

*Canto Six*

*The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Life*

AS ONE who between dim receding walls  
Towards the far gleam of a tunnel's mouth,  
Hoping for light, walks now with freer pace  
And feels approach a breath of wider air,  
So he escaped from that grey anarchy.  
Into an ineffectual world he came,  
A purposeless region of arrested birth  
Where being from non-being fled and dared  
To live but had no strength long to abide.  
Above there gleamed a pondering brow of sky  
Tormented, crossed by wings of doubtful haze  
Adventuring with a voice of roaming winds  
And crying for a direction in the void  
Like blind souls looking for the selves they lost  
And wandering through unfamiliar worlds;  
Wings of vague questioning met the query of Space.  
After denial dawned a dubious hope,  
A hope of self and form and leave to live  
And the birth of that which never yet could be,  
And joy of the mind's hazard, the heart's choice,  
Grace of the unknown and hands of sudden surprise  
And a touch of sure delight in unsure things:  
To a strange uncertain tract his journey came  
Where consciousness played with unconscious self  
And birth was an attempt or episode.  
A charm drew near that could not keep its spell,  
An eager Power that could not find its way,  
A Chance that chose a strange arithmetic  
But could not bind with it the forms it made,  
A multitude that could not guard its sum  
Which less than zero grew and more than one.

Arriving at a large and shadowy sense  
That cared not to define its fleeting drift,  
Life laboured in a strange and mythic air  
Denuded of her sweet magnificent suns.  
In worlds imagined, never yet made true,  
A lingering glimmer on creation's verge,  
One strayed and dreamed and never stopped to achieve:  
To achieve would have destroyed that magic Space.  
The marvels of a twilight wonderland  
Full of a beauty strangely, vainly made,  
A surge of fanciful realities,  
Dim tokens of a Splendour sealed above,  
Awoke the passion of the eyes' desire,  
Compelled belief on the enamoured thought  
And drew the heart but led it to no goal.  
A magic flowed as if of moving scenes  
That kept awhile their fugitive delicacy  
Of sparing lines limned by an abstract art  
In a rare scanted light with faint dream-brush  
On a silver background of incertitude.  
An infant glow of heavens near to morn,  
A fire intense conceived but never lit,  
Caressed the air with ardent hints of day.  
The perfect longing for imperfection's charm,  
The illumined caught by the snare of Ignorance,  
Ethereal creatures drawn by body's lure  
To that region of promise, beating invisible wings,  
Came hungry for the joy of finite life  
But too divine to tread created soil  
And share the fate of perishable things.  
The Children of the unembodied Gleam  
Arisen from a formless thought in the soul  
And chased by an imperishable desire,  
Traversed the field of the pursuing gaze.  
A Will that unpersisting failed, worked there:  
Life was a search but finding never came.

There nothing satisfied, but all allured,  
Things seemed to be that never wholly are,  
Images were seen that looked like living acts  
And symbols hid the sense they claimed to show,  
Pale dreams grew real to the dreamer's eyes.  
The souls came there that vainly strive for birth,  
And spirits entrapped might wander through all time,  
Yet never find the truth by which they live.  
All ran like hopes that hunt a lurking chance;  
Nothing was solid, nothing felt complete:  
All was unsafe, miraculous and half-true.  
It seemed a realm of lives that had no base.

Then dawned a greater seeking, broadened sky,  
A journey under wings of brooding Force.  
First came the kingdom of the morning star:  
A twilight beauty trembled under its spear  
And the throb of promise of a wider Life.  
Then slowly rose a great and doubting sun  
And in its light she made of self a world.  
A spirit was there that sought for its own deep self,  
Yet was content with fragments pushed in front  
And parts of living that belied the whole  
But, pieced together, might one day be true.  
Yet something seemed to be achieved at last.  
A growing volume of the will-to-be,  
A text of living and a graph of force,  
A script of acts, a song of conscious forms  
Burdened with meanings fugitive from thought's grasp  
And crowded with undertones of life's rhythmic cry,  
Could write itself on the hearts of living things.  
In an outbreak of the might of secret Spirit,  
In Life and Matter's answer of delight,  
Some face of deathless beauty could be caught  
That gave immortality to a moment's joy,  
Some word that could incarnate highest Truth

Leaped out from a chance tension of the soul,  
Some hue of the Absolute could fall on life,  
Some glory of knowledge and intuitive sight,  
Some passion of the rapturous heart of Love.  
A hierophant of the bodiless Secrecy  
Interned in an unseen spiritual sheath,  
The Will that pushes sense beyond its scope  
To feel the light and joy intangible,  
Half found its way into the Ineffable's peace,  
Half captured a sealed sweetness of desire  
That yearned from a bosom of mysterious Bliss,  
Half manifested veiled Reality.  
A soul not wrapped into its cloak of mind  
Could glimpse the true sense of a world of forms;  
Illumined by a vision in the thought,  
Upbuoyed by the heart's understanding flame,  
It could hold in the conscious ether of the spirit  
The divinity of a symbol universe.

This realm inspires us with our vaster hopes;  
Its forces have made landings on our globe,  
Its signs have traced their pattern in our lives:  
It lends a sovereign movement to our fate,  
Its errant waves motive our life's high surge.  
All that we seek for is prefigured there  
And all we have not known nor ever sought  
Which yet one day must be born in human hearts  
That the Timeless may fulfil itself in things.  
Incarnate in the mystery of the days,  
Eternal in an unclosed Infinite,  
A mounting endless possibility  
Climbs high upon a topless ladder of dream  
For ever in the Being's conscious trance.  
All on that ladder mounts to an unseen end.  
An Energy of perpetual transience makes  
The journey from which no return is sure,  
The pilgrimage of Nature to the Unknown.

As if in her ascent to her lost source  
She hoped to unroll all that could ever be,  
Her high procession moves from stage to stage,  
A progress leap from sight to greater sight,  
A process march from form to ampler form,  
A caravan of the inexhaustible  
Formations of a boundless Thought and Force.  
Her timeless Power that lay once on the lap  
Of a beginningless and endless Calm,  
Now severed from the Spirit's immortal bliss,  
Erects the type of all the joys she has lost;  
Compelling transient substance into shape,  
She hopes by the creative act's release  
To o'erleap sometimes the gulf she cannot fill,  
To heal awhile the wound of severance,  
Escape from the moment's prison of littleness  
And meet the Eternal's wide sublimities  
In the uncertain time-field portioned here.  
Almost she nears what never can be attained;  
She shuts eternity into an hour  
And fills a little soul with the Infinite;  
The Immobile leans to the magic of her call;  
She stands on a shore in the Illimitable,  
Perceives the formless Dweller in all forms  
And feels around her infinity's embrace.  
Her task no ending knows; she serves no aim  
But labours driven by a nameless Will  
That came from some unknowable formless Vast.  
This is her secret and impossible task  
To catch the boundless in a net of birth,  
To cast the spirit into physical form,  
To lend speech and thought to the Ineffable;  
She is pushed to reveal the ever Unmanifest.  
Yet by her skill the impossible has been done:  
She follows her sublime irrational plan,  
Invents devices of her magic art

To find new bodies for the Infinite  
And images of the Unimaginable;  
She has lured the Eternal into the arms of Time.  
Even now herself she knows not what she has done.  
For all is wrought beneath a baffling mask:  
A semblance other than its hidden truth  
The aspect wears of an illusion's trick,  
A feigned time-driven unreality,  
The unfinished creation of a changing soul  
In a body changing with the inhabitant.  
Insignificant her means, infinite her work;  
On a great field of shapeless consciousness  
In little finite strokes of mind and sense  
An endless Truth she endlessly unfolds;  
A timeless mystery works out in Time.  
The greatness she has dreamed her acts have missed,  
Her labour is a passion and a pain,  
A rapture and pang, her glory and her curse;  
And yet she cannot choose but labours on;  
Her mighty heart forbids her to desist.  
As long as the world lasts her failure lives  
Astonishing and foiling Reason's gaze,  
A folly and a beauty unspeakable,  
A superb madness of the will to live,  
A daring, a delirium of delight.  
This is her being's law, its sole resource;  
She sates, though satisfaction never comes,  
Her hungry will to lavish everywhere  
Her many-imaged fictions of the Self  
And thousand fashions of one Reality.  
A world she made touched by truth's fleeing hem,  
A world cast into a dream of what it seeks,  
An icon of truth, a conscious mystery's shape.  
It lingered not like the earth-mind hemmed in  
In solid barriers of apparent fact;  
It dared to trust the dream-mind and the soul.

A hunter of spiritual verities  
Still only thought or guessed or held by faith,  
It seized in imagination and confined  
A painted bird of paradise in a cage.  
This greater life is enamoured of the Unseen;  
It calls to some highest Light beyond its reach,  
It can feel the Silence that absolves the soul;  
It feels a saviour touch, a ray divine:  
Beauty and good and truth its godheads are.  
It is near to heavenlier heavens than earth's eyes see,  
A direr darkness than man's life can bear:  
It has kinship with the demon and the god.  
A strange enthusiasm has moved its heart;  
It hungers for heights, it passions for the supreme.  
It hunts for the perfect word, the perfect shape,  
It leaps to the summit thought, the summit light.  
For by the form the Formless is brought close  
And all perfection fringes the Absolute.  
A child of heaven who never saw his home,  
Its impetus meets the eternal at a point:  
It can only near and touch, it cannot hold;  
It can only strain towards some bright extreme:  
Its greatness is to seek and to create.

On every plane, this Greatness must create.  
On earth, in heaven, in hell she is the same;  
Of every fate she takes her mighty part.  
A guardian of the fire that lights the suns,  
She triumphs in her glory and her might:  
Opposed, oppressed she bears God's urge to be born:  
The spirit survives upon non-being's ground,  
World-force outlasts world-disillusion's shock:  
Dumb, she is still the Word, inert the Power.  
Here fallen, a slave of death and ignorance,  
To things deathless she is driven to aspire  
And moved to know even the Unknowable.  
Even nescient, null, her sleep creates a world.

When most unseen, most mightily she works;  
Housed in the atom, buried in the clod,  
Her quick creative passion cannot cease.  
Inconscience is her long gigantic pause,  
Her cosmic swoon is a stupendous phase:  
Time-born, she hides her immortality;  
In death, her bed, she waits the hour to rise.  
Even with the Light denied that sent her forth  
And the hope dead she needed for her task,  
Even when her brightest stars are quenched in Night,  
Nourished by hardship and calamity  
And with pain for her body's handmaid, masseuse, nurse,  
Her tortured invisible spirit continues still  
To toil though in darkness, to create though with pangs;  
She carries crucified God upon her breast.  
In chill insentient depths where joy is none,  
Immured, oppressed by the resisting Void  
Where nothing moves and nothing can become,  
Still she remembers, still invokes the skill  
The Wonder-worker gave her at her birth,  
Imparts to drowsy formlessness a shape,  
Reveals a world where nothing was before.  
In realms confined to a prone circle of death,  
To a dark eternity of Ignorance,  
A quiver in an inert inconscient mass,  
Or imprisoned in immobilised whorls of Force,  
By Matter's blind compulsion deaf and mute  
She refuses motionless in the dust to sleep.  
Then, for her rebel waking's punishment  
Given only hard mechanic Circumstance  
As the enginery of her magic craft,  
She fashions godlike marvels out of mud;  
In the plasm she sets her dumb immortal urge,  
Helps the live tissue to think, the closed sense to feel,  
Flashes through the frail nerves poignant messages,  
In a heart of flesh miraculously loves,

To brute bodies gives a soul, a will, a voice.  
Ever she summons as by a sorcerer's wand  
Beings and shapes and scenes innumerable,  
Torch-bearers of her pomps through Time and Space.  
This world is her long journey through the night,  
The suns and planets lamps to light her road,  
Our reason is the confidante of her thoughts,  
Our senses are her vibrant witnesses.  
There drawing her signs from things half true, half false,  
She labours to replace by realised dreams  
The memory of her lost eternity.

These are her deeds in this huge world-ignorance:  
Till the veil is lifted, till the night is dead,  
In light or dark she keeps her tireless search;  
Time is her road of endless pilgrimage.  
One mighty passion motives all her works.  
Her eternal Lover is her action's cause;  
For him she leaped forth from the unseen Vasts  
To move here in a stark unconscious world.  
Its acts are her commerce with her hidden Guest,  
His moods she takes for her heart's passionate moulds;  
In beauty she treasures the sunlight of his smile.  
Ashamed of her rich cosmic poverty,  
She cajoles with her small gifts his mightiness,  
Holds with her scenes his look's fidelity  
And woos his large-eyed wandering thoughts to dwell  
In figures of her million-impulsed Force.  
Only to attract her veiled companion  
And keep him close to her breast in her world-cloak  
Lest from her arms he turn to his formless peace,  
Is her heart's business and her clinging care.  
Yet when he is most near, she feels him far.  
For contradiction is her nature's law.  
Although she is ever in him and he in her,  
As if unaware of the eternal tie,  
Her will is to shut God into her works

And keep him as her cherished prisoner  
That never they may part again in Time.  
A sumptuous chamber of the spirit's sleep  
At first she made, a deep interior room,  
Where he slumbers as if a forgotten guest.  
But now she turns to break the oblivious spell,  
Awakes the sleeper on the sculptured couch;  
She finds again the Presence in the form  
And in the light that wakes with him recovers  
A meaning in the hurry and trudge of Time,  
And through this mind that once obscured the soul  
Passes a glint of unseen deity.  
Across a luminous dream of spirit-space  
She builds creation like a rainbow bridge  
Between the original Silence and the Void.  
A net is made of the mobile universe;  
She weaves a snare for the conscious Infinite.  
A knowledge is with her that conceals its steps  
And seems a mute omnipotent Ignorance.  
A might is with her that makes wonders true;  
The incredible is her stuff of common fact.  
Her purposes, her workings riddles prove;  
Examined, they grow other than they were,  
Explained, they seem yet more inexplicable.  
Even in our world a mystery has reigned  
Earth's cunning screen of trivial plainness hides;  
Her larger levels are of sorceries made.  
There the enigma shows its splendid prism,  
There is no deep disguise of commonness;  
Occult, profound comes all experience,  
Marvel is ever new, miracle divine.  
There is a screened burden, a mysterious touch,  
There is a secrecy of hidden sense.  
Although no earthen mask weighs on her face,  
Into herself she flees from her own sight.  
All forms are tokens of some veiled idea

Whose covert purpose lurks from mind's pursuit,  
Yet is a womb of sovereign consequence.  
There every thought and feeling is an act,  
And every act a symbol and a sign,  
And every symbol hides a living power.  
A universe she builds from truths and myths,  
But what she needed most she cannot build;  
All shown is a figure or copy of the Truth,  
But the Real veils from her its mystic face.  
All else she finds, there lacks eternity;  
All is sought out, but missed the Infinite.

A consciousness lit by a Truth above  
Was felt; it saw the light but not the Truth:  
It caught the Idea and built from it a world;  
It made an Image there and called it God.  
Yet something true and inward harboured there.  
The beings of that world of greater life,  
Tenants of a larger air and freer space,  
Live not by the body or in outward things:  
A deeper living was their seat of self.  
In that intense domain of intimacy  
Objects dwell as companions of the soul;  
The body's actions are a minor script,  
The surface rendering of a life within.  
All forces are Life's retinue in that world  
And thought and body as her handmaids move.  
The universal widenesses give her room:  
All feel the cosmic movement in their acts  
And are the instruments of her cosmic might.  
Or their own self they make their universe.  
In all who have risen to a greater Life,  
A voice of unborn things whispers to the ear,  
To their eyes visited by some high sunlight  
Aspiration shows the image of a crown:  
To work out a seed that she has thrown within,

To achieve her power in them her creatures live.  
Each is a greatness growing towards the heights  
Or from his inner centre oceans out;  
In circling ripples of concentric power  
They swallow, gluttoned, their environment.  
Even of that largeness many a cabin make;  
In narrower breadths and briefer vistas pent  
They live content with some small greatness won.  
To rule the little empire of themselves,  
To be a figure in their private world  
And make the milieu's joys and griefs their own  
And satisfy their life-motives and life-wants  
Is charge enough and office for this strength,  
A steward of the Person and his fate.  
This was transition-line and starting-point,  
A first immigration into heavenliness,  
For all who cross into that brilliant sphere:  
These are the kinsmen of our earthly race;  
This region borders on our mortal state.

This wider world our greater movements gives,  
Its strong formations build our growing selves;  
Its creatures are our brighter replicas,  
Complete the types we only initiate  
And are securely what we strive to be.  
As if thought-out eternal characters,  
Entire, not pulled as we by contrary tides,  
They follow the unseen leader in the heart,  
Their lives obey the inner nature's law.  
There is kept grandeur's store, the hero's mould;  
The soul is the watchful builder of its fate;  
None is a spirit indifferent and inert;  
They choose their side, they see the god they adore.  
A battle is joined between the true and false,  
A pilgrimage sets out to the divine Light.  
For even Ignorance there aspires to know  
And shines with the lustre of a distant star;

There is a knowledge in the heart of sleep  
And Nature comes to them as a conscious force.  
An ideal is their leader and their king:  
Aspiring to the monarchy of the sun  
They call in Truth for their high government,  
Hold her incarnate in their daily acts  
And fill their thoughts with her inspired voice  
And shape their lives into her breathing form,  
Till in her sun-gold godhead they too share.  
Or to the truth of Darkness they subscribe;  
Whether for Heaven or Hell they must wage war:  
Warriors of Good, they serve a shining cause  
Or are Evil's soldiers in the pay of Sin.  
For evil and good an equal tenure keep  
Wherever Knowledge is Ignorance's twin.  
All powers of Life towards their godhead tend  
In the wideness and the daring of that air,  
Each builds its temple and expands its cult,  
And Sin too there is a divinity.  
Affirming the beauty and splendour of her law  
She claims life as her natural domain,  
Assumes the world's throne or dons the papal robe:  
Her worshippers proclaim her sacred right.  
A red-tiaraed Falsehood they revere,  
Worship the shadow of a crooked God,  
Admit the black Idea that twists the brain  
Or lie with the harlot Power that slays the soul.  
A mastering virtue statuesques the pose,  
Or a Titan passion goads to a proud unrest:  
At Wisdom's altar they are kings and priests  
Or their life a sacrifice to an idol of Power.  
Or Beauty shines on them like a wandering star;  
Too far to reach, passionate they follow her light;  
In Art and life they catch the All-Beautiful's ray  
And make the world their radiant treasure house:  
Even common figures are with marvel robed;

A charm and greatness locked in every hour  
Awakes the joy which sleeps in all things made.  
A mighty victory or a mighty fall,  
A throne in heaven or a pit in hell,  
The dual Energy they have justified  
And marked their souls with her tremendous seal:  
Whatever Fate may do to them they have earned;  
Something they have done, something they have been, they live.  
There Matter is soul's result and not its cause.  
In a contrary balance to earth's truth of things  
The gross weighs less, the subtle counts for more;  
On inner values hangs the outer plan.  
As quivers with the thought the expressive word,  
As yearns the act with the passion of the soul  
This world's apparent sensible design  
Looks vibrant back to some interior might.  
A Mind not limited by external sense  
Gave figures to the spirit's imponderables,  
The world's impacts without channels registered  
And turned into the body's concrete thrill  
The vivid workings of a bodiless Force;  
Powers here subliminal that act unseen  
Or in ambush crouch waiting behind the wall  
Came out in front uncovering their face.  
The occult grew there overt, the obvious kept  
A covert turn and shouldered the unknown;  
The unseen was felt and jostled visible shapes.  
In the communion of two meeting minds  
Thought looked at thought and had no need of speech;  
Emotion clasped emotion in two hearts,  
They felt each other's thrill in the flesh and nerves  
Or melted each in each and grew immense  
As when two houses burn and fire joins fire:  
Hate grappled hate and love broke in on love,  
Will wrestled with will on mind's invisible ground;  
Others' sensations passing through like waves

Left quivering the subtle body's frame,  
Their anger rushed galloping in brute attack,  
A charge of trampling hooves on shaken soil;  
One felt another's grief invade the breast,  
Another's joy exulting ran through the blood:  
Hearts could draw close through distance, voices near  
That spoke upon the shore of alien seas.  
There beat a throb of living interchange:  
Being felt being even when afar  
And consciousness replied to consciousness.  
And yet the ultimate oneness was not there.  
There was a separateness of soul from soul:  
An inner wall of silence could be built,  
An armour of conscious might protect and shield;  
The being could be closed in and solitary;  
One could remain apart in self, alone.  
Identity was not yet nor union's peace.  
All was imperfect still, half-known, half-done:  
The miracle of Inconscience overpassed,  
The miracle of the Superconscient still,  
Unknown, self-wrapped, unfelt, unknowable,  
Looked down on them, origin of all they were.  
As forms they came of the formless Infinite,  
As names lived of a nameless Eternity.  
The beginning and the end were there occult;  
A middle term worked unexplained, abrupt:  
They were words that spoke to a vast wordless Truth,  
They were figures crowding an unfinished sum.  
None truly knew himself or knew the world  
Or the Reality living there enshrined:  
Only they knew what Mind could take and build  
Out of the secret Supermind's huge store.  
A darkness under them, a bright Void above,  
Uncertain they lived in a great climbing Space;  
By mysteries they explained a Mystery,  
A riddling answer met the riddle of things.

As he moved in this ether of ambiguous life,  
Himself was soon a riddle to himself;  
As symbols he saw all and sought their sense.

Across the leaping springs of death and birth  
And over shifting borders of soul-change,  
A hunter on the spirit's creative track,  
He followed in life's fine and mighty trails  
Pursuing her sealed formidable delight  
In a perilous adventure without close.  
At first no aim appeared in those large steps:  
Only the wide source he saw of all things here  
Looking towards a wider source beyond.  
For as she drew away from earthly lines,  
A tenser drag was felt from the Unknown,  
A higher context of delivering thought  
Drove her towards marvel and discovery;  
There came a high release from pettier cares,  
A mightier image of desire and hope,  
A vaster formula, a greater scene.  
Ever she circled towards some far-off Light:  
Her signs still covered more than they revealed;  
But tied to some immediate sight and will  
They lost their purport in the joy of use,  
Till stripped of their infinite meaning they became  
A cipher gleaming with unreal sense.  
Armed with a magical and haunted bow  
She aimed at a target kept invisible  
And ever deemed remote though always near.  
As one who spells illumined characters,  
The key-book of a crabbed magician text,  
He scanned her subtle tangled weird designs  
And the screened difficult theorem of her clues,  
Traced in the monstrous sands of desert Time  
The thread beginnings of her titan works,  
Watched her charade of action for some hint,

Read the Nō-gestures of her silhouettes,  
And strove to capture in their burdened drift  
The dance-fantasia of her sequences  
Escaping into rhythmic mystery,  
A glimmer of fugitive feet on fleeing soil.  
In the labyrinth pattern of her thoughts and hopes  
And the byways of her intimate desires,  
In the complex corners crowded with her dreams  
And rounds crossed by an intrigue of irrelevant rounds,  
A wanderer straying amid fugitive scenes,  
He lost its signs and chased each failing guess.  
Ever he met key-words, ignorant of their key.  
A sun that dazzled its own eye of sight,  
A luminous enigma's brilliant hood  
Lit the dense purple barrier of thought's sky:  
A dim large trance showed to the night her stars.  
As if sitting near an open window's gap,  
He read by lightning-flash on crowding flash  
Chapters of her metaphysical romance  
Of the soul's search for lost Reality  
And her fictions drawn from spirit's authentic fact,  
Her caprices and conceits and meanings locked,  
Her rash unseizable freaks and mystiered turns.  
The magnificent wrappings of her secrecy  
That fold her desirable body out of sight,  
The strange significant forms woven on her robe,  
Her meaningful outlines of the souls of things  
He saw, her false transparencies of thought-hue,  
Her rich brocades with imaged fancies sewn  
And mutable masks and broideries of disguise.  
A thousand baffling faces of the Truth  
Looked at him from her forms with unknown eyes  
And wordless mouths unrecognisable,  
Spoke from the figures of her masquerade,  
Or peered from the recondite magnificence  
And subtle splendour of her draperies.

In sudden scintillations of the Unknown,  
Inexpressive sounds became veridical,  
Ideas that seemed unmeaning flashed out truth;  
Voices that came from unseen waiting worlds  
Uttered the syllables of the Unmanifest  
To clothe the body of the mystic Word,  
And wizard diagrams of the occult Law  
Sealed some precise unreadable harmony,  
Or used hue and figure to reconstitute  
The herald blazon of Time's secret things.  
In her green wildernesses and lurking depths,  
In her thickets of joy where danger clasps delight,  
He glimpsed the hidden wings of her songster hopes,  
A glimmer of blue and gold and scarlet fire.  
In her covert lanes, bordering her chance field-paths  
And by her singing rivulets and calm lakes  
He found the glow of her golden fruits of bliss  
And the beauty of her flowers of dream and muse.  
As if a miracle of heart's change by joy  
He watched in the alchemist radiance of her suns  
The crimson outburst of one secular flower  
On the tree-of-sacrifice of spiritual love.  
In the sleepy splendour of her noons he saw,  
A perpetual repetition through the hours,  
Thought's dance of dragonflies on mystery's stream  
That skim but never test its murmurs' race,  
And heard the laughter of her rose desires  
Running as if to escape from longed-for hands,  
Jingling sweet anklet-bells of fantasy.  
Amidst live symbols of her occult power  
He moved and felt them as close real forms:  
In that life more concrete than the lives of men  
Throbbled heart-beats of the hidden reality:  
Embodied was there what we but think and feel,  
Self-framed what here takes outward borrowed shapes.  
A comrade of Silence on her austere heights

Accepted by her mighty loneliness,  
He stood with her on meditating peaks  
Where life and being are a sacrament  
Offered to the Reality beyond,  
And saw her loose into infinity  
Her hooded eagles of significance,  
Messengers of Thought to the Unknowable.  
Identified in soul-vision and soul-sense,  
Entering into her depths as into a house,  
All he became that she was or longed to be,  
He thought with her thoughts and journeyed with her steps,  
Lived with her breath and scanned all with her eyes  
That so he might learn the secret of her soul.  
A witness overmastered by his scene,  
He admired her splendid front of pomp and play  
And the marvels of her rich and delicate craft,  
And thrilled to the insistence of her cry;  
Impassioned he bore the sorceries of her might,  
Felt laid on him her abrupt mysterious will,  
Her hands that knead fate in their violent grasp,  
Her touch that moves, her powers that seize and drive.  
But this too he saw, her soul that wept within,  
Her seekings vain that clutch at fleeing truth,  
Her hopes whose sombre gaze mates with despair,  
The passion that possessed her longing limbs,  
The trouble and rapture of her yearning breasts,  
Her mind that toils unsatisfied with its fruits,  
Her heart that captures not the one Beloved.  
Always he met a veiled and seeking Force,  
An exiled goddess building mimic heavens,  
A Sphinx whose eyes look up to a hidden Sun.

Ever he felt near a spirit in her forms:  
Its passive presence was her nature's strength;  
This sole is real in apparent things,  
Even upon earth the spirit is life's key,

But her solid outsides nowhere bear its trace.  
Its stamp on her acts is undiscoverable.  
A pathos of lost heights is its appeal.  
Only sometimes is caught a shadowy line  
That seems a hint of veiled reality.  
Life stared at him with vague confused outlines  
Offering a picture the eyes could not keep,  
A story that was yet not written there.  
As in a fragmentary half-lost design  
Life's meanings fled from the pursuing eye.  
Life's visage hides life's real self from sight;  
Life's secret sense is written within, above.  
The thought that gives it sense lives far beyond;  
It is not seen in its half-finished design.  
In vain we hope to read the baffling signs  
Or find the word of the half-played charade.  
Only in that greater life a cryptic thought  
Is found, is hinted some interpreting word  
That makes the earth-myth a tale intelligible.  
Something was seen at last that looked like truth.  
In a half-lit air of hazardous mystery  
The eye that looks at the dark half of truth  
Made out an image mid a vivid blur  
And peering through a mist of subtle tints  
He saw a half-blind chained divinity  
Bewildered by the world in which he moved,  
Yet conscious of some light prompting his soul.  
Attracted to strange far-off shimmerings,  
Led by the fluting of a distant Player  
He sought his way amid life's laughter and call  
And the index chaos of her myriad steps  
Towards some total deep infinitude.  
Around crowded the forest of her signs:  
At hazard he read by arrow-leaps of Thought  
That hit the mark by guess or luminous chance,  
Her changing coloured road-lights of idea

And her signals of uncertain swift event,  
The hieroglyphs of her symbol pageantries  
And her landmarks in the tangled paths of Time.  
In her mazes of approach and of retreat  
To every side she draws him and repels,  
But drawn too near escapes from his embrace;  
All ways she leads him but no way is sure.  
Allured by the many-toned marvel of her chant,  
Attracted by the witchcraft of her moods  
And moved by her casual touch to joy and grief,  
He loses himself in her but wins her not.  
A fugitive paradise smiles at him from her eyes:  
He dreams of her beauty made for ever his,  
He dreams of his mastery her limbs shall bear,  
He dreams of the magic of her breasts of bliss.  
In her illumined script, her fanciful  
Translation of God's pure original text,  
He thinks to read the Scripture Wonderful,  
Hieratic key to unknown beatitudes.  
But the Word of Life is hidden in its script,  
The chant of Life has lost its divine note.  
Unseen, a captive in a house of sound,  
The spirit lost in the splendour of a dream  
Listens to a thousand-voiced illusion's ode.  
A delicate weft of sorcery steals the heart  
Or a fiery magic tints her tones and hues,  
Yet they but wake a thrill of transient grace;  
A vagrant march struck by the wanderer Time,  
They call to a brief unsatisfied delight  
Or wallow in ravishments of mind and sense,  
But miss the luminous answer of the soul.  
A blind heart-throb that reaches joy through tears,  
A yearning towards peaks for ever unreached,  
An ecstasy of unfulfilled desire  
Track the last heavenward climbings of her voice.  
Transmuted are past suffering's memories

Into an old sadness's sweet escaping trail:  
Turned are her tears to gems of diamond pain,  
Her sorrow into a magic crown of song.  
Brief are her snatches of felicity  
That touch the surface, then escape or die:  
A lost remembrance echoes in her depths,  
A deathless longing is hers, a veiled self's call;  
A prisoner in the mortal's limiting world,  
A spirit wounded by life sobs in her breast;  
A cherished suffering is her deepest cry.  
A wanderer on forlorn despairing routes,  
Along the roads of sound a frustrate voice  
Forsaken cries to a forgotten bliss.  
Astray in the echo caverns of Desire,  
It guards the phantoms of a soul's dead hopes  
And keeps alive the voice of perished things  
Or lingers upon sweet and errant notes  
Hunting for pleasure in the heart of pain.  
A fateful hand has touched the cosmic chords  
And the intrusion of a troubled strain  
Covers the inner music's hidden key  
That guides unheard the surface cadences.  
Yet is it joy to live and to create  
And joy to love and labour though all fails,  
And joy to seek though all we find deceives  
And all on which we lean betrays our trust;  
Yet something in its depths was worth the pain,  
A passionate memory haunts with ecstasy's fire.  
Even grief has joy hidden beneath its roots:  
For nothing is truly vain the One has made:  
In our defeated hearts God's strength survives  
And victory's star still lights our desperate road;  
Our death is made a passage to new worlds.  
This to Life's music gives its anthem swell.  
To all she lends the glory of her voice;  
Heaven's raptures whisper to her heart and pass,

Earth's transient yearnings cry from her lips and fade.  
Alone the God-given hymn escapes her art  
That came with her from her spiritual home  
But stopped half-way and failed, a silent word  
Awake in some deep pause of waiting worlds,  
A murmur suspended in eternity's hush:  
But no breath comes from the supernal peace:  
A sumptuous interlude occupies the ear  
And the heart listens and the soul consents;  
An evanescent music it repeats  
Wasting on transience Time's eternity.  
A tremolo of the voices of the hours  
Oblivious screens the high intended theme  
The self-embodying spirit came to play  
On the vast clavichord of Nature-Force.  
Only a mighty murmur here and there  
Of the eternal Word, the blissful Voice  
Or Beauty's touch transfiguring heart and sense,  
A wandering splendour and a mystic cry,  
Recalls the strength and sweetness heard no more.

Here is the gap, here stops or sinks life's force;  
This deficit paupers the magician's skill:  
This want makes all the rest seem thin and bare.  
A half-sight draws the horizon of her acts:  
Her depths remember what she came to do,  
But the mind has forgotten or the heart mistakes:  
In Nature's endless lines is lost the God.  
In knowledge to sum up omniscience,  
In action to erect the Omnipotent,  
To create her Creator here was her heart's conceit,  
To invade the cosmic scene with utter God.  
Toiling to transform the still far Absolute  
Into an all-fulfilling epiphany,  
Into an utterance of the Ineffable,  
She would bring the glory here of the Absolute's force,

Change poise into creation's rhythmic swing,  
Marry with a sky of calm a sea of bliss.  
A fire to call eternity into Time,  
Make body's joy as vivid as the soul's,  
Earth she would lift to neighbourhood with heaven,  
Labours life to equate with the Supreme  
And reconcile the Eternal and the Abyss.  
Her pragmatism of the transcendent Truth  
Fills silence with the voices of the gods,  
But in the cry the single Voice is lost.  
For Nature's vision climbs beyond her acts.  
A life of gods in heaven she sees above,  
A demigod emerging from an ape  
Is all she can in our mortal element.  
Here the half-god, the half-titan are her peak:  
This greater life wavers twixt earth and sky.  
A poignant paradox pursues her dreams:  
Her hooded energy moves an ignorant world  
To look for a joy her own strong clasp puts off:  
In her embrace it cannot turn to its source.  
Immense her power, endless her act's vast drive,  
Astray is its significance and lost.  
Although she carries in her secret breast  
The law and journeying curve of all things born  
Her knowledge partial seems, her purpose small;  
On a soil of yearning tread her sumptuous hours.  
A leaden Nescience weighs the wings of Thought,  
Her power oppresses the being with its garbs,  
Her actions prison its immortal gaze.  
A sense of limit haunts her masteries  
And nowhere is assured content or peace:  
For all the depth and beauty of her work  
A wisdom lacks that sets the spirit free.  
An old and faded charm had now her face  
And palled for him her quick and curious lore;  
His wide soul asked a deeper joy than hers.

Out of her daedal lines he sought escape;  
But neither gate of horn nor ivory  
He found nor postern of spiritual sight,  
There was no issue from that dreamlike space.  
Our being must move eternally through Time;  
Death helps us not, vain is the hope to cease;  
A secret Will compels us to endure.  
Our life's repose is in the Infinite;  
It cannot end, its end is Life supreme.  
Death is a passage, not the goal of our walk:  
Some ancient deep impulsion labours on:  
Our souls are dragged as with a hidden leash,  
Carried from birth to birth, from world to world,  
Our acts prolong after the body's fall  
The old perpetual journey without pause.  
No silent peak is found where Time can rest.  
This was a magic stream that reached no sea.  
However far he went, wherever turned,  
The wheel of works ran with him and outstripped;  
Always a farther task was left to do.  
A beat of action and a cry of search  
For ever grew in that unquiet world;  
A busy murmur filled the heart of Time.  
All was contrivance and unceasing stir.  
A hundred ways to live were tried in vain:  
A sameness that assumed a thousand forms  
Strove to escape from its long monotone  
And made new things that soon were like the old.  
A curious decoration lured the eye  
And novel values furbished ancient themes  
To cheat the mind with the idea of change.  
A different picture that was still the same  
Appeared upon the cosmic vague background.  
Only another labyrinthine house  
Of creatures and their doings and events,  
A city of the traffic of bound souls,

A market of creation and her wares,  
Was offered to the labouring mind and heart.  
A circuit ending where it first began  
Is dubbed the forward and eternal march  
Of progress on perfection's unknown road.  
Each final scheme leads to a sequel plan.  
Yet every new departure seems the last,  
Inspired evangel, theory's ultimate peak,  
Proclaiming a panacea for all Time's ills  
Or carrying thought in its ultimate zenith flight  
And trumpeting supreme discovery;  
Each brief idea, a structure perishable,  
Publishes the immortality of its rule,  
Its claim to be the perfect form of things,  
Truth's last epitome, Time's golden best.  
But nothing has been achieved of infinite worth:  
A world made ever anew, never complete,  
Piled always half-attempts on lost attempts  
And saw a fragment as the eternal Whole.  
In the aimless mounting total of things done  
Existence seemed a vain necessity's act,  
A wrestle of eternal opposites  
In a clasped antagonism's close-locked embrace,  
A play without denouement or idea,  
A hunger march of lives without a goal,  
Or, written on a bare blackboard of Space,  
A futile and recurring sum of souls,  
A hope that failed, a light that never shone,  
The labour of an unaccomplished Force  
Tied to its acts in a dim eternity.  
There is no end or none can yet be seen:  
Although defeated, life must struggle on;  
Always she sees a crown she cannot grasp;  
Her eyes are fixed beyond her fallen state.  
There quivers still within her breast and ours  
A glory that was once and is no more,

Or there calls to us from some unfulfilled beyond  
A greatness yet unreached by the halting world.  
In a memory behind our mortal sense  
A dream persists of larger happier air  
Breathing around free hearts of joy and love,  
Forgotten by us, immortal in lost Time.  
A ghost of bliss pursues her haunted depths;  
For she remembers still, though now so far,  
Her realm of golden ease and glad desire  
And the beauty and strength and happiness that were hers  
In the sweetness of her glowing paradise,  
In her kingdom of immortal ecstasy  
Half-way between God's silence and the Abyss.  
This knowledge in our hidden parts we keep;  
Awake to a vague mystery's appeal,  
We meet a deep unseen Reality  
Far truer than the world's face of present truth:  
We are chased by a self we cannot now recall  
And moved by a Spirit we must still become.  
As one who has lost the kingdom of his soul,  
We look back to some god-phase of our birth  
Other than this imperfect creature here  
And hope in this or a diviner world  
To recover yet from Heaven's patient guard  
What by our mind's forgetfulness we miss,  
Our being's natural felicity,  
Our heart's delight we have exchanged for grief,  
The body's thrill we bartered for mere pain,  
The bliss for which our mortal nature yearns  
As yearns an obscure moth to blazing Light.  
Our life is a march to a victory never won.  
This wave of being longing for delight,  
This eager turmoil of unsatisfied strengths,  
These long far files of forward-striving hopes  
Lift worshipping eyes to the blue Void called heaven  
Looking for the golden Hand that never came,

The advent for which all creation waits,  
The beautiful visage of Eternity  
That shall appear upon the roads of Time.  
Yet still to ourselves we say rekindling faith,  
“Oh, surely one day he shall come to our cry,  
One day he shall create our life anew  
And utter the magic formula of peace  
And bring perfection to the scheme of things.  
One day he shall descend to life and earth,  
Leaving the secrecy of the eternal doors,  
Into a world that cries to him for help,  
And bring the truth that sets the spirit free,  
The joy that is the baptism of the soul,  
The strength that is the outstretched arm of Love.  
One day he shall lift his beauty’s dreadful veil,  
Impose delight on the world’s beating heart  
And bare his secret body of light and bliss.”  
But now we strain to reach an unknown goal:  
There is no end of seeking and of birth,  
There is no end of dying and return;  
The life that wins its aim asks greater aims,  
The life that fails and dies must live again;  
Till it has found itself it cannot cease.  
All must be done for which life and death were made.  
But who shall say that even then is rest?  
Or there repose and action are the same  
In the deep breast of God’s supreme delight.  
In a high state where ignorance is no more,  
Each movement is a wave of peace and bliss,  
Repose God’s motionless creative force,  
Action a ripple in the Infinite  
And birth a gesture of Eternity.  
A sun of transfiguration still can shine  
And Night can bare its core of mystic light;  
The self-cancelling, self-afflicting paradox  
Into a self-luminous mystery might change,

The imbroglio into a joyful miracle.  
Then God could be visible here, here take a shape;  
Disclosed would be the spirit's identity;  
Life would reveal her true immortal face.  
But now a termless labour is her fate:  
In its recurrent decimal of events  
Birth, death are a ceaseless iteration's points;  
The old question-mark margins each finished page,  
Each volume of her effort's history.  
A limping Yes through the aeons journeys still  
Accompanied by an eternal No.  
All seems in vain, yet endless is the game.  
Impassive turns the ever-circling Wheel,  
Life has no issue, death brings no release.  
A prisoner of itself the being lives  
And keeps its futile immortality;  
Extinction is denied, its sole escape.  
An error of the gods has made the world.  
Or indifferent the Eternal watches Time.

END OF CANTO SIX