

Canto Three

The Debate of Love and Death

A SAD destroying cadence the voice sank;
It seemed to lead the advancing march of Life
Into some still original Inane.
But Savitri answered to almighty Death:
“O dark-browed sophist of the universe
Who veilst the Real with its own Idea,
Hiding with brute objects Nature’s living face,
Masking eternity with thy dance of death,
Thou hast woven the ignorant mind into a screen
And made of Thought error’s purveyor and scribe,
And a false witness of mind’s servant sense.
An aesthete of the sorrow of the world,
Champion of a harsh and sad philosophy
Thou hast used words to shutter out the Light
And called in Truth to vindicate a lie.
A lying reality is falsehood’s crown
And a perverted truth her richest gem.
O Death, thou speakest truth but truth that slays,
I answer to thee with the Truth that saves.
A traveller new-discovering himself,
One made of Matter’s world his starting-point,
He made of Nothingness his living-room
And Night a process of the eternal light
And death a spur towards immortality.
God wrapped his head from sight in Matter’s cowl,
His consciousness dived into inconscient depths,
All-Knowledge seemed a huge dark Nescience;
Infinity wore a boundless zero’s form.
His abysses of bliss became insensible deeps,
Eternity a blank spiritual Vast.
Annulling an original nullity

The Timeless took its ground in emptiness
And drew the figure of a universe,
That the spirit might adventure into Time
And wrestle with adamant Necessity
And the soul pursue a cosmic pilgrimage.
A spirit moved in black immensities
And built a Thought in ancient Nothingness;
A soul was lit in God's tremendous Void,
A secret labouring glow of nascent fire.
In Nihil's gulf his mighty Puissance wrought;
She swung her formless motion into shapes,
Made Matter the body of the Bodiless.
Infant and dim the eternal Might awoke.
In inert Matter breathed a slumbering Life,
In a subconscious Life Mind lay asleep;
In waking Life it stretched its giant limbs
To shake from it the torpor of its drowse;
A senseless substance quivered into sense,
The world's heart commenced to beat, its eyes to see,
In the crowded dumb vibrations of a brain
Thought fumbled in a ring to find itself,
Discovered speech and fed the new-born Word
That bridged with spans of light the world's ignorance.
In waking Mind, the Thinker built his house.
A reasoning animal willed and planned and sought;
He stood erect among his brute compeers,
He built life new, measured the universe,
Opposed his fate and wrestled with unseen Powers,
Conquered and used the laws that rule the world,
And hoped to ride the heavens and reach the stars,
A master of his huge environment.
Now through Mind's windows stares the demigod
Hidden behind the curtains of man's soul:
He has seen the Unknown, looked on Truth's veiless face;
A ray has touched him from the eternal sun;
Motionless, voiceless in foreseeing depths,

He stands awake in Supernature's light
And sees a glory of arisen wings
And sees the vast descending might of God.
 "O Death, thou lookst on an unfinished world
Assailed by thee and of its road unsure,
Peopled by imperfect minds and ignorant lives,
And sayest God is not and all is vain.
How shall the child already be the man?
Because he is infant, shall he never grow?
Because he is ignorant, shall he never learn?
In a small fragile seed a great tree lurks,
In a tiny gene a thinking being is shut;
A little element in a little sperm,
It grows and is a conqueror and a sage.
Then wilt thou spew out, Death, God's mystic truth,
Deny the occult spiritual miracle?
Still wilt thou say there is no spirit, no God?
A mute material Nature wakes and sees;
She has invented speech, unveiled a will.
Something there waits beyond towards which she strives,
Something surrounds her into which she grows:
To uncover the spirit, to change back into God,
To exceed herself is her transcendent task.
In God concealed the world began to be,
Tardily it travels towards manifest God:
Our imperfection towards perfection toils,
The body is the chrysalis of a soul:
The infinite holds the finite in its arms,
Time travels towards revealed eternity.
A miracle structure of the eternal Mage,
Matter its mystery hides from its own eyes,
A scripture written out in cryptic signs,
An occult document of the All-Wonderful's art.
All here bears witness to his secret might,
In all we feel his presence and his power.
A blaze of his sovereign glory is the sun,

A glory is the gold and glimmering moon,
A glory is his dream of purple sky.
A march of his greatness are the wheeling stars.
His laughter of beauty breaks out in green trees,
His moments of beauty triumph in a flower;
The blue sea's chant, the rivulet's wandering voice
Are murmurs falling from the Eternal's harp.
This world is God fulfilled in outwardness.
His ways challenge our reason and our sense;
By blind brute movements of an ignorant Force,
By means we slight as small, obscure or base,
A greatness founded upon little things,
He has built a world in the unknowing Void.
His forms he has massed from infinitesimal dust;
His marvels are built from insignificant things.
If mind is crippled, life untaught and crude,
If brutal masks are there and evil acts,
They are incidents of his vast and varied plot,
His great and dangerous drama's needed steps;
He makes with these and all his passion-play,
A play and yet no play but the deep scheme
Of a transcendent Wisdom finding ways
To meet her Lord in the shadow and the Night:
Above her is the vigil of the stars;
Watched by a solitary Infinitude
She embodies in dumb Matter the Divine,
In symbol minds and lives the Absolute.
A miracle-monger her mechanical craft;
Matter's machine worked out the laws of thought,
Life's engines served the labour of a soul:
The Mighty Mother her creation wrought,
A huge caprice self-bound by iron laws,
And shut God into an enigmatic world:
She lulled the Omniscient into nescient sleep,
Omnipotence on Inertia's back she drove,
Trode perfectly with divine unconscious steps

The enormous circle of her wonder-works.
Immortality assured itself by death;
The Eternal's face was seen through drifts of Time.
His knowledge he disguised as Ignorance,
His Good he sowed in Evil's monstrous bed,
Made error a door by which Truth could enter in,
His plant of bliss watered with Sorrow's tears.
A thousand aspects point back to the One;
A dual Nature covered the Unique.
In this meeting of the Eternal's mingling masques,
This tangle-dance of passionate contraries
Locking like lovers in a forbidden embrace
The quarrel of their lost identity,
Through this wrestle and wrangle of the extremes of Power
Earth's million roads struggled towards deity.
All stumbled on behind a stumbling Guide,
Yet every stumble is a needed pace
On unknown routes to an unknowable goal.
All blundered and straggled towards the One Divine.
As if transmuted by a titan spell
The eternal Powers assumed a dubious face:
Idols of an oblique divinity,
They wore the heads of animal or troll,
Assumed ears of the faun, the satyr's hoof,
Or harboured the demoniac in their gaze:
A crooked maze they made of thinking mind,
They suffered a metamorphosis of the heart,
Admitting bacchant revellers from the Night
Into its sanctuary of delights,
As in a Dionysian masquerade.
On the highways, in the gardens of the world
They wallowed oblivious of their divine parts,
As drunkards of a dire Circean wine
Or a child who sprawls and sports in Nature's mire.
Even wisdom, hewer of the roads of God,
Is a partner in the deep disastrous game:

Lost is the pilgrim's wallet and the scrip,
She fails to read the map and watch the star.
A poor self-righteous virtue is her stock
And reason's pragmatic grope or abstract sight,
Or the technique of a brief hour's success
She teaches, an usher in utility's school.
On the ocean surface of vast Consciousness
Small thoughts in shoals are fished up into a net
But the great truths escape her narrow cast;
Guarded from vision by creation's depths,
Obscure they swim in blind enormous gulfs
Safe from the little sounding leads of mind,
Too far for the puny diver's shallow plunge.
Our mortal vision peers with ignorant eyes;
It has no gaze on the deep heart of things.
Our knowledge walks leaning on Error's staff,
A worshipper of false dogmas and false gods,
Or fanatic of a fierce intolerant creed
Or a seeker doubting every truth he finds,
A sceptic facing Light with adamant No
Or chilling the heart with dry ironic smile,
A cynic stamping out the god in man;
A darkness wallows in the paths of Time
Or lifts its giant head to blot the stars;
It makes a cloud of the interpreting mind
And intercepts the oracles of the Sun.
Yet Light is there; it stands at Nature's doors:
It holds a torch to lead the traveller in.
It waits to be kindled in our secret cells;
It is a star lighting an ignorant sea,
A lamp upon our poop piercing the night.
As knowledge grows Light flames up from within:
It is a shining warrior in the mind,
An eagle of dreams in the divining heart,
An armour in the fight, a bow of God.
Then larger dawns arrive and Wisdom's pomps

Cross through the being's dim half-lighted fields;
Philosophy climbs up Thought's cloud-bank peaks
And Science tears out Nature's occult powers,
Enormous djinns who serve a dwarf's small needs,
Exposes the sealed minutiae of her art
And conquers her by her own captive force.
On heights unreached by mind's most daring soar,
Upon a dangerous edge of failing Time
The soul draws back into its deathless Self;
Man's knowledge becomes God's supernal Ray.
There is the mystic realm whence leaps the power
Whose fire burns in the eyes of seer and sage;
A lightning flash of visionary sight,
It plays upon an inward verge of mind:
Thought silenced gazes into a brilliant Void.
A voice comes down from mystic unseen peaks:
A cry of splendour from a mouth of storm,
It is the voice that speaks to night's profound,
It is the thunder and the flaming call.
Above the planes that climb from nescient earth,
A hand is lifted towards the Invisible's realm,
Beyond the superconscient's blinding line
And plucks away the screens of the Unknown;
A spirit within looks into the Eternal's eyes.
It hears the Word to which our hearts were deaf,
It sees through the blaze in which our thoughts grew blind;
It drinks from the naked breasts of glorious Truth,
It learns the secrets of eternity.
Thus all was plunged into the riddling Night,
Thus all is raised to meet a dazzling Sun.
O Death, this is the mystery of thy reign.
In earth's anomalous and magic field
Carried in its aimless journey by the sun
Mid the forced marches of the great dumb stars,
A darkness occupied the fields of God,
And Matter's world was governed by thy shape.

Thy mask has covered the Eternal's face,
The Bliss that made the world has fallen asleep.
Abandoned in the Vast she slumbered on:
An evil transmutation overtook
Her members till she knew herself no more.
Only through her creative slumber flit
Frail memories of the joy and beauty meant
Under the sky's blue laugh mid green-scarfed trees
And happy squanderings of scents and hues,
In the field of the golden promenade of the sun
And the vigil of the dream-light of the stars,
Amid high meditating heads of hills,
On the bosom of voluptuous rain-kissed earth
And by the sapphire tumbings of the sea.
But now the primal innocence is lost
And Death and Ignorance govern the mortal world
And Nature's visage wears a greyer hue.
Earth still has kept her early charm and grace,
The grandeur and the beauty still are hers,
But veiled is the divine Inhabitant.
The souls of men have wandered from the Light
And the great Mother turns away her face.
The eyes of the creatrix Bliss are closed
And sorrow's touch has found her in her dreams.
As she turns and tosses on her bed of Void,
Because she cannot wake and find herself
And cannot build again her perfect shape,
Oblivious of her nature and her state,
Forgetting her instinct of felicity,
Forgetting to create a world of joy,
She weeps and makes her creatures' eyes to weep;
Testing with sorrow's edge her children's breasts,
She spends on life's vain waste of hope and toil
The poignant luxury of grief and tears.
In the nightmare change of her half-conscious dream,
Tortured herself and torturing by her touch,

She comes to our hearts and bodies and our lives
Wearing a hard and cruel mask of pain.
Our nature twisted by the abortive birth
Returns wry answers to life's questioning shocks,
An acrid relish finds in the world's pangs,
Drinks the sharp wine of grief's perversity.
A curse is laid on the pure joy of life:
Delight, God's sweetest sign and Beauty's twin,
Dreaded by aspiring saint and austere sage,
Is shunned, a dangerous and ambiguous cheat,
A specious trick of an infernal Power
It tempts the soul to its self-hurt and fall.
A puritan God made pleasure a poisonous fruit,
Or red drug in the market-place of Death,
And sin the child of Nature's ecstasy.
Yet every creature hunts for happiness,
Buys with harsh pangs or tears by violence
From the dull breast of the inanimate globe
Some fragment or some broken shard of bliss.
Even joy itself becomes a poisonous draught;
Its hunger is made a dreadful hook of Fate.
All means are held good to catch a single beam,
Eternity sacrificed for a moment's bliss:
Yet for joy and not for sorrow earth was made
And not as a dream in endless suffering Time.
Although God made the world for his delight,
An ignorant Power took charge and seemed his Will
And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.
All grew a play of Chance simulating Fate.

“A secret air of pure felicity
Deep like a sapphire heaven our spirits breathe;
Our hearts and bodies feel its obscure call,
Our senses grope for it and touch and lose.
If this withdrew, the world would sink in the Void;
If this were not, nothing could move or live.

A hidden Bliss is at the root of things.
A mute Delight regards Time's countless works:
To house God's joy in things Space gave wide room,
To house God's joy in self our souls were born.
This universe an old enchantment guards;
Its objects are carved cups of World-Delight
Whose charmed wine is some deep soul's rapture-drink:
The All-Wonderful has packed heaven with his dreams,
He has made blank ancient Space his marvel-house;
He spilled his spirit into Matter's signs:
His fires of grandeur burn in the great sun,
He glides through heaven shimmering in the moon;
He is beauty carolling in the fields of sound;
He chants the stanzas of the odes of Wind;
He is silence watching in the stars at night;
He wakes at dawn and calls from every bough,
Lies stunned in the stone and dreams in flower and tree.
Even in this labour and dolour of Ignorance,
On the hard perilous ground of difficult earth,
In spite of death and evil circumstance
A will to live persists, a joy to be.
There is a joy in all that meets the sense,
A joy in all experience of the soul,
A joy in evil and a joy in good,
A joy in virtue and a joy in sin:
Indifferent to the threat of Karmic law,
Joy dares to grow upon forbidden soil,
Its sap runs through the plant and flowers of Pain:
It thrills with the drama of fate and tragic doom,
It tears its food from sorrow and ecstasy,
On danger and difficulty whets its strength;
It wallows with the reptile and the worm
And lifts its head, an equal of the stars;
It shares the faeries' dance, dines with the gnome:
It basks in the light and heat of many suns,
The sun of Beauty and the sun of Power

Flatter and foster it with golden beams;
It grows towards the Titan and the God.
On earth it lingers drinking its deep fill,
Through the symbol of her pleasure and her pain,
Of the grapes of Heaven and the flowers of the Abyss,
Of the flame-stabs and the torment-craft of Hell
And dim fragments of the glory of Paradise.
In the small paltry pleasures of man's life,
In his petty passions and joys it finds a taste,
A taste in tears and torture of broken hearts,
In the crown of gold and in the crown of thorns,
In life's nectar of sweetness and its bitter wine.
All being it explores for unknown bliss,
Sounds all experience for things new and strange.
Life brings into the earthly creature's days
A tongue of glory from a brighter sphere:
It deepens in his musings and his Art,
It leaps at the splendour of some perfect word,
It exults in his high resolves and noble deeds,
Wanders in his errors, dares the abyss's brink,
It climbs in his climbings, wallows in his fall.
Angel and demon brides his chamber share,
Possessors or competitors for life's heart.
To the enjoyer of the cosmic scene
His greatness and his littleness equal are,
His magnanimity and meanness hues
Cast on some neutral background of the gods:
The Artist's skill he admires who planned it all.
But not for ever endures this danger game:
Beyond the earth, but meant for delivered earth,
Wisdom and joy prepare their perfect crown;
Truth superhuman calls to thinking man.
At last the soul turns to eternal things,
In every shrine it cries for the clasp of God.
Then is there played the crowning Mystery,
Then is achieved the longed-for miracle.

Immortal Bliss her wide celestial eyes
Opens on the stars, she stirs her mighty limbs;
Time thrills to the sapphics of her amour-song
And Space fills with a white beatitude.
Then leaving to its grief the human heart,
Abandoning speech and the name-determined realms,
Through a gleaming far-seen sky of wordless thought,
Through naked thought-free heavens of absolute sight,
She climbs to the summits where the unborn Idea
Remembering the future that must be
Looks down upon the works of labouring Force,
Immutable above the world it made.
In the vast golden laughter of Truth's sun
Like a great heaven-bird on a motionless sea
Is poised her winged ardour of creative joy
On the still deep of the Eternal's peace.
This was the aim, this the supernal Law,
Nature's allotted task when beauty-drenched
In dim mist-waters of inconscient sleep,
Out of the Void this grand creation rose, —
For this the Spirit came into the Abyss
And charged with its power Matter's unknowing force,
In Night's bare session to cathedral Light,
In Death's realm repatriate immortality.
A mystic slow transfiguration works.
All our earth starts from mud and ends in sky,
And Love that was once an animal's desire,
Then a sweet madness in the rapturous heart,
An ardent comradeship in the happy mind,
Becomes a wide spiritual yearning's space.
A lonely soul passions for the Alone,
The heart that loved man thrills to the love of God,
A body is his chamber and his shrine.
Then is our being rescued from separateness;
All is itself, all is new-felt in God:
A Lover leaning from his cloister's door

Gathers the whole world into his single breast.
Then shall the business fail of Night and Death:
When unity is won, when strife is lost
And all is known and all is clasped by Love
Who would turn back to ignorance and pain?

“O Death, I have triumphed over thee within;
I quiver no more with the assault of grief;
A mighty calmness seated deep within
Has occupied my body and my sense:
It takes the world’s grief and transmutes to strength,
It makes the world’s joy one with the joy of God.
My love eternal sits throned on God’s calm;
For Love must soar beyond the very heavens
And find its secret sense ineffable;
It must change its human ways to ways divine,
Yet keep its sovereignty of earthly bliss.
O Death, not for my heart’s sweet poignancy
Nor for my happy body’s bliss alone
I have claimed from thee the living Satyavan,
But for his work and mine, our sacred charge.
Our lives are God’s messengers beneath the stars;
To dwell under death’s shadow they have come
Tempting God’s light to earth for the ignorant race,
His love to fill the hollow in men’s hearts,
His bliss to heal the unhappiness of the world.
For I, the woman, am the force of God,
He the Eternal’s delegate soul in man.
My will is greater than thy law, O Death;
My love is stronger than the bonds of Fate:
Our love is the heavenly seal of the Supreme.
I guard that seal against thy rending hands.
Love must not cease to live upon the earth;
For Love is the bright link twixt earth and heaven,
Love is the far Transcendent’s angel here;
Love is man’s lien on the Absolute.”
But to the woman Death the god replied,

With the ironic laughter of his voice
Discouraging the labour of the stars:
“Even so men cheat the Truth with splendid thoughts.
Thus wilt thou hire the glorious charlatan, Mind,
To weave from his Ideal’s gossamer air
A fine raiment for thy body’s nude desires
And thy heart’s clutching greedy passion clothe?
Daub not the web of life with magic hues:
Make rather thy thought a plain and faithful glass
Reflecting Matter and mortality,
And know thy soul a product of the flesh,
A made-up self in a constructed world.
Thy words are large murmurs in a mystic dream.
For how in the soiled heart of man could dwell
The immaculate grandeur of thy dream-built God,
Or who can see a face and form divine
In the naked two-legged worm thou callest man?
O human face, put off mind-painted masks:
The animal be, the worm that Nature meant;
Accept thy futile birth, thy narrow life.
For truth is bare like stone and hard like death;
Bare in the bareness, hard with truth’s hardness live.”
But Savitri replied to the dire God:
“Yes, I am human. Yet shall man by me,
Since in humanity waits his hour the God,
Trample thee down to reach the immortal heights,
Transcending grief and pain and fate and death.
Yes, my humanity is a mask of God:
He dwells in me, the mover of my acts,
Turning the great wheel of his cosmic work.
I am the living body of his light,
I am the thinking instrument of his power,
I incarnate Wisdom in an earthly breast,
I am his conquering and unslayable will.
The formless Spirit drew in me its shape;
In me are the Nameless and the secret Name.”

Death from the incredulous Darkness sent its cry:
“O priestess in Imagination’s house,
Persuade first Nature’s fixed immutable laws
And make the impossible thy daily work.
How canst thou force to wed two eternal foes?
Irreconcilable in their embrace
They cancel the glory of their pure extremes:
An unhappy wedlock maims their stunted force.
How shall thy will make one the true and false?
Where Matter is all, there Spirit is a dream:
If all are the Spirit, Matter is a lie,
And who was the liar who forged the universe?
The Real with the unreal cannot mate.
He who would turn to God, must leave the world;
He who would live in the Spirit, must give up life;
He who has met the Self, renounces self.
The voyagers of the million routes of mind
Who have travelled through Existence to its end,
Sages exploring the world-ocean’s vasts,
Have found extinction the sole harbour safe.
Two only are the doors of man’s escape,
Death of his body Matter’s gate to peace,
Death of his soul his last felicity.
In me all take refuge, for I, Death, am God.”
But Savitri replied to mighty Death:
“My heart is wiser than the Reason’s thoughts,
My heart is stronger than thy bonds, O Death.
It sees and feels the one Heart beat in all,
It feels the high Transcendent’s sunlike hands,
It sees the cosmic Spirit at its work;
In the dim Night it lies alone with God.
My heart’s strength can carry the grief of the universe
And never falter from its luminous track,
Its white tremendous orbit through God’s peace.
It can drink up the sea of All-Delight
And never lose the white spiritual touch,

The calm that broods in the deep Infinite.”
He said, “Art thou indeed so strong, O heart,
O soul, so free? And canst thou gather then
Bright pleasure from my wayside flowering boughs,
Yet falter not from thy hard journey’s goal,
Meet the world’s dangerous touch and never fall?
Show me thy strength and freedom from my laws.”
But Savitri answered, “Surely I shall find
Among the green and whispering woods of Life
Close-bosomed pleasures, only mine since his,
Or mine for him, because our joys are one.
And if I linger, Time is ours and God’s,
And if I fall, is not his hand near mine?
All is a single plan; each wayside act
Deepens the soul’s response, brings nearer the goal.”
Death the contemptuous Nihil answered her:
“So prove thy absolute force to the wise gods,
By choosing earthly joy! For self demand
And yet from self and its gross masks live free.
Then will I give thee all thy soul desires,
All the brief joys earth keeps for mortal hearts.
Only the one dearest wish that outweighs all,
Hard laws forbid and thy ironic fate.
My will once wrought remains unchanged through Time,
And Satyavan can never again be thine.”
But Savitri replied to the vague Power:
“If the eyes of Darkness can look straight at Truth,
Look in my heart and, knowing what I am,
Give what thou wilt or what thou must, O Death.
Nothing I claim but Satyavan alone.”
There was a hush as if of doubtful fates.
As one disdainful still who yields a point
Death bowed his sovereign head in cold assent:
“I give to thee, saved from death and poignant fate
Whatever once the living Satyavan
Desired in his heart for Savitri.

Bright noons I give thee and unwounded dawns,
Daughters of thy own shape in heart and mind,
Fair hero sons and sweetness undisturbed
Of union with thy husband dear and true.
And thou shalt harvest in thy joyful house
Felicity of thy surrounded eves.
Love shall bind by thee many gathered hearts.
The opposite sweetness in thy days shall meet
Of tender service to thy life's desired
And loving empire over all thy loved,
Two poles of bliss made one, O Savitri.
Return, O child, to thy forsaken earth.”
But Savitri replied, “Thy gifts resist.
Earth cannot flower if lonely I return.”
Then Death sent forth once more his angry cry,
As chides a lion his escaping prey:
“What knowst thou of earth's rich and changing life
Who thinkst that one man dead all joy must cease?
Hope not to be unhappy till the end:
For grief dies soon in the tired human heart;
Soon other guests the empty chambers fill.
A transient painting on a holiday's floor
Traced for a moment's beauty love was made.
Or if a voyager on the eternal trail,
Its objects fluent change in its embrace
Like waves to a swimmer upon infinite seas.”
But Savitri replied to the vague god,
“Give me back Satyavan, my only lord.
Thy thoughts are vacant to my soul that feels
The deep eternal truth in transient things.”
Death answered her, “Return and try thy soul!
Soon shalt thou find appeased that other men
On lavish earth have beauty, strength and truth,
And when thou hast half forgotten, one of these
Shall wind himself around thy heart that needs
Some human answering heart against thy breast;

For who, being mortal, can dwell glad alone?
Then Satyavan shall glide into the past,
A gentle memory pushed away from thee
By new love and thy children's tender hands,
Till thou shalt wonder if thou lov'dst at all.
Such is the life earth's travail has conceived,
A constant stream that never is the same."
But Savitri replied to mighty Death:
"O dark ironic critic of God's work,
Thou mockst the mind and body's faltering search
For what the heart holds in a prophet hour
And the immortal spirit shall make its own.
Mine is a heart that worshipped, though forsaken,
The image of the god its love adored;
I have burned in flame to travel in his steps.
Are we not they who bore vast solitude
Seated upon the hills alone with God?
Why dost thou vainly strive with me, O Death,
A mind delivered from all twilight thoughts,
To whom the secrets of the gods are plain?
For now at last I know beyond all doubt,
The great stars burn with my unceasing fire
And life and death are both its fuel made.
Life only was my blind attempt to love:
Earth saw my struggle, heaven my victory;
All shall be seized, transcended; there shall kiss
Casting their veils before the marriage fire
The eternal bridegroom and eternal bride.
The heavens accept our broken flights at last.
On our life's prow that breaks the waves of Time
No signal light of hope has gleamed in vain."
She spoke; the boundless members of the god
As if by secret ecstasy assailed,
Shuddered in silence as obscurely stir
Ocean's dim fields delivered to the moon.
Then lifted up as by a sudden wind

Around her in that vague and glimmering world
The twilight trembled like a bursting veil.

Thus with armed speech the great opponents strove.

Around those spirits in the glittering mist
A deepening half-light fled with pearly wings
As if to reach some far ideal Morn.

Outlined her thoughts flew through the gleaming haze
Mingling bright-pinioned with its lights and veils
And all her words like dazzling jewels were caught
Into the glow of a mysterious world,
Or tricked in the rainbow shifting of its hues
Like echoes swam fainting into far sound.

All utterance, all mood must there become
An unenduring tissue sewn by mind
To make a gossamer robe of beautiful change.

Intent upon her silent will she walked
On the dim grass of vague unreal plains,
A floating veil of visions in her front,
A trailing robe of dreams behind her feet.
But now her spirit's flame of conscient force
Retiring from a sweetness without fruit
Called back her thoughts from speech to sit within
In a deep room in meditation's house.

For only there could dwell the soul's firm truth:
Imperishable, a tongue of sacrifice,
It flamed unquenched upon the central hearth
Where burns for the high houselord and his mate
The homestead's sentinel and witness fire
From which the altars of the gods are lit.

All still compelled went gliding on unchanged,
Still was the order of these worlds reversed:
The mortal led, the god and spirit obeyed
And she behind was leader of their march
And they in front were followers of her will.
Onward they journeyed through the drifting ways
Vaguely companioned by the glimmering mists.

But faster now all fled as if perturbed
Escaping from the clearness of her soul.
A heaven-bird upon jewelled wings of wind
Borne like a coloured and embosomed fire,
By spirits carried in a pearl-hued cave,
On through the enchanted dimness moved her soul.
Death walked in front of her and Satyavan,
In the dark front of Death, a failing star.
Above was the unseen balance of his fate.

END OF CANTO THREE