

## Track 74, Canto 12 full

Always the Ideal beckoned from afar.  
Awakened by the touch of the Unseen,  
Deserting the boundary of things achieved,  
Aspired the strong discoverer, tireless Thought,  
5 Revealing at each step a luminous world.  
It left known summits for the unknown peaks:  
Impassioned, it sought the lone unrealised Truth,  
It longed for the Light that knows not death and birth.  
Each stage of the soul's remote ascent was built  
10 Into a constant heaven felt always here.  
At each pace of the journey marvellous  
A new degree of wonder and of bliss,  
A new rung formed in Being's mighty stair,  
A great wide step trembling with jewelled fire  
15 As if a burning spirit quivered there  
Upholding with his flame the immortal hope,  
As if a radiant God had given his soul  
That he might feel the tread of pilgrim feet  
Mounting in haste to the Eternal's house.  
20 At either end of each effulgent stair  
The heavens of the ideal Mind were seen  
In a blue lucency of dreaming Space  
Like strips of brilliant sky clinging to the moon.  
On one side glimmered hue on floating hue,  
25 A glory of sunrise breaking on the soul,  
In a tremulous rapture of the heart's insight  
And the spontaneous bliss that beauty gives,  
The lovely kingdoms of the deathless Rose.  
Above the spirit cased in mortal sense  
30 Are superconscious realms of heavenly peace,  
Below, the Inconscient's sullen dim abyss,  
Between, behind our life, the deathless Rose.  
Across the covert air the spirit breathes,  
A body of the cosmic beauty and joy  
35 Unseen, unguessed by the blind suffering world,  
Climbing from Nature's deep surrendered heart  
It blooms for ever at the feet of God,  
Fed by life's sacrificial mysteries.  
Here too its bud is born in human breasts;  
40 Then by a touch, a presence or a voice  
The world is turned into a temple ground  
And all discloses the unknown Beloved.  
In an outburst of heavenly joy and ease  
Life yields to the divinity within  
45 And gives the rapture-offering of its all,  
And the soul opens to felicity.  
A bliss is felt that never can wholly cease,  
A sudden mystery of secret Grace

Flowers goldening our earth of red desire.

50 All the high gods who hid their visages  
From the soiled passionate ritual of our hopes,  
Reveal their names and their undying powers.  
A fiery stillness wakes the slumbering cells,  
A passion of the flesh becoming spirit,

55 And marvellously is fulfilled at last  
The miracle for which our life was made.  
A flame in a white voiceless cupola  
Is seen and faces of immortal light,  
The radiant limbs that know not birth and death,

60 The breasts that suckle the first-born of the Sun,  
The wings that crowd thought's ardent silences,  
The eyes that look into spiritual Space.  
Our hidden centres of celestial force  
Open like flowers to a heavenly atmosphere;

65 Mind pauses thrilled with the supernal Ray,  
And even this transient body then can feel  
Ideal love and flawless happiness  
And laughter of the heart's sweetness and delight  
Freed from the rude and tragic hold of Time,

70 And beauty and the rhythmic feet of the hours.  
This in high realms touches immortal kind;  
What here is in the bud has blossomed there.  
There is the secrecy of the House of Flame,  
The blaze of godlike thought and golden bliss,

75 The rapt idealism of heavenly sense;  
There are the wonderful voices, the sun-laugh,  
A gurgling eddy in rivers of God's joy,  
And the mystiered vineyards of the gold moon-wine,  
All the fire and sweetness of which hardly here

80 A brilliant shadow visits mortal life.  
Although are witnessed there the joys of Time,  
Pressed on the bosom the Immortal's touch is felt,  
Heard are the flutings of the Infinite.  
Here upon earth are early awakenings,

85 Moments that tremble in an air divine,  
And grown upon the yearning of her soil  
Time's sun-flowers' gaze at gold Eternity:  
There are the imperishable beatitudes.  
A million lotuses swaying on one stem,

90 World after coloured and ecstatic world  
Climbs towards some far unseen epiphany.  
On the other side of the eternal stairs  
The mighty kingdoms of the deathless Flame  
Aspired to reach the Being's absolutes.

95 Out of the sorrow and darkness of the world,  
Out of the depths where life and thought are tombed,  
Lonely mounts up to heaven the deathless Flame.

In a veiled Nature's hallowed secrecies  
It burns for ever on the altar Mind,  
100 Its priests the souls of dedicated gods,  
Humanity its house of sacrifice.  
Once kindled, never can its flamings cease.  
A fire along the mystic paths of earth,  
It rises through the mortal's hemisphere,  
105 Till borne by runners of the Day and Dusk  
It enters the occult eternal Light  
And clambers whitening to the invisible Throne.  
Its worlds are steps of an ascending Force:  
A dream of giant contours, titan lines,  
100 Homes of unfallen and illumined Might,  
Heavens of unchanging Good pure and unborn,  
Heights of the grandeur of Truth's ageless ray,  
As in a symbol sky they start to view  
And call our souls into a vaster air.  
115 On their summits they bear up the sleepless Flame;  
Dreaming of a mysterious Beyond,  
Transcendent of the paths of Fate and Time,  
They point above themselves with index peaks  
Through a pale-sapphire ether of god-mind  
120 Towards some gold Infinite's apocalypse.  
A thunder rolling mid the hills of God,  
Tireless, severe is their tremendous Voice:  
Exceeding us, to exceed ourselves they call  
And bid us rise incessantly above.  
125 Far from our eager reach those summits live,  
Too lofty for our mortal strength and height,  
Hardly in a dire ecstasy of toil  
Climbed by the spirit's naked athlete will.  
Austere, intolerant they claim from us  
130 Efforts too lasting for our mortal nerve  
Our hearts cannot cleave to nor our flesh support;  
Only the Eternal's strength in us can dare  
To attempt the immense adventure of that climb  
And the sacrifice of all we cherish here.  
135 Our human knowledge is a candle burnt  
On a dim altar to a sun-vast Truth;  
Man's virtue, a coarse-spun ill-fitting dress,  
Apparels wooden images of Good;  
Passionate and blinded, bleeding, stained with mire  
140 His energy stumbles towards a deathless Force.  
An imperfection dogs our highest strength;  
Portions and pale reflections are our share.  
Happy the worlds that have not felt our fall,  
Where Will is one with Truth and Good with Power;  
145 Impoverished not by earth-mind's indigence,  
They keep God's natural breath of mightiness,

His bare spontaneous swift intensities;  
There is his great transparent mirror, Self,  
And there his sovereign autarchy of bliss  
150 In which immortal natures have their part,  
Heirs and cosharers of divinity.

He through the Ideal's kingdoms moved at will,  
Accepted their beauty and their greatness bore,  
Partook of the glories of their wonder fields,  
155 But passed nor stayed beneath their splendour's rule.  
All there was an intense but partial light.

In each a seraph-winged high-browed Idea  
United all knowledge by one master thought,  
Persuaded all action to one golden sense,  
160 All powers subjected to a single power  
And made a world where it could reign alone,  
An absolute ideal's perfect home.

Insignia of their victory and their faith,  
They offered to the Traveller at their gates  
165 A quenchless flame or an unfading flower,  
Emblem of a high kingdom's privilege.

A glorious shining Angel of the Way  
Presented to the seeking of the soul  
The sweetness and the might of an idea,  
170 Each deemed Truth's intimate fount and summit force,  
The heart of the meaning of the universe,  
Perfection's key, passport to Paradise.

Yet were there regions where these absolutes met  
And made a circle of bliss with married hands;  
175 Light stood embraced by light, fire wedded fire,  
But none in the other would his body lose  
To find his soul in the world's single Soul,  
A multiplied rapture of infinity.

Onward he passed to a diviner sphere:  
180 There, joined in a common greatness, light and bliss,  
All high and beautiful and desirable powers  
Forgetting their difference and their separate reign  
Become a single multitudinous whole.

Above the parting of the roads of Time,  
185 Above the Silence and its thousandfold Word,  
In the immutable and inviolate Truth  
For ever united and inseparable,  
The radiant children of Eternity dwell  
On the wide spirit height where all are one.

**End of Canto Twelve**