

Track 60: Section 1, lines 1 to 82

There came a slope that slowly downward sank;
It slipped towards a stumbling grey descent.

The dim-heart marvel of the ideal was lost;
Its crowding wonder of bright delicate dreams
5 And vague half-limned sublimities she had left:
Thought fell towards lower levels; hard and tense
It passioned for some crude reality.

The twilight floated still but changed its hues
And heavily swathed a less delightful dream;
10 It settled in tired masses on the air;
Its symbol colours tuned with duller reds
And almost seemed a lurid mist of day.

A straining taut and dire besieged her heart;
Heavy her sense grew with a dangerous load,
15 And sadder, greater sounds were in her ears,
And through stern breakings of the lambent glare
Her vision caught a hurry of driving plains
And cloudy mountains and wide tawny streams,
And cities climbed in minarets and towers
20 Towards an unavailing changeless sky:
Long quays and ghauts and harbours white with sails
Challenged her sight awhile and then were gone.

Amidst them travailed toiling multitudes
In ever shifting perishable groups,
25 A foiled cinema of lit shadowy shapes
Enveloped in the grey mantle of a dream.

Imagining meanings in life's heavy drift,
They trusted in the uncertain environment
And waited for death to change their spirit's scene.

30 A savage din of labour and a tramp
Of armoured life and the monotonous hum
Of thoughts and acts that ever were the same,
As if the dull reiterated drone
Of a great brute machine, beset her soul,—
35 A grey dissatisfied rumour like a ghost
Of the moaning of a loud unquiet sea.

A huge inhuman cyclopean voice,
A Babel-builders' song towering to heaven,
A throb of engines and the clang of tools
40 Brought the deep undertone of labour's pain.

As when pale lightnings tear a tortured sky,
High overhead a cloud-rimmed series flared
Chasing like smoke from a red funnel driven,
The forced creations of an ignorant Mind:
45 Drifting she saw like pictured fragments flee
Phantoms of human thought and baffled hopes,

The shapes of Nature and the arts of man,
Philosophies and disciplines and laws,
And the dead spirit of old societies,
50 Constructions of the Titan and the worm.

As if lost remnants of forgotten light,
Before her mind there fled with trailing wings
Dimmed revelations and delivering words,
Emptied of their mission and their strength to save,
55 The messages of the evangelist gods,
Voices of prophets, scripts of vanishing creeds.

Each in its hour eternal claimed went by:
Ideals, systems, sciences, poems, crafts
Tireless there perished and again recurred,
60 Sought restlessly by some creative Power;
But all were dreams crossing an empty vast.

Ascetic voices called of lonely seers
On mountain summits or by river banks
Or from the desolate heart of forest glades
65 Seeking heaven's rest or the spirit's worldless peace,
Or in bodies motionless like statues, fixed
In tranced cessations of their sleepless thought
Sat sleeping souls, and this too was a dream.

All things the past has made and slain were there,
70 Its lost forgotten forms that once had lived,
And all the present loves as new-revealed
And all the hopes the future brings had failed
Already, caught and spent in efforts vain,
Repeated fruitlessly age after age.

75 Unwearied all returned insisting still
Because of joy in the anguish of pursuit
And joy to labour and to win and lose
And joy to create and keep and joy to kill.

80 The rolling cycles passed and came again,
Brought the same toils and the same barren end,
Forms ever new and ever old, the long
Appalling revolutions of the world.