

Canto Eleven

The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Mind

THERE ceased the limits of the labouring Power.
But being and creation cease not there.
For Thought transcends the circles of mortal mind,
It is greater than its earthly instrument:
The godhead crammed into mind's narrow space
Escapes on every side into some vast
That is a passage to infinity.
It moves eternal in the spirit's field,
A runner towards the far spiritual light,
A child and servant of the spirit's force.
But mind too falls back from a nameless peak.
His being stretched beyond the sight of Thought.
For the spirit is eternal and unmade
And not by thinking was its greatness born,
And not by thinking can its knowledge come.
It knows itself and in itself it lives,
It moves where no thought is nor any form.
Its feet are steadied upon finite things,
Its wings can dare to cross the Infinite.
Arriving into his ken a wonder space
Of great and marvellous meetings called his steps,
Where Thought leaned on a Vision beyond thought
And shaped a world from the Unthinkable.
On peaks imagination cannot tread,
In the horizons of a tireless sight,
Under a blue veil of eternity
The splendours of ideal Mind were seen
Outstretched across the boundaries of things known.
Origin of the little that we are,
Instinct with the endless more that we must be,
A prop of all that human strength enacts,

Creator of hopes by earth unrealised,
It spreads beyond the expanding universe;
It wings beyond the boundaries of Dream,
It overtops the ceiling of life's soar.
Awake in a luminous sphere unbound by Thought,
Exposed to omniscient immensities,
It casts on our world its great crowned influences,
Its speed that outstrips the ambling of the hours,
Its force that strides invincibly through Time,
Its mights that bridge the gulf twixt man and God,
Its lights that combat Ignorance and Death.
In its vast ambit of ideal Space
Where beauty and mightiness walk hand in hand,
The Spirit's truths take form as living Gods
And each can build a world in its own right.
In an air which doubt and error cannot mark
With the stigmata of their deformity,
In communion with the musing privacy
Of a truth that sees in an unerring light
Where the sight falters not nor wanders thought,
Exempt from our world's exorbitant tax of tears,
Dreaming its luminous creations gaze
On the Ideas that people eternity.
In a sun-blaze of joy and absolute power
Above the Masters of the Ideal throne
In sessions of secure felicity,
In regions of illumined certitude.
Far are those realms from our labour and yearning and call,
Perfection's reign and hallowed sanctuary
Closed to the uncertain thoughts of human mind,
Remote from the turbid tread of mortal life.
But since our secret selves are next of kin,
A breath of unattained divinity
Visits the imperfect earth on which we toil;
Across a gleaming ether's golden laugh
A light falls on our vexed unsatisfied lives,

A thought comes down from the ideal worlds
And moves us to new-model even here
Some image of their greatness and appeal
And wonder beyond the ken of mortal hope.
Amid the heavy sameness of the days
And contradicted by the human law,
A faith in things that are not and must be
Lives comrade of this world's delight and pain,
The child of the secret soul's forbidden desire
Born of its amour with eternity.
Our spirits break free from their environment;
The future brings its face of miracle near,
Its godhead looks at us with present eyes;
Acts deemed impossible grow natural;
We feel the hero's immortality;
The courage and the strength death cannot touch
Awake in limbs that are mortal, hearts that fail;
We move by the rapid impulse of a will
That scorns the tardy trudge of mortal time.
These promptings come not from an alien sphere:
Ourselves are citizens of that mother State,
Adventurers, we have colonised Matter's night.
But now our rights are barred, our passports void;
We live self-exiled from our heavenlier home.
An errant ray from the immortal Mind
Accepted the earth's blindness and became
Our human thought, servant of Ignorance.
An exile, labourer on this unsure globe
Captured and driven in Life's nescient grasp,
Hampered by obscure cell and treacherous nerve,
It dreams of happier states and nobler powers,
The natural privilege of unfallen gods,
Recalling still its old lost sovereignty.
Amidst earth's mist and fog and mud and stone
It still remembers its exalted sphere
And the high city of its splendid birth.

A memory steals in from lost heavens of Truth,
A wide release comes near, a Glory calls,
A might looks out, an estranged felicity.
In glamorous passages of half-veiled light
Wandering, a brilliant shadow of itself,
This quick uncertain leader of blind gods,
This tender of small lamps, this minister serf
Hired by a mind and body for earth-use
Forgets its work mid crude realities;
It recovers its renounced imperial right,
It wears once more a purple robe of thought
And knows itself the Ideal's seer and king,
Communicant and prophet of the Unborn,
Heir to delight and immortality.
All things are real that here are only dreams,
In our unknown depths sleeps their reserve of truth,
On our unreached heights they reign and come to us
In thought and muse trailing their robes of light.
But our dwarf will and cold pragmatic sense
Admit not the celestial visitants:
Awaiting us on the Ideal's peaks
Or guarded in our secret self unseen
Yet flashed sometimes across the awakened soul,
Hide from our lives their greatness, beauty, power.
Our present feels sometimes their regal touch,
Our future strives towards their luminous thrones:
Out of spiritual secrecy they gaze,
Immortal footfalls in mind's corridors sound:
Our souls can climb into the shining planes,
The breadths from which they came can be our home.
His privilege regained of shadowless sight
The Thinker entered the immortals' air
And drank again his pure and mighty source.
Immutable in rhythmic calm and joy
He saw, sovereignly free in limitless light,
The unfallen planes, the thought-created worlds

Where Knowledge is the leader of the act
And Matter is of thinking substance made,
Feeling, a heaven-bird poised on dreaming wings,
Answers Truth's call as to a parent's voice,
Form luminous leaps from the all-shaping beam
And Will is a conscious chariot of the Gods,
And Life, a splendour stream of musing Force,
Carries the voices of the mystic Suns.
A happiness it brings of whispered truth;
There runs in its flow honeying the bosom of Space
A laughter from the immortal heart of Bliss,
And the unfathomed Joy of timelessness,
The sound of Wisdom's murmur in the Unknown
And the breath of an unseen Infinity.
In gleaming clarities of amethyst air
The chainless and omnipotent Spirit of Mind
Brooded on the blue lotus of the Idea.
A gold supernal sun of timeless Truth
Poured down the mystery of the eternal Ray
Through a silence quivering with the word of Light
On an endless ocean of discovery.
Far-off he saw the joining hemispheres.
On meditation's mounting edge of trance
Great stairs of thought climbed up to unborn heights
Where Time's last ridges touch eternity's skies
And Nature speaks to the spirit's absolute.

A triple realm of ordered thought came first,
A small beginning of immense ascent:
Above were bright ethereal skies of mind,
A packed and endless soar as if sky pressed sky
Buttressed against the Void on bastioned light;
The highest strove to neighbour eternity,
The largest widened into the infinite.
But though immortal, mighty and divine,
The first realms were close and kin to human mind;

Their deities shape our greater thinking's roads,
A fragment of their puissance can be ours:
These breadths were not too broad for our souls to range,
These heights were not too high for human hope.
A triple flight led to this triple world.
Although abrupt for common strengths to tread,
Its upward slope looks down on our earth-poise:
On a slant not too precipitously steep
One could turn back travelling deep descending lines
To commune with the mortal's universe.
The mighty wardens of the ascending stair
Who intercede with the all-creating Word,
There waited for the pilgrim heaven-bound soul;
Holding the thousand keys of the Beyond
They proffered their knowledge to the climbing mind
And filled the life with Thought's immensities.
The prophet hierophants of the occult Law,
The flame-bright hierarchs of the divine Truth,
Interpreters between man's mind and God's,
They bring the immortal fire to mortal men.
Iridescent, bodying the invisible,
The guardians of the Eternal's bright degrees
Fronted the Sun in radiant phalanxes.
Afar they seemed a symbol imagery,
Illumined originals of the shadowy script
In which our sight transcribes the ideal Ray,
Or icons figuring a mystic Truth,
But, nearer, Gods and living Presences.
A march of friezes marked the lowest steps;
Fantastically ornate and richly small,
They had room for the whole meaning of a world,
Symbols minute of its perfection's joy,
Strange beasts that were Nature's forces made alive
And, wakened to the wonder of his role,
Man grown an image undefaced of God
And objects the fine coin of Beauty's reign;

But wide the terrains were those levels serve.
In front of the ascending epiphany
World-Time's enjoyers, favourites of World-Bliss,
The Masters of things actual, lords of the hours,
Playmates of youthful Nature and child God,
Creators of Matter by hid stress of Mind
Whose subtle thoughts support unconscious Life
And guide the fantasy of brute events,
Stood there, a race of young keen-visioned gods,
King-children born on Wisdom's early plane,
Taught in her school world-making's mystic play.
Archmasons of the eternal Thaumaturge,
Moulders and measurers of fragmented Space,
They have made their plan of the concealed and known
A dwelling-house for the invisible king.
Obeying the Eternal's deep command
They have built in the material front of things
This wide world-kindergarten of young souls
Where the infant spirit learns through mind and sense
To read the letters of the cosmic script
And study the body of the cosmic self
And search for the secret meaning of the whole.
To all that Spirit conceives they give a mould;
Persuading Nature into visible moods
They lend a finite shape to infinite things.
Each power that leaps from the Unmanifest
Leaving the largeness of the Eternal's peace
They seized and held by their precisian eye
And made a figurante in the cosmic dance.
Its free caprice they bound by rhythmic laws
And compelled to accept its posture and its line
In the wizardry of an ordered universe.
The All-containing was contained in form,
Oneness was carved into units measurable,
The limitless built into a cosmic sum:
Unending Space was beaten into a curve,

Indivisible Time into small minutes cut,
The infinitesimal massed to keep secure
The mystery of the Formless cast into form.
Invincibly their craft devised for use
The magic of sequent number and sign's spell,
Design's miraculous potency was caught
Laden with beauty and significance
And by the determining mandate of their gaze
Figure and quality equating joined
In an inextricable identity.
On each event they stamped its curves of law
And its trust and charge of burdened circumstance;
A free and divine incident no more
At each moment willed or adventure of the soul,
It lengthened a fate-bound mysterious chain,
A line foreseen of an immutable plan,
One step more in Necessity's long march.
A term was set for every eager Power
Restraining its will to monopolise the world,
A groove of bronze prescribed for force and act
And shown to each moment its appointed place
Forewilled inalterably in the spiral
Huge Time-loop fugitive from eternity.
Inevitable their thoughts like links of Fate
Imposed on the leap and lightning race of mind
And on the frail fortuitous flux of life
And on the liberty of atomic things
Immutable cause and adamant consequence.
Idea gave up the plastic infinity
To which it was born and now traced out instead
Small separate steps of chain-work in a plot:
Immortal once, now tied to birth and end,
Torn from its immediacy of errorless sight,
Knowledge was rebuilt from cells of inference
Into a fixed body flasque and perishable;
Thus bound it grew, but could not last and broke

And to a new thinking's body left its place.
A cage for the Infinite's great-eyed seraphim Thoughts
Was closed with a criss-cross of world-laws for bars
And hedged into a curt horizon's arc
The irised vision of the Ineffable.
A timeless Spirit was made the slave of the hours;
The Unbound was cast into a prison of birth
To make a world that Mind could grasp and rule.
On an earth which looked towards a thousand suns,
That the created might grow Nature's lord
And Matter's depths be illumined with a soul
They tied to date and norm and finite scope
The million-mysteried movement of the One.

Above stood ranked a subtle archangel race
With larger lids and looks that searched the unseen.
A light of liberating knowledge shone
Across the gulfs of silence in their eyes;
They lived in the mind and knew truth from within;
A sight withdrawn in the concentrated heart
Could pierce behind the screen of Time's results
And the rigid cast and shape of visible things.
All that escaped conception's narrow noose
Vision descried and gripped; their seeing thoughts
Filled in the blanks left by the seeking sense.
High architects of possibility
And engineers of the impossible,
Mathematicians of the infinitudes
And theoreticians of unknowable truths,
They formulate enigma's postulates
And join the unknown to the apparent worlds.
Acolytes they wait upon the timeless Power,
The cycle of her works investigate;
Passing her fence of wordless privacy
Their mind could penetrate her occult mind
And draw the diagram of her secret thoughts;
They read the codes and ciphers she had sealed,

Copies they made of all her guarded plans,
For every turn of her mysterious course
Assigned a reason and unchanging rule.
The unseen grew visible to student eyes,
Explained was the immense Inconscient's scheme,
Audacious lines were traced upon the Void;
The Infinite was reduced to square and cube.
Arranging symbol and significance,
Tracing the curve of a transcendent Power,
They framed the cabbala of the cosmic Law,
The balancing line discovered of Life's technique
And structured her magic and her mystery.
Imposing schemes of knowledge on the Vast
They clamped to syllogisms of finite thought
The free logic of an infinite Consciousness,
Grammared the hidden rhythms of Nature's dance,
Critiqued the plot of the drama of the worlds,
Made figure and number a key to all that is:
The psycho-analysis of cosmic Self
Was traced, its secrets hunted down, and read
The unknown pathology of the Unique.
Assessed was the system of the probable,
The hazard of fleeing possibilities,
To account for the Actual's unaccountable sum,
Necessity's logarithmic tables drawn,
Cast into a scheme the triple act of the One.
Unveiled, the abrupt invisible multitude
Of forces whirling from the hands of Chance
Seemed to obey some vast imperative:
Their tangled motives worked out unity.
A wisdom read their mind to themselves unknown,
Their anarchy rammed into a formula
And from their giant randomness of Force,
Following the habit of their million paths,
Distinguishing each faintest line and stroke
Of a concealed unalterable design,

Out of the chaos of the Invisible's moods
Derived the calculus of Destiny.
In its bright pride of universal lore
Mind's knowledge overtopped the Omniscient's power:
The Eternal's winging eagle puissances
Surprised in their untracked empyrean
Stooped from their gyres to obey the beck of Thought:
Each mystiered God forced to revealing form,
Assigned his settled moves in Nature's game,
Zigzagged at the gesture of a chess-player Will
Across the chequerboard of cosmic Fate.
In the wide sequence of Necessity's steps
Predicted, every act and thought of God,
Its values weighed by the accountant Mind,
Checked in his mathematised omnipotence,
Lost its divine aspect of miracle
And was a figure in a cosmic sum.
The mighty Mother's whims and lightning moods
Arisen from her all-wise unruled delight
In the freedom of her sweet and passionate breast,
Robbed of their wonder were chained to a cause and aim;
An idol of bronze replaced her mystic shape
That captures the movements of the cosmic vasts,
In the sketch precise of an ideal face
Forgotten was her eyelashes' dream-print
Carrying on their curve infinity's dreams,
Lost the alluring marvel of her eyes;
The surging wave-throbs of her vast sea-heart
They bound to a theorem of ordered beats:
Her deep designs which from herself she had veiled
Bowed self-revealed in their confessional.
For the birth and death of the worlds they fixed a date,
The diameter of infinity was drawn,
Measured the distant arc of the unseen heights
And visualised the plumbless viewless depths,
Till all seemed known that in all time could be.

All was coerced by number, name and form;
Nothing was left untold, incalculable.
Yet was their wisdom circled with a nought:
Truths they could find and hold but not the one Truth:
The Highest was to them unknowable.
By knowing too much they missed the whole to be known:
The fathomless heart of the world was left unguessed
And the Transcendent kept its secrecy.

In a sublimer and more daring soar
To the wide summit of the triple stairs
Bare steps climbed up like flaming rocks of gold
Burning their way to a pure absolute sky.
August and few the sovereign Kings of Thought
Have made of Space their wide all-seeing gaze
Surveying the enormous work of Time:
A breadth of all-containing Consciousness
Supported Being in a still embrace.
Intercessors with a luminous Unseen,
They capt in the long passage to the world
The imperatives of the creator Self
Obeyed by unknowing earth, by conscious heaven;
Their thoughts are partners in its vast control.
A great all-ruling Consciousness is there
And Mind unwitting serves a higher Power;
It is a channel, not the source of all.
The cosmos is no accident in Time;
There is a meaning in each play of Chance,
There is a freedom in each face of Fate.
A Wisdom knows and guides the mystiered world;
A Truth-gaze shapes its beings and events;
A Word self-born upon creation's heights,
Voice of the Eternal in the temporal spheres,
Prophet of the seeings of the Absolute,
Sows the Idea's significance in Form
And from that seed the growths of Time arise.
On peaks beyond our ken the All-Wisdom sits:

A single and infallible look comes down,
A silent touch from the supernal's air
Awakes to ignorant knowledge in its acts
The secret power in the inconscient depths,
Compelling the blinded Godhead to emerge,
Determining Necessity's nude dance
As she passes through the circuit of the hours
And vanishes from the chase of finite eyes
Down circling vistas of aeonic Time.
The unseizable forces of the cosmic whirl
Bear in their bacchant limbs the fixity
Of an original foresight that is Fate.
Even Nature's ignorance is Truth's instrument;
Our struggling ego cannot change her course:
Yet is it a conscious power that moves in us,
A seed-idea is parent of our acts
And destiny the unrecognised child of Will.
Infallibly by Truth's directing gaze
All creatures here their secret self disclose,
Forced to become what in themselves they hide.
For He who Is grows manifest in the years
And the slow Godhead shut within the cell
Climbs from the plasm to immortality.
But hidden, but denied to mortal grasp,
Mystic, ineffable is the spirit's truth,
Unspoken, caught only by the spirit's eye.
When naked of ego and mind it hears the Voice;
It looks through light to ever greater light
And sees Eternity ensphering Life.
This greater Truth is foreign to our thoughts;
Where a free Wisdom works, they seek for a rule;
Or we only see a tripping game of Chance
Or a labour in chains forced by bound Nature's law,
An absolutism of dumb unthinking Power.
Audacious in their sense of God-born strength
These dared to grasp with their thought Truth's absolute;

By an abstract purity of godless sight,
By a percept nude, intolerant of forms,
They brought to Mind what Mind could never reach
And hoped to conquer Truth's supernal base.
A stripped imperative of conceptual phrase
Architectonic and inevitable
Translated the unthinkable into thought:
A silver-winged fire of naked subtle sense,
An ear of mind withdrawn from the outward's rhymes
Discovered the seed-sounds of the eternal Word,
The rhythm and music heard that built the worlds,
And seized in things the bodiless Will to be.
The Illimitable they measured with number's rods
And traced the last formula of limited things,
In transparent systems bodied termless truths,
The Timeless made accountable to Time
And valued the incommensurable Supreme.
To park and hedge the ungrasped infinitudes
They erected absolute walls of thought and speech
And made a vacuum to hold the One.
In their sight they drove towards an empty peak,
A mighty space of cold and sunlit air.
To unify their task, excluding life
Which cannot bear the nakedness of the Vast,
They made a cipher of a multitude,
In negation found the meaning of the All
And in nothingness the absolute positive.
A single law simplified the cosmic theme,
Compressing Nature into a formula;
Their titan labour made all knowledge one,
A mental algebra of the Spirit's ways,
An abstract of the living Divinity.
Here the mind's wisdom stopped; it felt complete;
For nothing more was left to think or know:
In a spiritual zero it sat throned
And took its vast silence for the Ineffable.

This was the play of the bright gods of Thought.
Attracting into time the timeless Light,
Imprisoning eternity in the hours,
This they have planned, to snare the feet of Truth
In an aureate net of concept and of phrase
And keep her captive for the thinker's joy
In his little world built of immortal dreams:
There must she dwell mured in the human mind,
An empress prisoner in her subject's house,
Adored and pure and still on his heart's throne,
His splendid property cherished and apart
In the wall of silence of his secret muse,
Immaculate in white virginity,
The same for ever and for ever one,
His worshipped changeless Goddess through all time.
Or else, a faithful consort of his mind
Assenting to his nature and his will,
She sanctions and inspires his words and acts
Prolonging their resonance through the listening years,
Companion and recorder of his march
Crossing a brilliant tract of thought and life
Carved out of the eternity of Time.
A witness to his high triumphant star,
Her godhead servitor to a crowned Idea,
He shall dominate by her a prostrate world;
A warrant for his deeds and his beliefs,
She attests his right divine to lead and rule.
Or as a lover clasps his one beloved,
Godhead of his life's worship and desire,
Icon of his heart's sole idolatry,
She now is his and must live for him alone:
She has invaded him with her sudden bliss,
An exhaustless marvel in his happy grasp,
An allurement, a caught ravishing miracle.
Her now he claims after long rapt pursuit,
The one joy of his body and his soul:

Inescapable is her divine appeal,
Her immense possession an undying thrill,
An intoxication and an ecstasy:
The passion of her self-revealing moods,
A heavenly glory and variety,
Makes ever new her body to his eyes,
Or else repeats the first enchantment's touch,
The luminous rapture of her mystic breasts
And beautiful vibrant limbs a living field
Of throbbing new discovery without end.
A new beginning flowers in word and laugh,
A new charm brings back the old extreme delight:
He is lost in her, she is his heaven here.
Truth smiled upon the gracious golden game.
Out of her hushed eternal spaces leaned
The great and boundless Goddess feigned to yield
The sunlit sweetness of her secrecies.
Incarnating her beauty in his clasp
She gave for a brief kiss her immortal lips
And drew to her bosom one glorified mortal head:
She made earth her home, for whom heaven was too small.
In a human breast her occult presence lived;
He carved from his own self his figure of her:
She shaped her body to a mind's embrace.
Into thought's narrow limits she has come;
Her greatness she has suffered to be pressed
Into the little cabin of the Idea,
The closed room of a lonely thinker's grasp:
She has lowered her heights to the stature of our souls
And dazzled our lids with her celestial gaze.
Thus each is satisfied with his high gain
And thinks himself beyond mortality blest,
A king of truth upon his separate throne.
To her possessor in the field of Time
A single splendour caught from her glory seems
The one true light, her beauty's glowing whole.

But thought nor word can seize eternal Truth:
The whole world lives in a lonely ray of her sun.
In our thinking's close and narrow lamp-lit house
The vanity of our shut mortal mind
Dreams that the chains of thought have made her ours;
But only we play with our own brilliant bonds;
Tying her down, it is ourselves we tie.
In our hypnosis by one luminous point
We see not what small figure of her we hold;
We feel not her inspiring boundlessness,
We share not her immortal liberty.
Thus is it even with the seer and sage;
For still the human limits the divine:
Out of our thoughts we must leap up to sight,
Breathe her divine illimitable air,
Her simple vast supremacy confess,
Dare to surrender to her absolute.
Then the Unmanifest reflects his form
In the still mind as in a living glass;
The timeless Ray descends into our hearts
And we are rapt into eternity.
For Truth is wider, greater than her forms.
A thousand icons they have made of her
And find her in the idols they adore;
But she remains herself and infinite.

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