

Track 39: Section 5, lines 350 to 523

350 Then came a fierier breath of waking Life,
And there arose from the dim gulf of things
The strange creations of a thinking sense,
Existences half-real and half-dream.
A life was there that hoped not to survive:

355 Beings were born who perished without trace,
Events that were a formless drama's limbs
And actions driven by a blind creature will.
A seeking Power found out its road to form,
Patterns were built of love and joy and pain

360 And symbol figures for the moods of Life.
An insect hedonism fluttered and crawled
And basked in a sunlit Nature's surface thrills,
And dragon raptures, python agonies
Crawled in the marsh and mire and licked the sun.

365 Huge armoured strengths shook a frail quaking ground,
Great puissant creatures with a dwarfish brain,
And pigmy tribes imposed their small life-drift.
In a dwarf model of humanity
Nature now launched the extreme experience

370 And master-point of her design's caprice,
Luminous result of her half-conscious climb
On rungs twixt her sublimities and grotesques
To massive from infinitesimal shapes,
To a subtle balancing of body and soul,

375 To an order of intelligent littleness.
Around him in the moment-beats of Time
The kingdom of the animal self arose,
Where deed is all and mind is still half-born
And the heart obeys a dumb unseen control.

380 The Force that works by the light of Ignorance,
Her animal experiment began,
Crowding with conscious creatures her world-scheme;
But to the outward only were they alive,
Only they replied to touches and surfaces

385 And to the prick of need that drove their lives.
A body that knew not its own soul within,
There lived and longed, had wrath and joy and grief;
A mind was there that met the objective world
As if a stranger or enemy at its door:

390 Its thoughts were kneaded by the shocks of sense;
It captured not the spirit in the form,
It entered not the heart of what it saw;
It looked not for the power behind the act,
It studied not the hidden motive in things

395 Nor strove to find the meaning of it all.
Beings were there who wore a human form;
Absorbed they lived in the passion of the scene,
But knew not who they were or why they lived:
Content to breathe, to feel, to sense, to act,

400 Life had for them no aim save Nature's joy
And the stimulus and delight of outer things;
Identified with the spirit's outward shell,

They worked for the body's wants, they craved no more.
The veiled spectator watching from their depths
405 Fixed not his inward eye upon himself
Nor turned to find the author of the plot,
He saw the drama only and the stage.
There was no brooding stress of deeper sense,
The burden of reflection was not borne:
410 Mind looked on Nature with unknowing eyes,
Adored her boons and feared her monstrous strokes.
It pondered not on the magic of her laws,
It thirsted not for the secret wells of Truth,
But made a register of crowding facts
415 And strung sensations on a vivid thread:
It hunted and it fled and sniffed the winds,
Or slothed inert in sunshine and soft air:
It sought the engrossing contacts of the world,
But only to feed the surface sense with bliss.
420 These felt life's quiver in the outward touch,
They could not feel behind the touch the soul.
To guard their form of self from Nature's harm,
To enjoy and to survive was all their care.
The narrow horizon of their days was filled
425 With things and creatures that could help and hurt:
The world's values hung upon their little self.
Isolated, cramped in the vast unknown,
To save their small lives from surrounding Death
They made a tiny circle of defence
430 Against the siege of the huge universe:
They preyed upon the world and were its prey,
But never dreamed to conquer and be free.
Obeying the World-Power's hints and firm taboos
A scanty part they drew from her rich store;
435 There was no conscious code and no life-plan:
The patterns of thinking of a little group
Fixed a traditional behaviour's law.
Ignorant of soul save as a wraith within,
Tied to a mechanism of unchanging lives
440 And to a dull usual sense and feeling's beat,
They turned in grooves of animal desire.
In walls of stone fenced round they worked and warred,
Did by a banded selfishness a small good
Or wrought a dreadful wrong and cruel pain
445 On sentient lives and thought they did no ill.
Ardent from the sack of happy peaceful homes
And gorged with slaughter, plunder, rape and fire,
They made of human selves their helpless prey,
A drove of captives led to lifelong woe,
450 Or torture a spectacle made and holiday,
Mocking or thrilled by their torn victims' pangs;
Admiring themselves as titans and as gods
Proudly they sang their high and glorious deeds
And praised their victory and their splendid force.
455 An animal in the instinctive herd
Pushed by life impulses, forced by common needs,

Each in his own kind saw his ego's glass;
All served the aim and action of the pack.
Those like himself, by blood or custom kin,
460 To him were parts of his life, his adjunct selves,
His personal nebula's constituent stars,
Satellite companions of his solar I.
A master of his life's environment,
A leader of a huddled human mass
465 Herding for safety on a dangerous earth,
He gathered them round him as if minor Powers
To make a common front against the world,
Or, weak and sole on an indifferent earth,
As a fortress for his undefended heart,
470 Or else to heal his body's loneliness.
In others than his kind he sensed a foe,
An alien unlike force to shun and fear,
A stranger and adversary to hate and slay.
Or he lived as lives the solitary brute;
475 At war with all he bore his single fate.
Absorbed in the present act, the fleeting days,
None thought to look beyond the hour's gains,
Or dreamed to make this earth a fairer world,
Or felt some touch divine surprise his heart.
480 The gladness that the fugitive moment gave,
The desire grasped, the bliss, the experience won,
Movement and speed and strength were joy enough
And bodily longings shared and quarrel and play,
And tears and laughter and the need called love.
485 In war and clasp these life-wants joined the All-Life,
Wrestlings of a divided unity
Inflicting mutual grief and happiness
In ignorance of the Self for ever one.
Arming its creatures with delight and hope
490 A half-awakened Nescience struggled there
To know by sight and touch the outside of things.
Instinct was formed; in memory's crowded sleep
The past lived on as in a bottomless sea:
Inverting into half-thought the quickened sense
495 She felt around for truth with fumbling hands,
Clutched to her the little she could reach and seize
And put aside in her subconscious cave.
So must the dim being grow in light and force
And rise to his higher destiny at last,
500 Look up to God and round at the universe,
And learn by failure and progress by fall
And battle with environment and doom,
By suffering discover his deep soul
And by possession grow to his own vasts.
505 Half-way she stopped and found her path no more.
Still nothing was achieved but to begin,
Yet finished seemed the circle of her force.
Only she had beaten out sparks of ignorance;
Only the life could think and not the mind,
510 Only the sense could feel and not the soul.

Only was lit some heat of the flame of Life,
Some joy to be, some rapturous leaps of sense.

All was an impetus of half-conscious Force,
A spirit sprawling drowned in dense life-foam,
515 A vague self grasping at the shape of things.

Behind all moved seeking for vessels to hold
A first raw vintage of the grapes of God,
On earth's mud a spilth of the supernal Bliss,
Intoxicating the stupefied soul and mind
520 A heady wine of rapture dark and crude,
Dim, uncast yet into spiritual form,
Obscure inhabitant of the world's blind core,
An unborn godhead's will, a mute Desire.