

Track 35: Canto Four, Section 1, lines 1 to 110

- A quivering trepidant uncertain world
Born from that dolorous meeting and eclipse
Appeared in the emptiness where her feet had trod,
A quick obscurity, a seeking stir.
- 5 There was a writhing of half-conscious force
Hardly awakened from the Inconscient's sleep,
Tied to an instinct-driven Ignorance,
To find itself and find its hold on things.
Inheritor of poverty and loss,
- 10 Assailed by memories that fled when seized,
Haunted by a forgotten uplifting hope,
It strove with a blindness as of groping hands
To fill the aching and disastrous gap
Between earth-pain and the bliss from which Life fell.
- 15 A world that ever seeks for something missed,
Hunts for the joy that earth has failed to keep.
Too near to our gates its unappeased unrest
For peace to live on the inert solid globe:
It has joined its hunger to the hunger of earth,
- 20 It has given the law of craving to our lives,
It has made our spirit's need a fathomless gulf.
An Influence entered mortal night and day,
A shadow overcast the time-born race;
In the troubled stream where leaps a blind heart-pulse
- 25 And the nerve-beat of feeling wakes in sense
Dividing Matter's sleep from conscious Mind,
There strayed a call that knew not why it came.
A Power beyond earth's scope has touched the earth;
The repose that might have been can be no more;
- 30 A formless yearning passions in man's heart,
A cry is in his blood for happier things:
Else could he roam on a free sunlit soil
With the childlike pain-forgetting mind of beasts
Or live happy, unmoved, like flowers and trees.
- 35 The Might that came upon the earth to bless,
Has stayed on earth to suffer and aspire.
The infant laugh that rang through time is hushed:
Man's natural joy of life is overcast
And sorrow is his nurse of destiny.
- 40 The animal's thoughtless joy is left behind,
Care and reflection burden his daily walk;
He has risen to greatness and to discontent,
He is awake to the Invisible.
Insatiate seeker, he has all to learn:
- 45 He has exhausted now life's surface acts,
His being's hidden realms remain to explore.
He becomes a mind, he becomes a spirit and self;
In his fragile tenement he grows Nature's lord.

In him Matter wakes from its long obscure trance,
50 In him earth feels the Godhead drawing near.
An eyeless Power that sees no more its aim,
A restless hungry energy of Will,
Life cast her seed in the body's indolent mould;
It woke from happy torpor a blind Force
55 Compelling it to sense and seek and feel.
In the enormous labour of the Void
Perturbing with her dreams the vast routine
And dead roll of a slumbering universe
The mighty prisoner struggled for release.

60 Alive with her yearning woke the inert cell,
In the heart she kindled a fire of passion and need,
Amid the deep calm of inanimate things
Arose her great voice of toil and prayer and strife.
A groping consciousness in a voiceless world,
65 A guideless sense was given her for her road;
Thought was withheld and nothing now she knew,
But all the unknown was hers to feel and clasp.
Obeying the push of unborn things towards birth
Out of her seal of insentient life she broke:
70 In her substance of unthinking mute soul-strength
That cannot utter what its depths divine,
Awoke a blind necessity to know.
The chain that bound her she made her instrument;
Instinct was hers, the chrysalis of Truth,
75 And effort and growth and striving nescience.
Inflicting on the body desire and hope,
Imposing on conscience consciousness,
She brought into Matter's dull tenacity
Her anguished claim to her lost sovereign right,
80 Her tireless search, her vexed uneasy heart,
Her wandering unsure steps, her cry for change.
Adorer of a joy without a name,
In her obscure cathedral of delight
To dim dwarf gods she offers secret rites.

85 But vain unending is the sacrifice,
The priest an ignorant mage who only makes
Futile mutations in the altar's plan
And casts blind hopes into a powerless flame.
A burden of transient gains weighs down her steps
90 And hardly under that load can she advance;
But the hours cry to her, she travels on
Passing from thought to thought, from want to want;
Her greatest progress is a deepened need.
Matter dissatisfies, she turns to Mind;
95 She conquers earth, her field, then claims the heavens.
Insensible, breaking the work she has done
The stumbling ages over her labour pass,

But still no great transforming light came down
And no revealing rapture touched her fall.

- 100 Only a glimmer sometimes splits mind's sky
Justifying the ambiguous providence
That makes of night a path to unknown dawns
Or a dark clue to some diviner state.
In Nescience began her mighty task,
105 In Ignorance she pursues the unfinished work,
For knowledge gropes, but meets not Wisdom's face.
Ascending slowly with unconscious steps,
A foundling of the Gods she wanders here
Like a child-soul left near the gates of Hell
110 Fumbling through fog in search of Paradise.