

Track 81: Canto Two, Section 1: lines 1 to 72

A stillness absolute, incommunicable,
Meets the sheer self-discovery of the soul;
A wall of stillness shuts it from the world,
A gulf of stillness swallows up the sense
5 And makes unreal all that mind has known,
All that the labouring senses still would weave
Prolonging an imaged unreality.
Self's vast spiritual silence occupies Space;
Only the Inconceivable is left,
10 Only the Nameless without space and time:
Abolished is the burdening need of life:
Thought falls from us, we cease from joy and grief;
The ego is dead; we are freed from being and care,
We have done with birth and death and work and fate.
15 O soul, it is too early to rejoice!
Thou hast reached the boundless silence of the Self,
Thou hast leaped into a glad divine abyss;
But where hast thou thrown Self's mission and Self's power?
On what dead bank on the Eternal's road?
20 One was within thee who was self and world,
What hast thou done for his purpose in the stars?
Escape brings not the victory and the crown!
Something thou cam'st to do from the Unknown,
But nothing is finished and the world goes on
25 Because only half God's cosmic work is done.
Only the everlasting No has neared
And stared into thy eyes and killed thy heart:
But where is the Lover's everlasting Yes,
And immortality in the secret heart,
30 The voice that chants to the creator Fire,
The symbolled OM, the great assenting Word,
The bridge between the rapture and the calm,
The passion and the beauty of the Bride,
The chamber where the glorious enemies kiss,
35 The smile that saves, the golden peak of things?
This too is Truth at the mystic fount of Life.
A black veil has been lifted; we have seen
The mighty shadow of the omniscient Lord;
But who has lifted up the veil of light
40 And who has seen the body of the King?
The mystery of God's birth and acts remains
Leaving unbroken the last chapter's seal,
Unsolved the riddle of the unfinished Play;
The cosmic Player laughs within his mask,
45 And still the last inviolate secret hides
Behind the human glory of a Form,
Behind the gold eidolon of a Name.
A large white line has figured as a goal,
But far beyond the ineffable suntracks blaze:
50 What seemed the source and end was a wide gate,
A last bare step into eternity.
An eye has opened upon timelessness,
Infinity takes back the forms it gave,

55 And through God's darkness or his naked light
His million rays return into the Sun.
There is a zero sign of the Supreme;
Nature left nude and still uncovers God.
But in her grandiose nothingness all is there:
When her strong garbs are torn away from us,
60 The soul's ignorance is slain but not the soul:
The zero covers an immortal face.
A high and blank negation is not all,
A huge extinction is not God's last word,
Life's ultimate sense, the close of being's course,
65 The meaning of this great mysterious world.
In absolute silence sleeps an absolute Power.
Awaking, it can wake the trance-bound soul
And in the ray reveal the parent sun:
It can make the world a vessel of Spirit's force,
70 It can fashion in the clay God's perfect shape.
To free the self is but one radiant pace;
Here to fulfil himself was God's desire.