

Canto One

The Destined Meeting-Place

BUT NOW the destined spot and hour were close;
Unknowing she had neared her nameless goal.
For though a dress of blind and devious chance
Is laid upon the work of all-wise Fate,
Our acts interpret an omniscient Force
That dwells in the compelling stuff of things,
And nothing happens in the cosmic play
But at its time and in its foreseen place.
To a space she came of soft and delicate air
That seemed a sanctuary of youth and joy,
A highland world of free and green delight
Where spring and summer lay together and strove
In indolent and amicable debate,
Inarmed, disputing with laughter who should rule.
There expectation beat wide sudden wings
As if a soul had looked out from earth's face,
And all that was in her felt a coming change
And forgetting obvious joys and common dreams,
Obedient to Time's call, to the spirit's fate,
Was lifted to a beauty calm and pure
That lived under the eyes of Eternity.
A crowd of mountainous heads assailed the sky
Pushing towards rival shoulders nearer heaven,
The armoured leaders of an iron line;
Earth prostrate lay beneath their feet of stone.
Below them crouched a dream of emerald woods
And gleaming borders solitary as sleep:
Pale waters ran like glimmering threads of pearl.
A sigh was straying among happy leaves;
Cool-perfumed with slow pleasure-burdened feet
Faint stumbling breezes faltered among flowers.

The white crane stood, a vivid motionless streak,
Peacock and parrot jewelled soil and tree,
The dove's soft moan enriched the enamoured air
And fire-winged wild-drakes swam in silvery pools.
Earth couched alone with her great lover Heaven,
Uncovered to her consort's azure eye.
In a luxurious ecstasy of joy
She squandered the love-music of her notes,
Wasting the passionate pattern of her blooms
And festival riot of her scents and hues.
A cry and leap and hurry was around,
The stealthy footfalls of her chasing things,
The shaggy emerald of her centaur mane,
The gold and sapphire of her warmth and blaze.
Magician of her rapt felicities,
Blithe, sensuous-hearted, careless and divine,
Life ran or hid in her delightful rooms;
Behind all brooded Nature's grandiose calm.
Primaevael peace was there and in its bosom
Held undisturbed the strife of bird and beast.
Man the deep-browed artificer had not come
To lay his hand on happy inconscient things,
Thought was not there nor the measurer, strong-eyed toil,
Life had not learned its discord with its aim.
The Mighty Mother lay outstretched at ease.
All was in line with her first satisfied plan;
Moved by a universal will of joy
The trees bloomed in their green felicity
And the wild children brooded not on pain.
At the end reclined a stern and giant tract
Of tangled depths and solemn questioning hills,
Peaks like a bare austerity of the soul,
Armoured, remote and desolately grand
Like the thought-screened infinities that lie
Behind the rapt smile of the Almighty's dance.
A matted forest-head invaded heaven

As if a blue-throated ascetic peered
From the stone fastness of his mountain cell
Regarding the brief gladness of the days;
His vast extended spirit couched behind.
A mighty murmur of immense retreat
Besieged the ear, a sad and limitless call
As of a soul retiring from the world.
This was the scene which the ambiguous Mother
Had chosen for her brief felicitous hour;
Here in this solitude far from the world
Her part she began in the world's joy and strife.
Here were disclosed to her the mystic courts,
The lurking doors of beauty and surprise,
The wings that murmur in the golden house,
The temple of sweetness and the fiery aisle.
A stranger on the sorrowful roads of Time,
Immortal under the yoke of death and fate,
A sacrificant of the bliss and pain of the spheres,
Love in the wilderness met Savitri.

END OF CANTO ONE