

*Canto Four*

*The Kingdoms of the Little Life*

A QUIVERING trepidant uncertain world  
Born from that dolorous meeting and eclipse  
Appeared in the emptiness where her feet had trod,  
A quick obscurity, a seeking stir.  
There was a writhing of half-conscious force  
Hardly awakened from the Inconscient's sleep,  
Tied to an instinct-driven Ignorance,  
To find itself and find its hold on things.  
Inheritor of poverty and loss,  
Assailed by memories that fled when seized,  
Haunted by a forgotten uplifting hope,  
It strove with a blindness as of groping hands  
To fill the aching and disastrous gap  
Between earth-pain and the bliss from which Life fell.  
A world that ever seeks for something missed,  
Hunts for the joy that earth has failed to keep.  
Too near to our gates its unappeased unrest  
For peace to live on the inert solid globe:  
It has joined its hunger to the hunger of earth,  
It has given the law of craving to our lives,  
It has made our spirit's need a fathomless gulf.  
An Influence entered mortal night and day,  
A shadow overcast the time-born race;  
In the troubled stream where leaps a blind heart-pulse  
And the nerve-beat of feeling wakes in sense  
Dividing Matter's sleep from conscious Mind,  
There strayed a call that knew not why it came.  
A Power beyond earth's scope has touched the earth;  
The repose that might have been can be no more;  
A formless yearning passions in man's heart,  
A cry is in his blood for happier things:

Else could he roam on a free sunlit soil  
With the childlike pain-forgetting mind of beasts  
Or live happy, unmoved, like flowers and trees.  
The Might that came upon the earth to bless,  
Has stayed on earth to suffer and aspire.  
The infant laugh that rang through time is hushed:  
Man's natural joy of life is overcast  
And sorrow is his nurse of destiny.  
The animal's thoughtless joy is left behind,  
Care and reflection burden his daily walk;  
He has risen to greatness and to discontent,  
He is awake to the Invisible.  
Insatiate seeker, he has all to learn:  
He has exhausted now life's surface acts,  
His being's hidden realms remain to explore.  
He becomes a mind, he becomes a spirit and self;  
In his fragile tenement he grows Nature's lord.  
In him Matter wakes from its long obscure trance,  
In him earth feels the Godhead drawing near.  
An eyeless Power that sees no more its aim,  
A restless hungry energy of Will,  
Life cast her seed in the body's indolent mould;  
It woke from happy torpor a blind Force  
Compelling it to sense and seek and feel.  
In the enormous labour of the Void  
Perturbing with her dreams the vast routine  
And dead roll of a slumbering universe  
The mighty prisoner struggled for release.  
Alive with her yearning woke the inert cell,  
In the heart she kindled a fire of passion and need,  
Amid the deep calm of inanimate things  
Arose her great voice of toil and prayer and strife.  
A groping consciousness in a voiceless world,  
A guideless sense was given her for her road;  
Thought was withheld and nothing now she knew,  
But all the unknown was hers to feel and clasp.

Obeying the push of unborn things towards birth  
Out of her seal of insentient life she broke:  
In her substance of unthinking mute soul-strength  
That cannot utter what its depths divine,  
Awoke a blind necessity to know.  
The chain that bound her she made her instrument;  
Instinct was hers, the chrysalis of Truth,  
And effort and growth and striving nescience.  
Inflicting on the body desire and hope,  
Imposing on inconscience consciousness,  
She brought into Matter's dull tenacity  
Her anguished claim to her lost sovereign right,  
Her tireless search, her vexed uneasy heart,  
Her wandering unsure steps, her cry for change.  
Adorer of a joy without a name,  
In her obscure cathedral of delight  
To dim dwarf gods she offers secret rites.  
But vain unending is the sacrifice,  
The priest an ignorant mage who only makes  
Futile mutations in the altar's plan  
And casts blind hopes into a powerless flame.  
A burden of transient gains weighs down her steps  
And hardly under that load can she advance;  
But the hours cry to her, she travels on  
Passing from thought to thought, from want to want;  
Her greatest progress is a deepened need.  
Matter dissatisfies, she turns to Mind;  
She conquers earth, her field, then claims the heavens.  
Insensible, breaking the work she has done  
The stumbling ages over her labour pass,  
But still no great transforming light came down  
And no revealing rapture touched her fall.  
Only a glimmer sometimes splits mind's sky  
Justifying the ambiguous providence  
That makes of night a path to unknown dawns  
Or a dark clue to some diviner state.

In Nescience began her mighty task,  
In Ignorance she pursues the unfinished work,  
For knowledge gropes, but meets not Wisdom's face.  
Ascending slowly with unconscious steps,  
A foundling of the Gods she wanders here  
Like a child-soul left near the gates of Hell  
Fumbling through fog in search of Paradise.

In this slow ascension he must follow her pace  
Even from her faint and dim subconscious start:  
So only can earth's last salvation come.  
For so only could he know the obscure cause  
Of all that holds us back and baffles God  
In the jail-delivery of the imprisoned soul.  
Along swift paths of fall through dangerous gates  
He chanced into a grey obscurity  
Teeming with instincts from the mindless gulfs  
That pushed to wear a form and win a place.  
Life here was intimate with Death and Night  
And ate Death's food that she might breathe awhile;  
She was their inmate and adopted waif.  
Accepting subconsciousness, in dumb darkness' reign  
A sojourner, she hoped not any more.  
There far away from Truth and luminous thought  
He saw the original seat, the separate birth  
Of the dethroned, deformed and suffering Power.  
An unhappy face of falsity made true,  
A contradiction of our divine birth,  
Indifferent to beauty and to light,  
Parading she flaunted her animal disgrace  
Unhelped by camouflage, brutal and bare,  
An authentic image recognised and signed  
Of her outcast force exiled from heaven and hope,  
Fallen, glorying in the vileness of her state,  
The grovel of a strength once half divine,  
The graceless squalor of her beast desires,

The staring visage of her ignorance,  
The naked body of her poverty.  
Here first she crawled out from her cabin of mud  
Where she had lain unconscious, rigid, mute:  
Its narrowness and torpor held her still,  
A darkness clung to her uneffaced by Light.  
There neared no touch redeeming from above:  
The upward look was alien to her sight,  
Forgotten the fearless godhead of her walk;  
Renounced was the glory and felicity,  
The adventure in the dangerous fields of Time:  
Hardly she availed, wallowing, to bear and live.

A wide unquiet mist of seeking Space,  
A rayless region swallowed in vague swathes,  
That seemed, unnamed, unbodied and unhoused,  
A swaddled visionless and formless mind,  
Asked for a body to translate its soul.  
Its prayer denied, it fumbled after thought.  
As yet not powered to think, hardly to live,  
It opened into a weird and pigmy world  
Where this unhappy magic had its source.  
On dim confines where Life and Matter meet  
He wandered among things half-seen, half-guessed,  
Pursued by ungrasped beginnings and lost ends.  
There life was born but died before it could live.  
There was no solid ground, no constant drift;  
Only some flame of mindless Will had power.  
Himself was dim to himself, half-felt, obscure,  
As if in a struggle of the Void to be.  
In strange domains where all was living sense  
But mastering thought was not nor cause nor rule,  
Only a crude child-heart cried for toys of bliss,  
Mind flickered, a disordered infant glow,  
And random shapeless energies drove towards form  
And took each wisp-fire for a guiding sun.

This blindfold force could place no thinking step;  
Asking for light she followed darkness' clue.  
An unconscious Power groped towards consciousness,  
Matter smitten by Matter glimmered to sense,  
Blind contacts, slow reactions beat out sparks  
Of instinct from a cloaked subliminal bed,  
Sensations crowded, dumb substitutes for thought,  
Perception answered Nature's wakening blows  
But still was a mechanical response,  
A jerk, a leap, a start in Nature's dream,  
And rude unchastened impulses jostling ran  
Heedless of every motion but their own  
And, darkling, clashed with darker than themselves,  
Free in a world of settled anarchy.  
The need to exist, the instinct to survive  
Engrossed the tense precarious moment's will  
And an unseeing desire felt out for food.  
The gusts of Nature were the only law,  
Force wrestled with force, but no result remained:  
Only were achieved a nescient grasp and drive  
And feelings and instincts knowing not their source,  
Sense-pleasures and sense-pangs soon caught, soon lost,  
And the brute motion of unthinking lives.  
It was a vain unnecessary world  
Whose will to be brought poor and sad results  
And meaningless suffering and a grey unease.  
Nothing seemed worth the labour to become.

But judged not so his spirit's wakened eye.  
As shines a solitary witness star  
That burns apart, Light's lonely sentinel,  
In the drift and teeming of a mindless Night,  
A single thinker in an aimless world  
Awaiting some tremendous dawn of God,  
He saw the purpose in the works of Time.  
Even in that aimlessness a work was done

Pregnant with magic will and change divine.  
The first writhings of the cosmic serpent Force  
Uncoiled from the mystic ring of Matter's trance;  
It raised its head in the warm air of life.  
It could not cast off yet Night's stiffening sleep  
Or wear as yet mind's wonder-flecks and streaks,  
Put on its jewelled hood the crown of soul  
Or stand erect in the blaze of spirit's sun.  
As yet were only seen foulness and force,  
The secret crawl of consciousness to light  
Through a fertile slime of lust and battenning sense,  
Beneath the body's crust of thickened self  
A tardy fervent working in the dark,  
The turbid yeast of Nature's passionate change,  
Ferment of the soul's creation out of mire.  
A heavenly process donned this grey disguise,  
A fallen ignorance in its covert night  
Laboured to achieve its dumb unseemly work,  
A camouflage of the Inconscient's need  
To release the glory of God in Nature's mud.  
His sight, spiritual in embodying orbs,  
Could pierce through the grey phosphorescent haze  
And scan the secrets of the shifting flux  
That animates these mute and solid cells  
And leads the thought and longing of the flesh  
And the keen lust and hunger of its will.  
This too he tracked along its hidden stream  
And traced its acts to a miraculous fount.  
A mystic Presence none can probe nor rule,  
Creator of this game of ray and shade  
In this sweet and bitter paradoxical life,  
Asks from the body the soul's intimacies  
And by the swift vibration of a nerve  
Links its mechanic throbs to light and love.  
It summons the spirit's sleeping memories  
Up from subconscious depths beneath Time's foam;

Oblivious of their flame of happy truth,  
Arriving with heavy eyes that hardly see,  
They come disguised as feelings and desires,  
Like weeds upon the surface float awhile  
And rise and sink on a somnambulist tide.  
Impure, degraded though her motions are,  
Always a heaven-truth broods in life's deeps;  
In her obscurest members burns that fire.  
A touch of God's rapture in creation's acts,  
A lost remembrance of felicity  
Lurks still in the dumb roots of death and birth,  
The world's senseless beauty mirrors God's delight.  
That rapture's smile is secret everywhere;  
It flows in the wind's breath, in the tree's sap,  
Its hued magnificence blooms in leaves and flowers.  
When life broke through its half-drowse in the plant  
That feels and suffers but cannot move or cry,  
In beast and in winged bird and thinking man  
It made of the heart's rhythm its music's beat;  
It forced the unconscious tissues to awake  
And ask for happiness and earn the pang  
And thrill with pleasure and laughter of brief delight,  
And quiver with pain and crave for ecstasy.  
Imperative, voiceless, ill-understood,  
Too far from light, too close to being's core,  
Born strangely in Time from the eternal Bliss,  
It presses on heart's core and vibrant nerve;  
Its sharp self-seeking tears our consciousness;  
Our pain and pleasure have that sting for cause:  
Instinct with it, but blind to its true joy  
The soul's desire leaps out towards passing things.  
All Nature's longing drive none can resist,  
Comes surging through the blood and quickened sense;  
An ecstasy of the infinite is her cause.  
It turns in us to finite loves and lusts,  
The will to conquer and have, to seize and keep,

To enlarge life's room and scope and pleasure's range,  
To battle and overcome and make one's own,  
The hope to mix one's joy with others' joy,  
A yearning to possess and be possessed,  
To enjoy and be enjoyed, to feel, to live.  
Here was its early brief attempt to be,  
Its rapid end of momentary delight  
Whose stamp of failure haunts all ignorant life.  
Inflicting still its habit on the cells  
The phantom of a dark and evil start  
Ghostlike pursues all that we dream and do.  
Although on earth are firm established lives,  
A working of habit or a sense of law,  
A steady repetition in the flux,  
Yet are its roots of will ever the same;  
These passions are the stuff of which we are made.  
This was the first cry of the awaking world.  
It clings around us still and clamps the god.  
Even when reason is born and soul takes form,  
In beast and reptile and in thinking man  
It lasts and is the fount of all their life.  
This too was needed that breath and living might be.  
The spirit in a finite ignorant world  
Must rescue so its prisoned consciousness  
Forced out in little jets at quivering points  
From the Inconscient's sealed infinitude.  
Then slowly it gathers mass, looks up at Light.  
This Nature lives tied to her origin,  
A clutch of nether force is on her still;  
Out of unconscious depths her instincts leap;  
A neighbour is her life to insentient Nought.  
Under this law an ignorant world was made.

    In the enigma of the darkened Vasts,  
In the passion and self-loss of the Infinite  
When all was plunged in the negating Void,  
Non-Being's night could never have been saved

If Being had not plunged into the dark  
Carrying with it its triple mystic cross.  
Invoking in world-time the timeless truth,  
Bliss changed to sorrow, knowledge made ignorant,  
God's force turned into a child's helplessness  
Can bring down heaven by their sacrifice.  
A contradiction founds the base of life:  
The eternal, the divine Reality  
Has faced itself with its own contraries;  
Being became the Void and Conscious-Force  
Nescience and walk of a blind Energy  
And Ecstasy took the figure of world-pain.  
In a mysterious dispensation's law  
A Wisdom that prepares its far-off ends  
Planned so to start her slow aeonic game.  
A blindfold search and wrestle and fumbling clasp  
Of a half-seen Nature and a hidden Soul,  
A game of hide-and-seek in twilit rooms,  
A play of love and hate and fear and hope  
Continues in the nursery of mind  
Its hard and heavy romp of self-born twins.  
At last the struggling Energy can emerge  
And meet the voiceless Being in wider fields;  
Then can they see and speak and, breast to breast,  
In a larger consciousness, a clearer light,  
The Two embrace and strive and each know each  
Regarding closer now the playmate's face.  
Even in these formless coilings he could feel  
Matter's response to an infant stir of soul.  
In Nature he saw the mighty Spirit concealed,  
Watched the weak birth of a tremendous Force,  
Pursued the riddle of Godhead's tentative pace,  
Heard the faint rhythms of a great unborn Muse.

Then came a fierier breath of waking Life,  
And there arose from the dim gulf of things

The strange creations of a thinking sense,  
Existences half-real and half-dream.  
A life was there that hoped not to survive:  
Beings were born who perished without trace,  
Events that were a formless drama's limbs  
And actions driven by a blind creature will.  
A seeking Power found out its road to form,  
Patterns were built of love and joy and pain  
And symbol figures for the moods of Life.  
An insect hedonism fluttered and crawled  
And basked in a sunlit Nature's surface thrills,  
And dragon raptures, python agonies  
Crawled in the marsh and mire and licked the sun.  
Huge armoured strengths shook a frail quaking ground,  
Great puissant creatures with a dwarfish brain,  
And pigmy tribes imposed their small life-drift.  
In a dwarf model of humanity  
Nature now launched the extreme experience  
And master-point of her design's caprice,  
Luminous result of her half-conscious climb  
On rungs twixt her sublimities and grotesques  
To massive from infinitesimal shapes,  
To a subtle balancing of body and soul,  
To an order of intelligent littleness.  
Around him in the moment-beats of Time  
The kingdom of the animal self arose,  
Where deed is all and mind is still half-born  
And the heart obeys a dumb unseen control.  
The Force that works by the light of Ignorance,  
Her animal experiment began,  
Crowding with conscious creatures her world-scheme;  
But to the outward only were they alive,  
Only they replied to touches and surfaces  
And to the prick of need that drove their lives.  
A body that knew not its own soul within,  
There lived and longed, had wrath and joy and grief;

A mind was there that met the objective world  
As if a stranger or enemy at its door:  
Its thoughts were kneaded by the shocks of sense;  
It captured not the spirit in the form,  
It entered not the heart of what it saw;  
It looked not for the power behind the act,  
It studied not the hidden motive in things  
Nor strove to find the meaning of it all.  
Beings were there who wore a human form;  
Absorbed they lived in the passion of the scene,  
But knew not who they were or why they lived:  
Content to breathe, to feel, to sense, to act,  
Life had for them no aim save Nature's joy  
And the stimulus and delight of outer things;  
Identified with the spirit's outward shell,  
They worked for the body's wants, they craved no more.  
The veiled spectator watching from their depths  
Fixed not his inward eye upon himself  
Nor turned to find the author of the plot,  
He saw the drama only and the stage.  
There was no brooding stress of deeper sense,  
The burden of reflection was not borne:  
Mind looked on Nature with unknowing eyes,  
Adored her boons and feared her monstrous strokes.  
It pondered not on the magic of her laws,  
It thirsted not for the secret wells of Truth,  
But made a register of crowding facts  
And strung sensations on a vivid thread:  
It hunted and it fled and sniffed the winds,  
Or slothed inert in sunshine and soft air:  
It sought the engrossing contacts of the world,  
But only to feed the surface sense with bliss.  
These felt life's quiver in the outward touch,  
They could not feel behind the touch the soul.  
To guard their form of self from Nature's harm,  
To enjoy and to survive was all their care.

The narrow horizon of their days was filled  
With things and creatures that could help and hurt:  
The world's values hung upon their little self.  
Isolated, cramped in the vast unknown,  
To save their small lives from surrounding Death  
They made a tiny circle of defence  
Against the siege of the huge universe:  
They preyed upon the world and were its prey,  
But never dreamed to conquer and be free.  
Obeying the World-Power's hints and firm taboos  
A scanty part they drew from her rich store;  
There was no conscious code and no life-plan:  
The patterns of thinking of a little group  
Fixed a traditional behaviour's law.  
Ignorant of soul save as a wraith within,  
Tied to a mechanism of unchanging lives  
And to a dull usual sense and feeling's beat,  
They turned in grooves of animal desire.  
In walls of stone fenced round they worked and warred,  
Did by a banded selfishness a small good  
Or wrought a dreadful wrong and cruel pain  
On sentient lives and thought they did no ill.  
Ardent from the sack of happy peaceful homes  
And gorged with slaughter, plunder, rape and fire,  
They made of human selves their helpless prey,  
A drove of captives led to lifelong woe,  
Or torture a spectacle made and holiday,  
Mocking or thrilled by their torn victims' pangs;  
Admiring themselves as titans and as gods  
Proudly they sang their high and glorious deeds  
And praised their victory and their splendid force.  
An animal in the instinctive herd  
Pushed by life impulses, forced by common needs,  
Each in his own kind saw his ego's glass;  
All served the aim and action of the pack.  
Those like himself, by blood or custom kin,

To him were parts of his life, his adjunct selves,  
His personal nebula's constituent stars,  
Satellite companions of his solar I.  
A master of his life's environment,  
A leader of a huddled human mass  
Herding for safety on a dangerous earth,  
He gathered them round him as if minor Powers  
To make a common front against the world,  
Or, weak and sole on an indifferent earth,  
As a fortress for his undefended heart,  
Or else to heal his body's loneliness.  
In others than his kind he sensed a foe,  
An alien unlike force to shun and fear,  
A stranger and adversary to hate and slay.  
Or he lived as lives the solitary brute;  
At war with all he bore his single fate.  
Absorbed in the present act, the fleeting days,  
None thought to look beyond the hour's gains,  
Or dreamed to make this earth a fairer world,  
Or felt some touch divine surprise his heart.  
The gladness that the fugitive moment gave,  
The desire grasped, the bliss, the experience won,  
Movement and speed and strength were joy enough  
And bodily longings shared and quarrel and play,  
And tears and laughter and the need called love.  
In war and clasp these life-wants joined the All-Life,  
Wrestlings of a divided unity  
Inflicting mutual grief and happiness  
In ignorance of the Self for ever one.  
Arming its creatures with delight and hope  
A half-awakened Nescience struggled there  
To know by sight and touch the outside of things.  
Instinct was formed; in memory's crowded sleep  
The past lived on as in a bottomless sea:  
Inverting into half-thought the quickened sense  
She felt around for truth with fumbling hands,

Clutched to her the little she could reach and seize  
And put aside in her subconscious cave.  
So must the dim being grow in light and force  
And rise to his higher destiny at last,  
Look up to God and round at the universe,  
And learn by failure and progress by fall  
And battle with environment and doom,  
By suffering discover his deep soul  
And by possession grow to his own vast.  
Half-way she stopped and found her path no more.  
Still nothing was achieved but to begin,  
Yet finished seemed the circle of her force.  
Only she had beaten out sparks of ignorance;  
Only the life could think and not the mind,  
Only the sense could feel and not the soul.  
Only was lit some heat of the flame of Life,  
Some joy to be, some rapturous leaps of sense.  
All was an impetus of half-conscious Force,  
A spirit sprawling drowned in dense life-foam,  
A vague self grasping at the shape of things.  
Behind all moved seeking for vessels to hold  
A first raw vintage of the grapes of God,  
On earth's mud a spilt of the supernal Bliss,  
Intoxicating the stupefied soul and mind  
A heady wine of rapture dark and crude,  
Dim, uncast yet into spiritual form,  
Obscure inhabitant of the world's blind core,  
An unborn godhead's will, a mute Desire.

A third creation now revealed its face.  
A mould of body's early mind was made.  
A glint of light kindled the obscure World-Force;  
It dowered a driven world with the seeing Idea  
And armed the act with thought's dynamic point:  
A small thinking being watched the works of Time.  
A difficult evolution from below

Called a masked intervention from above;  
Else this great, blind inconscient universe  
Could never have disclosed its hidden mind,  
Or even in blinkers worked in beast and man  
The Intelligence that devised the cosmic scheme.  
At first he saw a dim obscure mind-power  
Moving concealed by Matter and dumb life.  
A current thin, it streamed in life's vast flow  
Tossing and drifting under a drifting sky  
Amid the surge and glimmering tremulous wash,  
Released in splash of sense and feeling's waves.  
In the deep midst of an insentient world  
Its huddled waves and foam of consciousness ran  
Pressing and eddying through a narrow strait,  
Carrying experience in its crowded pace.  
It flowed emerging into upper light  
From the deep pool of its subliminal birth  
To reach some high existence still unknown.  
There was no thinking self, aim there was none:  
All was unorganised stress and seekings vague.  
Only to the unstable surface rose  
Sensations, stabs and edges of desire  
And passion's leaps and brief emotion's cries,  
A casual colloquy of flesh with flesh,  
A murmur of heart to longing wordless heart,  
Glimmerings of knowledge with no shape of thought  
And jets of subconscious will or hunger's pulls.  
All was dim sparkle on a foaming top:  
It whirled around a drifting shadow-self  
On an inconscient flood of Force in Time.  
Then came the pressure of a seeing Power  
That drew all into a dancing turbid mass  
Circling around a single luminous point,  
Centre of reference in a conscious field,  
Figure of a unitary Light within.  
It lit the impulse of the half-sentient flood,

Even an illusion gave of fixity  
As if a sea could serve as a firm soil.  
That strange observing Power imposed its sight.  
It forced on flux a limit and a shape,  
It gave its stream a lower narrow bank,  
Drew lines to snare the spirit's formlessness.  
It fashioned the life-mind of bird and beast,  
The answer of the reptile and the fish,  
The primitive pattern of the thoughts of man.  
A finite movement of the Infinite  
Came winging its way through a wide air of Time;  
A march of knowledge moved in Nescience  
And guarded in the form a separate soul.  
Its right to be immortal it reserved,  
But built a wall against the siege of death  
And threw a hook to clutch eternity.  
A thinking entity appeared in Space.  
A little ordered world broke into view  
Where being had prison-room for act and sight,  
A floor to walk, a clear but scanty range.  
An instrument-personality was born,  
And a restricted clamped intelligence  
Consented to confine in narrow bounds  
Its seeking; it tied the thought to visible things,  
Prohibiting the adventure of the Unseen  
And the soul's tread through unknown infinities.  
A reflex reason, Nature-habit's glass  
Illumined life to know and fix its field,  
Accept a dangerous ignorant brevity  
And the inconclusive purpose of its walk  
And profit by the hour's precarious chance  
In the allotted boundaries of its fate.  
A little joy and knowledge satisfied  
This little being tied into a knot  
And hung on a bulge of its environment,  
A little curve cut off in measureless Space,

A little span of life in all vast Time.  
A thought was there that planned, a will that strove,  
But for small aims within a narrow scope,  
Wasting unmeasured toil on transient things.  
It knew itself a creature of the mud;  
It asked no larger law, no loftier aim;  
It had no inward look, no upward gaze.  
A backward scholar on logic's rickety bench  
Indoctrinated by the erring sense,  
It took appearance for the face of God,  
For casual lights the marching of the suns,  
For heaven a starry strip of doubtful blue;  
Aspects of being feigned to be the whole.  
There was a voice of busy interchange,  
A market-place of trivial thoughts and acts:  
A life soon spent, a mind the body's slave  
Here seemed the brilliant crown of Nature's work,  
And tiny egos took the world as means  
To sate awhile dwarf lusts and brief desires,  
In a death-closed passage saw life's start and end  
As though a blind alley were creation's sign,  
As if for this the soul had coveted birth  
In the wonderland of a self-creating world  
And the opportunities of cosmic Space.  
This creature passionate only to survive,  
Fettered to puny thoughts with no wide range  
And to the body's needs and pangs and joys,  
This fire growing by its fuel's death,  
Increased by what it seized and made its own:  
It gathered and grew and gave itself to none.  
Only it hoped for greatness in its den  
And pleasure and victory in small fields of power  
And conquest of life-room for self and kin,  
An animal limited by its feeding-space.  
It knew not the Immortal in its house;  
It had no greater deeper cause to live.

In limits only it was powerful;  
Acute to capture truth for outward use,  
Its knowledge was the body's instrument;  
Absorbed in the little works of its prison-house  
It turned around the same unchanging points  
In the same circle of interest and desire,  
But thought itself the master of its jail.  
Although for action, not for wisdom made,  
Thought was its apex — or its gutter's rim:  
It saw an image of the external world  
And saw its surface self, but knew no more.  
Out of a slow confused embroiled self-search  
Mind grew to a clarity cut out, precise,  
A gleam enclosed in a stone ignorance.  
In this bound thinking's narrow leadership  
Tied to the soil, inspired by common things,  
Attached to a confined familiar world,  
Amid the multitude of her motived plots,  
Her changing actors and her million masks,  
Life was a play monotonously the same.  
There were no vast perspectives of the spirit,  
No swift invasions of unknown delight,  
No golden distances of wide release.  
This petty state resembled our human days  
But fixed to eternity of changeless type,  
A moment's movement doomed to last through Time.  
Existence bridge-like spanned the inconscient gulfs,  
A half-illuminated building in a mist,  
Which from a void of Form arose to sight  
And jutted out into a void of Soul.  
A little light in a great darkness born,  
Life knew not where it went nor whence it came.  
Around all floated still the nescient haze.