

Canto Nine

The Paradise of the Life-Gods

AROUND him shone a great felicitous Day.
A lustre of some rapturous Infinite,
It held in the splendour of its golden laugh
Regions of the heart's happiness set free,
Intoxicated with the wine of God,
Immersed in light, perpetually divine.
A favourite and intimate of the Gods
Obeying the divine command to joy,
It was the sovereign of its own delight
And master of the kingdoms of its force.
Assured of the bliss for which all forms were made,
Unmoved by fear and grief and the shocks of Fate
And unalarmed by the breath of fleeting Time
And unbesieged by adverse circumstance,
It breathed in a sweet secure unguarded ease
Free from our body's frailty inviting death,
Far from our danger-zone of stumbling Will.
It needed not to curb its passionate beats;
Thrilled by the clasp of the warm satisfied sense
And the swift wonder-rush and flame and cry
Of the life-impulses' red magnificent race,
It lived in a jewel-rhythm of the laughter of God
And lay on the breast of universal love.
Immune the unfettered Spirit of Delight
Pastured his gleaming sun-herds and moon-flocks
Along the lyric speed of griefless streams
In fragrance of the unearthly asphodel.
A silence of felicity wrapped the heavens,
A careless radiance smiled upon the heights;
A murmur of inarticulate ravishment
Trembled in the winds and touched the enchanted soil;

Incessant in the arms of ecstasy
Repeating its sweet involuntary note
A sob of rapture flowed along the hours.
Advancing under an arch of glory and peace,
Traveller on plateau and on musing ridge,
As one who sees in the World-Magician's glass
A miracled imagery of soul-scapes flee
He traversed scenes of an immortal joy
And gazed into abysses of beauty and bliss.
Around him was a light of conscious suns
And a brooding gladness of great symbol things;
To meet him crowded plains of brilliant calm,
Mountains and violet valleys of the Blest,
Deep glens of joy and crooning waterfalls
And woods of quivering purple solitude;
Below him lay like gleaming jewelled thoughts
Rapt dreaming cities of Gandharva kings.
Across the vibrant secrecies of Space
A dim and happy music sweetly stole,
Smitten by unseen hands he heard heart-close
The harps' cry of the heavenly minstrels pass,
And voices of unearthly melody
Chanted the glory of eternal love
In the white-blue-moonbeam air of Paradise.
A summit and core of all that marvellous world,
Apart stood high Elysian nameless hills,
Burning like sunsets in a trance of eve.
As if to some new unsearched profundity,
Into a joyful stillness plunged their base;
Their slopes through a hurry of laughter and voices sank,
Crossed by a throng of singing rivulets,
Adoring blue heaven with their happy hymn,
Down into woods of shadowy secrecy:
Lifted into wide voiceless mystery
Their peaks climbed towards a greatness beyond life.
The shining Edens of the vital gods

Received him in their deathless harmonies.
All things were perfect there that flower in Time;
Beauty was there creation's native mould,
Peace was a thrilled voluptuous purity.
There Love fulfilled her gold and roseate dreams
And Strength her crowned and mighty reveries;
Desire climbed up, a swift omnipotent flame,
And Pleasure had the stature of the gods;
Dream walked along the highways of the stars;
Sweet common things turned into miracles:
Overtaken by the spirit's sudden spell,
Smitten by a divine passion's alchemy,
Pain's self compelled transformed to potent joy
Curing the antithesis twixt heaven and hell.
All life's high visions are embodied there,
Her wandering hopes achieved, her aureate combs
Caught by the honey-eater's darting tongue,
Her burning guesses changed to ecstasied truths,
Her mighty pantings stilled in deathless calm
And liberated her immense desires.
In that paradise of perfect heart and sense
No lower note could break the endless charm
Of her sweetness ardent and immaculate;
Her steps are sure of their intuitive fall.
After the anguish of the soul's long strife
At length were found calm and celestial rest
And, lapped in a magic flood of sorrowless hours,
Healed were his warrior nature's wounded limbs
In the encircling arms of Energies
That brooked no stain and feared not their own bliss.
In scenes forbidden to our pallid sense
Amid miraculous scents and wonder-hues
He met the forms that divinise the sight,
To music that can immortalise the mind
And make the heart wide as infinity
Listened, and captured the inaudible

Cadences that awake the occult ear:
Out of the ineffable hush it hears them come
Trembling with the beauty of a wordless speech,
And thoughts too great and deep to find a voice,
Thoughts whose desire new-makes the universe.
A scale of sense that climbed with fiery feet
To heights of unimagined happiness,
Recast his being's aura in joy-glow,
His body glimmered like a skiey shell;
His gates to the world were swept with seas of light.
His earth, dowered with celestial competence,
Harboured a power that needed now no more
To cross the closed customs-line of mind and flesh
And smuggle godhead into humanity.
It shrank no more from the supreme demand
Of an untired capacity for bliss,
A might that could explore its own infinite
And beauty and passion and the depths' reply
Nor feared the swoon of glad identity
Where spirit and flesh in inner ecstasy join
Annulling the quarrel between self and shape.
It drew from sight and sound spiritual power,
Made sense a road to reach the intangible:
It thrilled with the supernal influences
That build the substance of life's deeper soul.
Earth-nature stood reborn, comrade of heaven.
A fit companion of the timeless Kings,
Equalled with the godheads of the living Suns,
He mixed in the radiant pastimes of the Unborn,
Heard whispers of the Player never seen
And listened to his voice that steals the heart
And draws it to the breast of God's desire,
And felt its honey of felicity
Flow through his veins like the rivers of Paradise,
Made body a nectar-cup of the Absolute.
In sudden moments of revealing flame,

In passionate responses half-unveiled
He reached the rim of ecstasies unknown;
A touch supreme surprised his hurrying heart,
The clasp was remembered of the Wonderful,
And hints leaped down of white beatitudes.
Eternity drew close disguised as Love
And laid its hand upon the body of Time.
A little gift comes from the Immensitudes,
But measureless to life its gain of joy;
All the untold Beyond is mirrored there.
A giant drop of the Bliss unknowable
Overwhelmed his limbs and round his soul became
A fiery ocean of felicity;
He foundered drowned in sweet and burning vasts:
The dire delight that could shatter mortal flesh,
The rapture that the gods sustain he bore.
Immortal pleasure cleansed him in its waves
And turned his strength into undying power.
Immortality captured Time and carried Life.

END OF CANTO NINE