motley. I laughed and laughed while my foot was still trembling, and my heart no less. "This is clearly the home of all paint pots," I said.

With fifty blotches painted on your faces and limbs you were sitting there, and I was amazed, you men of today. And with fifty mirrors around you to flatter and echo your color display! Verily, you could wear no better masks, you men of today, than your own faces! Who could possibly find you out?

With the characters of past written all over you, and these characters in turn painted over with new characters: thus have you concealed yourselves perfectly from all interpreters of characters. And even if one could try the reins, who would be fool enough to believe that you have reins? You seem baked out of colors and pasted notes. Motley, all ages and people peek out of your veils; motley, all customs and faiths speak out of your gestures.

If one took the veils and wraps and colors and gestures away from you, just enough would be left to scare the crows. Verily, I myself am the scared crow who once saw you naked and without color; and I flew away when the skeleton beckoned to me lovingly. Rather I would be a day laborer in Hades among the shades of the past! Even the underworldly are plumper and fuller than you.

This, indeed, is bitterness for my bowels, that I can endure you neither naked nor clothed, you men of today. All that is uncanny in the future and all that has ever made fugitive birds shudder is surely more comfortable and cozy than your "reality." For thus you speak: "Real

are we entirely. . . ." Thus you stick out your chests—but alas they are hollow! . . . Unbelievable: thus I call you, for all your pride in being real!

All ages prate against each other in your spirits: and the dreams and pratings of all ages were yet more real than your waking. You are sterile. . . . You are half-open gates at which the gravediggers wait.

How you stand there, you who are sterile, how thin around the ribs! And some among you probably realized this and said, "Probably some god secretly took something from me while I slept. Verily, enough to make himself a little female! Strange is the poverty of my ribs." Thus have some men of today already spoken.

Indeed, you make me laugh, you men of today, and particularly when you are amazed at yourselves. And I should be in a sorry plight if I could not laugh at your amazement and had to drink down everything disgusting out of your bowls. But I shall take you more lightly, for I have a heavy burden; and what does it matter if bugs shall light on my bundle? Verily, it will not make it heavier. And not from you, you men of today, shall the great weariness come over me.

Alas, where shall I climb now with my longing? From all mountains I look out for fatherlands and motherlands. But home I found nowhere: a fugitive am I in all cities and a departure at all gates. Strange and a mockery to me are the men of today to whom my heart recently drew me; and I am driven out of fatherlands and motherlands. Thus I now love only my *children's land*, yet undiscovered, in the farthest sea: for this I bid my sails search and search.

In my children I want to make up for being the child of my fathers—and to all the future, for *this* today.

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

—Nietzsche



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