

Canto Three

The House of the Spirit and the New Creation

A MIGHTIER task remained than all he had done.
To That he turned from which all being comes,
A sign attending from the Secrecy
Which knows the Truth ungrasped behind our thoughts
And guards the world with its all-seeing gaze.
In the unapproachable stillness of his soul,
Intense, one-pointed, monumental, lone,
Patient he sat like an incarnate hope
Motionless on a pedestal of prayer.
A strength he sought that was not yet on earth,
Help from a Power too great for mortal will,
The light of a Truth now only seen afar,
A sanction from his high omnipotent Source.
But from the appalling heights there stooped no voice;
The timeless lids were closed; no opening came.
A neutral helpless void oppressed the years.
In the texture of our bound humanity
He felt the stark resistance huge and dumb
Of our inconscient and unseeing base,
The stubborn mute rejection in life's depths,
The ignorant No in the origin of things.
A veiled collaboration with the Night
Even in himself survived and hid from his view:
Still something in his earthly being kept
Its kinship with the Inconscient whence it came.
A shadowy unity with a vanished past
Treasured in an old-world frame was lurking there,
Secret, unnoted by the illumined mind,
And in subconscious whispers and in dream
Still murmured at the mind's and spirit's choice.
Its treacherous elements spread like slippery grains

Hoping the incoming Truth might stumble and fall,
And old ideal voices wandering moaned
And pleaded for a heavenly leniency
To the gracious imperfections of our earth
And the sweet weaknesses of our mortal state.
This now he willed to discover and exile,
The element in him betraying God.
All Nature's recondite spaces were stripped bare,
All her dim crypts and corners searched with fire
Where refugee instincts and unshaped revolts
Could shelter find in darkness' sanctuary
Against the white purity of heaven's cleansing flame.
All seemed to have perished that was undivine:
Yet some minutest dissident might escape
And still a centre lurk of the blind force.
For the Inconscient too is infinite;
The more its abysses we insist to sound,
The more it stretches, stretches endlessly.
Then lest a human cry should spoil the Truth
He tore desire up from its bleeding roots
And offered to the gods the vacant place.
Thus could he bear the touch immaculate.
A last and mightiest transformation came.
His soul was all in front like a great sea
Flooding the mind and body with its waves;
His being, spread to embrace the universe,
United the within and the without
To make of life a cosmic harmony,
An empire of the immanent Divine.
In this tremendous universality
Not only his soul-nature and mind-sense
Included every soul and mind in his,
But even the life of flesh and nerve was changed
And grew one flesh and nerve with all that lives;
He felt the joy of others as his joy,
He bore the grief of others as his grief;

His universal sympathy upbore,
Immense like ocean, the creation's load
As earth upbears all beings' sacrifice,
Thrilled with the hidden Transcendent's joy and peace.
There was no more division's endless scroll;
One grew the Spirit's secret unity,
All Nature felt again the single bliss.
There was no cleavage between soul and soul,
There was no barrier between world and God.
Overpowered were form and memory's limiting line;
The covering mind was seized and torn apart;
It was dissolved and now no more could be,
The one Consciousness that made the world was seen;
All now was luminosity and force.
Abolished in its last thin fainting trace
The circle of the little self was gone;
The separate being could no more be felt;
It disappeared and knew itself no more,
Lost in the spirit's wide identity.
His nature grew a movement of the All,
Exploring itself to find that all was He,
His soul was a delegation of the All
That turned from itself to join the one Supreme.
Transcended was the human formula;
Man's heart that had obscured the Inviolable
Assumed the mighty beating of a god's;
His seeking mind ceased in the Truth that knows;
His life was a flow of the universal life.
He stood fulfilled on the world's highest line
Awaiting the ascent beyond the world,
Awaiting the descent the world to save.
A Splendour and a Symbol wrapped the earth,
Serene epiphanies looked and hallowed vasts
Surrounded, wise infinitudes were close
And bright remotenesses leaned near and kin.
Sense failed in that tremendous lucency;

Ephemeral voices from his hearing fell
And Thought potent no more sank large and pale
Like a tired god into mysterious seas.
The robes of mortal thinking were cast down
Leaving his knowledge bare to absolute sight;
Fate's driving ceased and Nature's sleepless spur:
The athlete heavings of the will were stilled
In the Omnipotent's unmoving peace.
Life in his members lay down vast and mute;
Naked, unwalled, unterrified it bore
The immense regard of Immortality.
The last movement died and all at once grew still.
A weight that was the unseen Transcendent's hand
Laid on his limbs the Spirit's measureless seal,
Infinity swallowed him into shoreless trance.

As one who sets his sail towards mystiered shores
Driven through huge oceans by the breath of God,
The fathomless below, the unknown around,
His soul abandoned the blind star-field, Space.
Afar from all that makes the measured world,
Plunging to hidden eternities it withdrew
Back from mind's foaming surface to the Vasts
Voiceless within us in omniscient sleep.
Above the imperfect reach of word and thought,
Beyond the sight that seeks support of form,
Lost in deep tracts of superconscient Light,
Or voyaging in blank featureless Nothingness,
Sole in the trackless Incommensurable,
Or past not-self and self and selflessness,
Transgressing the dream-shores of conscious mind
He reached at last his sempiternal base.
On sorrowless heights no winging cry disturbs,
Pure and untouched above this mortal play
Is spread the spirit's hushed immobile air.
There no beginning is and there no end;

There is the stable force of all that moves;
There the aeonic labourer is at rest.
There turns no keyed creation in the void,
No giant mechanism watched by a soul;
There creaks no fate-turned huge machinery;
The marriage of evil with good within one breast,
The clash of strife in the very clasp of love,
The dangerous pain of life's experiment
In the values of Inconsequence and Chance,
The peril of mind's gamble, throwing our lives
As stake in a wager of indifferent gods
And the shifting lights and shadows of the idea
Falling upon the surface consciousness,
And in the dream of a mute witness soul
Creating the error of a half-seen world
Where knowledge is a seeking ignorance,
Life's steps a stumbling series without suit,
Its aspect of fortuitous design,
Its equal measure of the true and false
In that immobile and immutable realm
Find no access, no cause, no right to live:
There only reigns the spirit's motionless power
Poised in itself through still eternity
And its omniscient and omnipotent peace.
Thought clashes not with thought and truth with truth,
There is no war of right with rival right;
There are no stumbling and half-seeing lives
Passing from chance to unexpected chance,
No suffering of hearts compelled to beat
In bodies of the inert Inconscient's make.
Armed with the immune occult unsinking Fire
The guardians of Eternity keep its law
For ever fixed upon Truth's giant base
In her magnificent and termless home.
There Nature on her dumb spiritual couch
Immutably transcendent knows her source

And to the stir of multitudinous worlds
Assents unmoved in a perpetual calm.
All-causing, all-sustaining and aloof,
The Witness looks from his unshaken poise,
An Eye immense regarding all things done.
Apart, at peace above creation's stir,
Immersed in the eternal altitudes,
He abode defended in his shoreless self,
Companioned only by the all-seeing One.
A Mind too mighty to be bound by Thought,
A Life too boundless for the play in Space,
A Soul without borders unconvinced of Time,
He felt the extinction of the world's long pain,
He became the unborn Self that never dies,
He joined the sessions of Infinity.
On the cosmic murmur primal loneliness fell,
Annulled was the contact formed with time-born things,
Empty grew Nature's wide community.
All things were brought back to their formless seed,
The world was silent for a cyclic hour.
Although the afflicted Nature he had left
Maintained beneath him her broad numberless fields,
Her enormous act, receding, failed remote
As if a soulless dream at last had ceased.
No voice came down from the high Silences,
None answered from her desolate solitudes.
A stillness of cessation reigned, the wide
Immortal hush before the gods are born;
A universal Force awaited, mute,
The veiled Transcendent's ultimate decree.

Then suddenly there came a downward look.
As if a sea exploring its own depths,
A living Oneness widened at its core
And joined him to unnumbered multitudes.
A Bliss, a Light, a Power, a flame-white Love

Caught all into a sole immense embrace;
Existence found its truth on Oneness' breast
And each became the self and space of all.
The great world-rhythms were heart-beats of one Soul,
To feel was a flame-discovery of God,
All mind was a single harp of many strings,
All life a song of many meeting lives;
For worlds were many, but the Self was one.
This knowledge now was made a cosmos' seed:
This seed was cased in the safety of the Light,
It needed not a sheath of Ignorance.
Then from the trance of that tremendous clasp
And from the throbbings of that single Heart
And from the naked Spirit's victory
A new and marvellous creation rose.
Incalculable outflowing infinitudes
Laughing out an unmeasured happiness
Lived their innumerable unity;
Worlds where the being is unbound and wide
Bodied unthinkably the egoless Self;
Rapture of beatific energies
Joined Time to the Timeless, poles of a single joy;
White vasts were seen where all is wrapped in all.
There were no contraries, no sundered parts,
All by spiritual links were joined to all
And bound indissolubly to the One:
Each was unique, but took all lives as his own,
And, following out these tones of the Infinite,
Recognised in himself the universe.
A splendid centre of infinity's whirl
Pushed to its zenith's height, its last expanse,
Felt the divinity of its own self-bliss
Repeated in its numberless other selves:
It took up tirelessly into its scope
Persons and figures of the Impersonal,
As if prolonging in a ceaseless count,

In a rapturous multiplication's sum,
The recurring decimals of eternity.
None was apart, none lived for himself alone,
Each lived for God in him and God in all,
Each soleness inexpressibly held the whole.
There Oneness was not tied to monotone;
It showed a thousand aspects of itself,
Its calm immutable stability
Upbore on a changeless ground for ever safe,
Compelled to a spontaneous servitude,
The ever-changing incalculable steps,
The seeming-reckless dance's subtle plan
Of immense world-forces in their perfect play.
Appearance looked back to its hidden truth
And made of difference oneness' smiling play;
It made all persons fractions of the Unique,
Yet all were being's secret integers.
All struggle was turned to a sweet strife of love
In the harmonised circle of a sure embrace.
Identity's reconciling happiness gave
A rich security to difference.
On a meeting line of hazardous extremes
The game of games was played to its breaking-point,
Where through self-finding by divine self-loss
There leaps out unity's supreme delight
Whose blissful undivided sweetness feels
A communality of the Absolute.
There was no sob of suffering anywhere;
Experience ran from point to point of joy:
Bliss was the pure undying truth of things.
All Nature was a conscious front of God:
A wisdom worked in all, self-moved, self-sure,
A plenitude of illimitable Light,
An authenticity of intuitive Truth,
A glory and passion of creative Force.
Infallible, leaping from eternity,

The moment's thought inspired the passing act.
A word, a laughter, sprang from Silence' breast,
A rhythm of Beauty in the calm of Space,
A knowledge in the fathomless heart of Time.
All turned to all without reserve's recoil:
A single ecstasy without a break,
Love was a close and thrilled identity
In the throbbing heart of all that luminous life.
A universal vision that unites,
A sympathy of nerve replying to nerve,
Hearing that listens to thought's inner sound
And follows the rhythmic meanings of the heart,
A touch that needs not hands to feel, to clasp,
Were there the native means of consciousness
And heightened the intimacy of soul with soul.
A grand orchestra of spiritual powers,
A diapason of soul-interchange
Harmonised a Oneness deep, immeasurable.
In these new worlds projected he became
A portion of the universal gaze,
A station of the all-inhabiting light,
A ripple on a single sea of peace.
His mind answered to countless communing minds,
His words were syllables of the cosmos' speech,
His life a field of the vast cosmic stir.
He felt the footsteps of a million wills
Moving in unison to a single goal.
A stream ever new-born that never dies,
Caught in its thousandfold current's ravishing flow,
With eddies of immortal sweetness thrilled,
He bore coiling through his members as they passed
Calm movements of interminable delight,
The bliss of a myriad myriads who are one.

In this vast outbreak of perfection's law
Imposing its fixity on the flux of things

He saw a hierarchy of lucent planes
Enfeoffed to this highest kingdom of God-state.
Attuning to one Truth their own right rule
Each housed the gladness of a bright degree,
Alone in beauty, perfect in self-kind,
An image cast by one deep truth's absolute,
Married to all in happy difference.
Each gave its powers to help its neighbours' parts,
But suffered no diminution by the gift;
Profiteers of a mystic interchange,
They grew by what they took and what they gave,
All others they felt as their own complements,
One in the might and joy of multitude.
Even in the poise where Oneness draws apart
To feel the rapture of its separate selves,
The Sole in its solitude yearned towards the All
And the Many turned to look back at the One.
An all-revealing all-creating Bliss,
Seeking for forms to manifest truths divine,
Aligned in their significant mystery
The gleams of the symbols of the Ineffable
Blazoned like hues upon a colourless air
On the white purity of the Witness Soul.
These hues were the very prism of the Supreme,
His beauty, power, delight creation's cause.
A vast Truth-Consciousness took up these signs
To pass them on to some divine child Heart
That looked on them with laughter and delight
And joyed in these transcendent images
Living and real as the truths they house.
The Spirit's white neutrality became
A playground of miracles, a rendezvous
For the secret powers of a mystic Timelessness:
It made of Space a marvel house of God,
It poured through Time its works of ageless might,
Unveiled seen as a luring rapturous face

The wonder and beauty of its Love and Force.
The eternal Goddess moved in her cosmic house
Sporting with God as a Mother with her child:
To him the universe was her bosom of love,
His toys were the immortal verities.
All here self-lost had there its divine place.
The Powers that here betray our hearts and err,
Were there sovereign in truth, perfect in joy,
Masters in a creation without flaw,
Possessors of their own infinitude.
There Mind, a splendid sun of vision's rays,
Shaped substance by the glory of its thoughts
And moved amidst the grandeur of its dreams.
Imagination's great ensorcelling rod
Summoned the unknown and gave to it a home,
Outspread luxuriantly in golden air
Truth's iris-coloured wings of fantasy,
Or sang to the intuitive heart of joy
Wonder's dream-notes that bring the Real close.
Its power that makes the unknowable near and true,
In the temple of the ideal shrined the One:
It peopled thought and mind and happy sense
Filled with bright aspects of the might of God
And living persons of the one Supreme,
The speech that voices the ineffable,
The ray revealing unseen Presences,
The virgin forms through which the Formless shines,
The Word that ushers divine experience
And the Ideas that crowd the Infinite.
There was no gulf between the thought and fact,
Ever they replied like bird to calling bird;
The will obeyed the thought, the act the will.
There was a harmony woven twixt soul and soul.
A marriage with eternity divinised Time.
There Life pursued, unwearied of her sport,
Joy in her heart and laughter on her lips,

The bright adventure of God's game of chance.
In her ingenious ardour of caprice,
In her transfiguring mirth she mapped on Time
A fascinating puzzle of events,
Lured at each turn by new vicissitudes
To self-discovery that could never cease.
Ever she framed stark bonds for the will to break,
Brought new creations for the thought's surprise
And passionate ventures for the heart to dare,
Where Truth recurred with an unexpected face
Or else repeated old familiar joy
Like the return of a delightful rhyme.
At hide-and-seek on a Mother-Wisdom's breast,
An artist teeming with her world-idea,
She never could exhaust its numberless thoughts
And vast adventure into thinking shapes
And trial and lure of a new living's dreams.
Untired of sameness and untired of change,
Endlessly she unrolled her moving act,
A mystery drama of divine delight,
A living poem of world-ecstasy,
A kakemono of significant forms,
A coiled perspective of developing scenes,
A brilliant chase of self-revealing shapes,
An ardent hunt of soul looking for soul,
A seeking and a finding as of gods.
There Matter is the Spirit's firm density,
An artistry of glad outwardness of self,
A treasure-house of lasting images
Where sense can build a world of pure delight:
The home of a perpetual happiness,
It lodged the hours as in a pleasant inn.
The senses there were outlets of the soul;
Even the youngest child-thought of the mind
Incarnated some touch of highest things.
There substance was a resonant harp of self,

A net for the constant lightnings of the spirit,
A magnet power of love's intensity
Whose yearning throb and adoration's cry
Drew God's approaches close, sweet, wonderful.
Its solidity was a mass of heavenly make;
Its fixity and sweet permanence of charm
Made a bright pedestal for felicity.
Its bodies woven by a divine sense
Prolonged the nearness of soul's clasp with soul;
Its warm play of external sight and touch
Reflected the glow and thrill of the heart's joy,
Mind's climbing brilliant thoughts, the spirit's bliss;
Life's rapture kept for ever its flame and cry.
All that now passes lived immortal there
In the proud beauty and fine harmony
Of Matter plastic to spiritual light.
Its ordered hours proclaimed the eternal Law;
Vision reposed on a safety of deathless forms;
Time was Eternity's transparent robe.
An architect hewing out self's living rock,
Phenomenon built Reality's summer-house
On the beaches of the sea of Infinity.

Against this glory of spiritual states,
Their parallels and yet their opposites,
Floated and swayed, eclipsed and shadowlike
As if a doubt made substance, flickering, pale,
This other scheme two vast negations found.
A world that knows not its inhabiting Self
Labours to find its cause and need to be;
A spirit ignorant of the world it made,
Obscured by Matter, travestied by Life,
Struggles to emerge, to be free, to know and reign;
These were close-tied in one disharmony,
Yet the divergent lines met not at all.
Three Powers governed its irrational course,

In the beginning an unknowing Force,
In the middle an embodied striving soul,
In its end a silent spirit denying life.
A dull and infelicitous interlude
Unrolls its dubious truth to a questioning Mind
Compelled by the ignorant Power to play its part
And to record her inconclusive tale,
The mystery of her inconscient plan
And the riddle of a being born from Night
By a marriage of Necessity with Chance.
This darkness hides our nobler destiny.
A chrysalis of a great and glorious truth,
It stifles the winged marvel in its sheath
Lest from the prison of Matter it escape
And, wasting its beauty on the formless Vast,
Merged into the Unknowable's mystery,
Leave unfulfilled the world's miraculous fate.
As yet thought only some high spirit's dream
Or a vexed illusion in man's toiling mind,
A new creation from the old shall rise,
A Knowledge inarticulate find speech,
Beauty suppressed burst into paradise bloom,
Pleasure and pain dive into absolute bliss.
A tongueless oracle shall speak at last,
The Superconscient conscious grow on earth,
The Eternal's wonders join the dance of Time.
But now all seemed a vainly teeming vast
Upheld by a deluded Energy
To a spectator self-absorbed and mute,
Careless of the unmeaning show he watched,
Regarding the bizarre procession pass
Like one who waits for an expected end.
He saw a world that is from a world to be.
There he divined rather than saw or felt,
Far off upon the rim of consciousness,
Transient and frail this little whirling globe

And on it left like a lost dream's vain mould,
A fragile copy of the spirit's shell,
His body gathered into mystic sleep.
A foreign shape it seemed, a mythic shade.

Alien now seemed that dim far universe,
Self and eternity alone were true.
Then memory climbed to him from the striving planes
Bringing a cry from once-loved cherished things,
And to the cry as to its own lost call
A ray replied from the occult Supreme.
For even there the boundless Oneness dwells.
To its own sight unrecognisable,
It lived still sunk in its own tenebrous seas,
Upholding the world's inconscient unity
Hidden in Matter's insentient multitude.
This seed-self sown in the Indeterminate
Forfeits its glory of divinity,
Concealing the omnipotence of its Force,
Concealing the omniscience of its Soul;
An agent of its own transcendent Will,
It merges knowledge in the inconscient deep;
Accepting error, sorrow, death and pain,
It pays the ransom of the ignorant Night,
Redeeming by its substance Nature's fall.
Himself he knew and why his soul had gone
Into earth's passionate obscurity
To share the labour of an errant Power
Which by division hopes to find the One.
Two beings he was, one wide and free above,
One struggling, bound, intense, its portion here.
A tie between them still could bridge two worlds;
There was a dim response, a distant breath;
All had not ceased in the unbounded hush.
His heart lay somewhere conscious and alone
Far down below him like a lamp in night;

Abandoned it lay, alone, imperishable,
Immobile with excess of passionate will,
His living, sacrificed and offered heart
Absorbed in adoration mystical,
Turned to its far-off fount of light and love.
In the luminous stillness of its mute appeal
It looked up to the heights it could not see;
It yearned from the longing depths it could not leave.
In the centre of his vast and fateful trance
Half-way between his free and fallen selves,
Interceding twixt God's day and the mortal's night,
Accepting worship as its single law,
Accepting bliss as the sole cause of things,
Refusing the austere joy which none can share,
Refusing the calm that lives for calm alone,
To her it turned for whom it willed to be.
In the passion of its solitary dream
It lay like a closed soundless oratory
Where sleeps a consecrated argent floor
Lit by a single and untrembling ray
And an invisible Presence kneels in prayer.
On some deep breast of liberating peace
All else was satisfied with quietude;
This only knew there was a truth beyond.
All other parts were dumb in centred sleep
Consenting to the slow deliberate Power
Which tolerates the world's error and its grief,
Consenting to the cosmic long delay,
Timelessly waiting through the patient years
Her coming they had asked for earth and men;
This was the fiery point that called her now.
Extinction could not quench that lonely fire;
Its seeing filled the blank of mind and will;
Thought dead, its changeless force abode and grew.
Armed with the intuition of a bliss
To which some moved tranquillity was the key,

It persevered through life's huge emptiness
Amid the blank denials of the world.
It sent its voiceless prayer to the Unknown;
It listened for the footsteps of its hopes
Returning through the void immensities,
It waited for the fiat of the Word
That comes through the still self from the Supreme.

END OF CANTO THREE