But to the woman Death the god replied,  
With the ironic laughter of his voice  
Discouraging the labour of the stars:  

“Even so men cheat the Truth with splendid thoughts.  
Thus wilt thou hire the glorious charlatan, Mind,  
To weave from his Ideal's gossamer air  
A fine raiment for thy body's nude desires  
And thy heart's clutching greedy passion clothe?  

Daub not the web of life with magic hues:  
Make rather thy thought a plain and faithful glass  
Reflecting Matter and mortality,  
And know thy soul a product of the flesh,  
A made-up self in a constructed world.  

Thy words are large murmurs in a mystic dream.  
For how in the soiled heart of man could dwell  
The immaculate grandeur of thy dream-built God,  
Or who can see a face and form divine  
In the naked two-legged worm thou callest man?  

O human face, put off mind-painted masks:  
The animal be, the worm that Nature meant;  
Accept thy futile birth, thy narrow life.  
For truth is bare like stone and hard like death;  
Bare in the bareness, hard with truth's hardness live.”  

But Savitri replied to the dire God:  
“Yes, I am human. Yet shall man by me,  
Since in humanity waits his hour the God,  
Trample thee down to reach the immortal heights,  
Transcending grief and pain and fate and death.  

Yes, my humanity is a mask of God:  
He dwells in me, the mover of my acts,  
Turning the great wheel of his cosmic work.  
I am the living body of his light,  
I am the thinking instrument of his power,  
I incarnate Wisdom in an earthly breast,  
I am his conquering and unslayable will.  
The formless Spirit drew in me its shape;  
In me are the Nameless and the secret Name.”  

Death from the incredulous Darkness sent its cry:  
“O priestess in Imagination’s house,  
Persuade first Nature's fixed immutable laws  
And make the impossible thy daily work.  
How canst thou force to wed two eternal foes?  
Irreconcilable in their embrace  
They cancel the glory of their pure extremes:  
An unhappy wedlock maims their stunted force.  
How shall thy will make one the true and false?  
Where Matter is all, there Spirit is a dream:  
If all are the Spirit, Matter is a lie,  
And who was the liar who forged the universe?
The Real with the unreal cannot mate.

He who would turn to God, must leave the world;
He who would live in the Spirit, must give up life;
He who has met the Self, renounces self.

The voyagers of the million routes of mind
Who have travelled through Existence to its end,
Sages exploring the world-ocean's vasts,
Have found extinction the sole harbour safe.

Two only are the doors of man's escape,

Death of his body Matter's gate to peace,
Death of his soul his last felicity.

In me all take refuge, for I, Death, am God.”

But Savitri replied to mighty Death:

“My heart is wiser than the Reason's thoughts,
My heart is stronger than thy bonds, O Death.

It sees and feels the one Heart beat in all,
It feels the high Transcendent's sunlike hands,
It sees the cosmic Spirit at its work;
In the dim Night it lies alone with God.

My heart's strength can carry the grief of the universe
And never falter from its luminous track,
Its white tremendous orbit through God's peace.

It can drink up the sea of All-Delight
And never lose the white spiritual touch,

The calm that broods in the deep Infinite.”

He said, “Art thou indeed so strong, O heart,
O soul, so free? And canst thou gather then
Bright pleasure from my wayside flowering boughs,
Yet falter not from thy hard journey's goal,

Meet the world's dangerous touch and never fall?

Show me thy strength and freedom from my laws.”

But Savitri answered, “Surely I shall find
Among the green and whispering woods of Life
Close-bosomed pleasures, only mine since his,

Or mine for him, because our joys are one.

And if I linger, Time is ours and God's,
And if I fall, is not his hand near mine?

All is a single plan; each wayside act
Deepens the soul's response, brings nearer the goal.”

Death the contemptuous Nihil answered her:

“So prove thy absolute force to the wise gods,
By choosing earthly joy! For self demand
And yet from self and its gross masks live free.

Then will I give thee all thy soul desires,

All the brief joys earth keeps for mortal hearts.

Only the one dearest wish that outweighs all,
Hard laws forbid and thy ironic fate.

My will once wrought remains unchanged through Time,
And Satyavan can never again be thine.”
But Savitri replied to the vague Power:
“If the eyes of Darkness can look straight at Truth,
Look in my heart and, knowing what I am,
Give what thou wilt or what thou must, O Death.
Nothing I claim but Satyavan alone.”

There was a hush as if of doubtful fates.
As one disdainful still who yields a point
Death bowed his sovereign head in cold assent:
“I give to thee, saved from death and poignant fate
Whatever once the living Satyavan
Desired in his heart for Savitri.

Bright noons I give thee and unwounded dawns,
Daughters of thy own shape in heart and mind,
Fair hero sons and sweetness undisturbed
Of union with thy husband dear and true.

And thou shalt harvest in thy joyful house
Felicity of thy surrounded eves.

Love shall bind by thee many gathered hearts.
The opposite sweetness in thy days shall meet
Of tender service to thy life’s desired
And loving empire over all thy loved,
Two poles of bliss made one, O Savitri.

Return, O child, to thy forsaken earth.”
Earth cannot flower if lonely I return.”

Then Death sent forth once more his angry cry,
As chides a lion his escaping prey:
“What knowst thou of earth’s rich and changing life
Who thinkst that one man dead all joy must cease?
Hope not to be unhappy till the end:
For grief dies soon in the tired human heart;
Soon other guests the empty chambers fill.

A transient painting on a holiday’s floor
Traced for a moment’s beauty love was made.

Or if a voyager on the eternal trail,
Its objects fluent change in its embrace
Like waves to a swimmer upon infinite seas.”