

Track 62: Section 4a, lines 309 to 460

Then rang again a deeper cry of Death.

- 310 As if beneath its weight of sterile law
Oppressed by its own obstinate meaningless will,
Disdainful, weary and compassionate,
It kept no more its old intolerant sound,
But seemed like life's in her unnumbered paths
- 315 Toiling for ever and achieving nought
Because of birth and change, her mortal powers
By which she lasts, around the term-posts fixed
Turning of a wide circling aimless race
Whose course for ever speeds and is the same.
- 320 In its long play with Fate and Chance and Time
Assured of the game's vanity lost or won,
Crushed by its load of ignorance and doubt
Which knowledge seems to increase and growth to enlarge,
The earth-mind sinks and it despairs and looks
- 325 Old, weary and discouraged on its work.
Yet was all nothing then or vainly achieved?
Some great thing has been done, some light, some power
Delivered from the huge Inconscient's grasp:
It has emerged from night; it sees its dawns
- 330 Circling for ever though no dawn can stay.
This change was in the godhead's far-flung voice;
His form of dread was altered and admitted
Our transient effort at eternity,
Yet flung vast doubts of what might else have been
- 335 On grandiose hints of an impossible day.
The great voice surging cried to Savitri:
"Because thou knowst the wisdom that transcends
Both veil of forms and the contempt of forms,
Arise delivered by the seeing gods.
- 340 If free thou hadst kept thy mind from life's fierce stress,
Thou mightst have been like them omniscient, calm.
But the violent and passionate heart forbids.
It is the storm bird of an anarch Power
That would upheave the world and tear from it
- 345 The indecipherable scroll of Fate,
Death's rule and Law and the unknowable Will.
Hasteners to action, violators of God
Are these great spirits who have too much love,
And they who formed like thee, for both art thou,
- 350 Have come into the narrow bounds of life
With too large natures overleaping time.
Worshippers of force who know not her recoil,
Their giant wills compel the troubled years.
- 355 The wise are tranquil; silent the great hills
Rise ceaselessly towards their unreached sky,
Seated on their unchanging base, their heads
Dreamless in heaven's immutable domain.
On their aspiring tops, sublime and still,

Lifting half-way to heaven the climbing soul
360 The mighty mediators stand content
To watch the revolutions of the stars:
Motionlessly moving with the might of earth,
They see the ages pass and are the same.

The wise think with the cycles, they hear the tread
365 Of far-off things; patient, unmoved they keep
Their dangerous wisdom in their depths restrained,
Lest man's frail days into the unknown should sink
Dragged like a ship by bound leviathan
Into the abyss of his stupendous seas.

370 Lo, how all shakes when the gods tread too near!
All moves, is in peril, anguished, torn, upheaved.
The hurrying aeons would stumble on too swift
If strength from heaven surprised the imperfect earth
And veiless knowledge smote these unfit souls.

375 The deities have screened their dreadful power:
God hides his thought and, even, he seems to err.
Be still and tardy in the slow wise world.
Mighty art thou with the dread goddess filled,
To whom thou criedst at dawn in the dim woods.

380 Use not thy strength like the wild Titan souls!
Touch not the seated lines, the ancient laws,
Respect the calm of great established things.”
But Savitri replied to the huge god:
“What is the calm thou vauntst, O Law, O Death?

385 Is it not the dull-visioned tread inert
Of monstrous energies chained in a stark round
Soulless and stone-eyed with mechanic dreams?
Vain the soul's hope if changeless Law is all:
Ever to the new and the unknown press on

390 The speeding aeons justifying God.
What were earth's ages if the grey restraint
Were never broken and glories sprang not forth
Bursting their obscure seed, while man's slow life
Leaped hurried into sudden splendid paths

395 By divine words and human gods revealed?
Impose not upon sentient minds and hearts
The dull fixity that binds inanimate things.
Well is the unconscious rule for the animal breeds
Content to live beneath the immutable yoke;

400 Man turns to a nobler walk, a master path.
I trample on thy law with living feet;
For to arise in freedom I was born.
If I am mighty let my force be unveiled
Equal companion of the dateless powers,

405 Or else let my frustrated soul sink down
Unworthy of Godhead in the original sleep.
I claim from Time my will's eternity,

God from his moments.”

410 Death replied to her, “Why should the noble and immortal will
Stoop to the petty works of transient earth,
Freedom forgotten and the Eternal's path?

Or is this the high use of strength and thought,
To struggle with the bonds of death and time
And spend the labour that might earn the gods
415 And battle and bear agony of wounds
To grasp the trivial joys that earth can guard
In her small treasure-chest of passing things?

Child, hast thou trodden the gods beneath thy feet
Only to win poor shreds of earthly life
420 For him thou lov'st cancelling the grand release,
Keeping from early rapture of the heavens
His soul the lenient deities have called?

Are thy arms sweeter than the courts of God?”

425 She answered, “Straight I trample on the road
The strong hand hewed for me which planned our paths.

I run where his sweet dreadful voice commands
And I am driven by the reins of God.

Why drew he wide his scheme of mighty worlds
Or filled infinity with his passionate breath?

430 Or wherefore did he build my mortal form
And sow in me his bright and proud desires,
If not to achieve, to flower in me, to love,
Carving his human image richly shaped
In thoughts and largenesses and golden powers?

435 Far Heaven can wait our coming in its calm.
Easy the heavens were to build for God.

Earth was his difficult matter, earth the glory
Gave of the problem and the race and strife.

440 There are the ominous masks, the terrible powers;
There it is greatness to create the gods.

Is not the spirit immortal and absolved
Always, delivered from the grasp of Time?

Why came it down into the mortal's Space?

445 A charge he gave to his high spirit in man
And wrote a hidden decree on Nature's tops.

Freedom is this with ever seated soul,
Large in life's limits, strong in Matter's knots,
Building great stuff of action from the worlds
To make fine wisdom from coarse, scattered strands
450 And love and beauty out of war and night,
The wager wonderful, the game divine.

What liberty has the soul which feels not free
Unless stripped bare and cannot kiss the bonds
The Lover winds around his playmate's limbs,
445 Choosing his tyranny, crushed in his embrace?

To seize him better with her boundless heart

She accepts the limiting circle of his arms,
Bows full of bliss beneath his mastering hands
And laughs in his rich constraints, most bound, most free.

460 This is my answer to thy lures, O Death."