

Canto Seven

*The Discovery of the Cosmic Spirit
and the Cosmic Consciousness*

IN THE little hermitage in the forest's heart,
In the sunlight and the moonlight and the dark
The daily human life went plodding on
Even as before with its small unchanging works
And its spare outward body of routine
And happy quiet of ascetic peace.
The old beauty smiled of the terrestrial scene;
She too was her old gracious self to men.
The Ancient Mother clutched her child to her breast
Pressing her close in her environing arms,
As if earth ever the same could for ever keep
The living spirit and body in her clasp,
As if death were not there nor end nor change.
Accustomed only to read outward signs
None saw aught new in her, none divined her state;
They saw a person where was only God's vast,
A still being or a mighty nothingness.
To all she was the same perfect Savitri:
A greatness and a sweetness and a light
Poured out from her upon her little world.
Life showed to all the same familiar face,
Her acts followed the old unaltered round,
She spoke the words that she was wont to speak
And did the things that she had always done.
Her eyes looked out on earth's unchanging face,
Around her soul's muteness all moved as of old;
A vacant consciousness watched from within,
Empty of all but bare Reality.
There was no will behind the word and act,
No thought formed in her brain to guide the speech:

An impersonal emptiness walked and spoke in her,
Something perhaps unfelt, unseen, unknown
Guarded the body for its future work,
Or Nature moved in her old stream of force.
Perhaps she bore made conscious in her breast
The miraculous Nihil, origin of our souls
And source and sum of the vast world's events,
The womb and grave of thought, a cipher of God,
A zero circle of being's totality.
It used her speech and acted in her acts,
It was beauty in her limbs, life in her breath;
The original Mystery wore her human face.
Thus was she lost within to separate self;
Her mortal ego perished in God's night.
Only a body was left, the ego's shell
Afloat mid drift and foam of the world-sea,
A sea of dream watched by a motionless sense
In a figure of unreal reality.
An impersonal foresight could already see, —
In the unthinking knowledge of the spirit
Even now it seemed nigh done, inevitable, —
The individual die, the cosmos pass;
These gone, the transcendental grew a myth,
The Holy Ghost without the Father and Son,
Or, a substratum of what once had been,
Being that never willed to bear a world
Restored to its original loneliness,
Impassive, sole, silent, intangible.
Yet all was not extinct in this deep loss;
The being travelled not towards nothingness.
There was some high surpassing Secrecy,
And when she sat alone with Satyavan,
Her moveless mind with his that searched and strove,
In the hush of the profound and intimate night
She turned to the face of a veiled voiceless Truth
Hid in the dumb recesses of the heart

Or waiting beyond the last peak climbed by Thought, —
Unseen itself it sees the struggling world
And prompts our quest, but cares not to be found, —
Out of that distant Vast came a reply.
Something unknown, unreached, inscrutable
Sent down the messages of its bodiless Light,
Cast lightning flashes of a thought not ours
Crossing the immobile silence of her mind:
In its might of irresponsible sovereignty
It seized on speech to give those flamings shape,
Made beat the heart of wisdom in a word
And spoke immortal things through mortal lips.
Or, listening to the sages of the woods,
In question and in answer broke from her
High strange revealings impossible to men,
Something or someone secret and remote
Took hold of her body for his mystic use,
Her mouth was seized to channel ineffable truths,
Knowledge unthinkable found an utterance.
Astonished by a new enlightenment,
Invaded by a streak of the Absolute,
They marvelled at her, for she seemed to know
What they had only glimpsed at times afar.
These thoughts were formed not in her listening brain,
Her vacant heart was like a stringless harp;
Impassive the body claimed not its own voice,
But let the luminous greatness through it pass.
A dual Power at being's occult poles
Still acted, nameless and invisible:
Her divine emptiness was their instrument.
Inconscient Nature dealt with the world it had made,
And using still the body's instruments
Slipped through the conscious void she had become;
The superconscient Mystery through that Void
Missioned its word to touch the thoughts of men.
As yet this great impersonal speech was rare.

But now the unmoving wide spiritual space
In which her mind survived tranquil and bare,
Admitted a traveller from the cosmic breadths:
A thought came through draped as an outer voice.
It called not for the witness of the mind,
It spoke not to the hushed receiving heart;
It came direct to the pure perception's seat,
An only centre now of consciousness,
If centre could be where all seemed only space;
No more shut in by body's walls and gates
Her being, a circle without circumference,
Already now surpassed all cosmic bounds
And more and more spread into infinity.
This being was its own unbounded world,
A world without form or feature or circumstance;
It had no ground, no wall, no roof of thought,
Yet saw itself and looked on all around
In a silence motionless and illimitable.
There was no person there, no centred mind,
No seat of feeling on which beat events
Or objects wrought and shaped reaction's stress.
There was no motion in this inner world,
All was a still and even infinity.
In her the Unseen, the Unknown waited his hour.

But now she sat by sleeping Satyavan,
Awake within, and the enormous Night
Surrounded her with the Unknowable's vast.
A voice began to speak from her own heart
That was not hers, yet mastered thought and sense.
As it spoke all changed within her and without;
All was, all lived; she felt all being one;
The world of unreality ceased to be:
There was no more a universe built by mind,
Convicted as a structure or a sign;
A spirit, a being saw created things

And cast itself into unnumbered forms
And was what it saw and made; all now became
An evidence of one stupendous truth,
A Truth in which negation had no place,
A being and a living consciousness,
A stark and absolute Reality.
There the unreal could not find a place,
The sense of unreality was slain:
There all was conscious, made of the Infinite,
All had a substance of Eternity.
Yet this was the same Indecipherable;
It seemed to cast from it universe like a dream
Vanishing for ever into an original Void.
But this was no more some vague ubiquitous point
Or a cipher of vastness in unreal Nought.
It was the same but now no more seemed far
To the living clasp of her recovered soul.
It was her self, it was the self of all,
It was the reality of existing things,
It was the consciousness of all that lived
And felt and saw; it was Timelessness and Time,
It was the Bliss of formlessness and form.
It was all Love and the one Beloved's arms,
It was sight and thought in one all-seeing Mind,
It was joy of Being on the peaks of God.
She passed beyond Time into eternity,
Slipped out of space and became the Infinite;
Her being rose into unreachable heights
And found no end of its journey in the Self.
It plunged into the unfathomable deeps
And found no end to the silent mystery
That held all world within one lonely breast,
Yet harboured all creation's multitudes.
She was all vastness and one measureless point,
She was a height beyond heights, a depth beyond depths,
She lived in the everlasting and was all

That harbours death and bears the wheeling hours.
All contraries were true in one huge spirit
Surpassing measure, change and circumstance.
An individual, one with cosmic self
In the heart of the Transcendent's miracle
And the secret of World-personality
Was the creator and the lord of all.
Mind was a single innumerable look
Upon himself and all that he became.
Life was his drama and the Vast a stage,
The universe was his body, God its soul.
All was one single immense reality,
All its innumerable phenomenon.

Her spirit saw the world as living God;
It saw the One and knew that all was He.
She knew him as the Absolute's self-space,
One with her self and ground of all things here
In which the world wanders seeking for the Truth
Guarded behind its face of ignorance:
She followed him through the march of endless Time.
All Nature's happenings were events in her,
The heart-beats of the cosmos were her own,
All beings thought and felt and moved in her;
She inhabited the vastness of the world,
Its distances were her nature's boundaries,
Its closenesses her own life's intimacies.
Her mind became familiar with its mind,
Its body was her body's larger frame
In which she lived and knew herself in it
One, multitudinous in its multitudes.
She was a single being, yet all things;
The world was her spirit's wide circumference,
The thoughts of others were her intimates,
Their feelings close to her universal heart,
Their bodies her many bodies kin to her;
She was no more herself but all the world.

Out of the infinitudes all came to her,
Into the infinitudes sentient she spread,
Infinity was her own natural home.
Nowhere she dwelt, her spirit was everywhere,
The distant constellations wheeled round her;
Earth saw her born, all worlds were her colonies,
The greater worlds of life and mind were hers;
All Nature reproduced her in its lines,
Its movements were large copies of her own.
She was the single self of all these selves,
She was in them and they were all in her.
This first was an immense identity
In which her own identity was lost:
What seemed herself was an image of the Whole.
She was a subconscious life of tree and flower,
The outbreak of the honied buds of spring;
She burned in the passion and splendour of the rose,
She was the red heart of the passion-flower,
The dream-white of the lotus in its pool.
Out of subconscious life she climbed to mind,
She was thought and the passion of the world's heart,
She was the godhead hid in the heart of man,
She was the climbing of his soul to God.
The cosmos flowered in her, she was its bed.
She was Time and the dreams of God in Time;
She was Space and the wideness of his days.
From this she rose where Time and Space were not;
The superconscient was her native air,
Infinity was her movement's natural space;
Eternity looked out from her on Time.

END OF CANTO SEVEN
END OF BOOK SEVEN