At first out of the busy hum of mind
As if from a loud thronged market into a cave
By an inward moment’s magic she had come.
A stark hushed emptiness became her self:
Her mind unvisited by the voice of thought
Stared at a void deep’s dumb infinity.
Her heights receded, her depths behind her closed;
All fled away from her and left her blank.
But when she came back to her self of thought,
Once more she was a human thing on earth,
A lump of Matter, a house of closed sight,
A mind compelled to think out ignorance,
A life-force pressed into a camp of works
And the material world her limiting field.
Amazed like one unknowing she sought her way
Out of the tangle of man’s ignorant past
That took the surface person for the soul.
Then a Voice spoke that dwelt on secret heights:
“For man thou seekst, not for thyself alone.
Only if God assumes the human mind
And puts on mortal ignorance for his cloak
And makes himself the Dwarf with triple stride,
Can he help man to grow into the God.
As man disguised the cosmic Greatness works
And finds the mystic inaccessible gate
And opens the Immortal’s golden door.
Man, human, follows in God’s human steps.
Accepting his darkness thou must bring to him light,
Accepting his sorrow thou must bring to him bliss.
In Matter’s body find thy heaven-born soul.”
Then Savitri surged out of her body’s wall
And stood a little span outside herself
And looked into her subtle being’s depths
And in its heart as in a lotus-bud
Divined her secret and mysterious soul.
At the dim portal of the inner life
That bars out from our depths the body’s mind
And all that lives but by the body’s breath,
She knocked and pressed against the ebony gate.
The living portal groaned with sullen hinge:
Heavily reluctant it complained inert
Against the tyranny of the spirit’s touch.
A formidable voice cried from within:
“Back, creature of earth, lest tortured and torn thou die.”
A dreadful murmur rose like a dim sea;
The Serpent of the threshold hissing rose,
A fatal guardian hood with monstrous coils,
The hounds of darkness growled with jaws agape,
And trolls and gnomes and goblins scowled and stared
And wild beast roarings thrilled the blood with fear
And menace muttered in a dangerous tongue.
Unshaken her will pressed on the rigid bars:
The gate swung wide with a protesting jar,
The opponent Powers withdrew their dreadful guard;
Her being entered into the inner worlds.
In a narrow passage, the subconscious's gate,
She breathed with difficulty and pain and strove
To find the inner self concealed in sense.
Into a dense of subtle Matter packed,
A cavity filled with a blind mass of power,
An opposition of misleading gleams,
A heavy barrier of unseeing sight,
She forced her way through body to the soul.
Across a perilous border line she passed
Where Life dips into the subconscious dusk
Or struggles from Matter into chaos of mind,
Aswarm with elemental entities
And fluttering shapes of vague half-bodied thought
And crude beginnings of incontinent force.
At first a difficult narrowness was there,
A press of uncertain powers and drifting wills;
For all was there but nothing in its place.
At times an opening came, a door was forced;
She crossed through spaces of a secret self
And trod in passages of inner Time.
At last she broke into a form of things,
A start of finiteness, a world of sense:
But all was still confused, nothing self-found.
Soul was not there but only cries of life.
A thronged and clamorous air environed her.
A horde of sounds defied significance,
A dissonant clash of cries and contrary calls;
A mob of visions broke across the sight,
A jostled sequence lacking sense and suite,
Feelings pushed through a packed and burdened heart,
Each forced its separate inconsequent way
But cared for nothing but its ego's drive.
A rally without key of common will,
Thought stared at thought and pulled at the taut brain
As if to pluck the reason from its seat
And cast its corpse into life's wayside drain;
So might forgotten lie in Nature's mud
Abandoned the slain sentinel of the soul.
So could life's power shake from it mind's rule,
Nature renounce the spirit's government
And the bare elemental energies
Make of the sense a glory of boundless joy,
A splendour of ecstatic anarchy,
A revel mighty and mad of utter bliss.

100 This was the sense’s instinct void of soul
Or when the soul sleeps hidden void of power,
But now the vital godhead wakes within
And lifts the life with the Supernal’s touch.
But how shall come the glory and the flame

105 If mind is cast away into the abyss?
For body without mind has not the light,
The rapture of spirit sense, the joy of life;
All then becomes subconscient, tenebrous,
Inconscience puts its seal on Nature’s page

110 Or else a mad disorder whirls the brain
Posting along a ravaged nature’s roads,
A chaos of disordered impulses
In which no light can come, no joy, no peace.

115 As if in a long endless tossing street
One driven mid a trampling hurrying crowd
Hour after hour she trod without release
Holding by her will the senseless meute at bay;
Out of the dreadful press she dragged her will

120 And fixed her thought upon the saviour Name;
Then all grew still and empty; she was free.
A large deliverance came, a vast calm space.
Awhile she moved through a blank tranquillity
Of naked Light from an invisible sun,

125 A void that was a bodiless happiness,
A blissful vacuum of nameless peace.
But now a mightier danger’s front drew near:
The press of bodily mind, the Inconscient’s brood
Of aimless thought and will had fallen from her.

130 Approaching loomed a giant head of Life
Ungoverned by mind or soul, subconscient, vast.
It tossed all power into a single drive,
It made its power a might of dangerous seas.
Into the stillness of her silent self,

135 Into the whiteness of its muse of Space
A spate, a torrent of the speed of Life
Broke like a wind-lashed driven mob of waves
Racing on a pale floor of summer sand;
It drowned its banks, a mountain of climbing waves.

140 Enormous was its vast and passionate voice.
It cried to her listening spirit as it ran,
Demanding God’s submission to chainless Force.
A deaf force calling to a status dumb,
A thousand voices in a muted Vast,
It claimed the heart’s support for its clutch at joy,
For its need to act the witness Soul’s consent,
For its lust of power her neutral being’s seal.
Into the wideness of her watching self
It brought a grandiose gust of the Breath of Life;
150
Its torrent carried the world’s hopes and fears,
All life’s, all Nature’s dissatisfied hungry cry,
And the longing all eternity cannot fill.
It called to the mountain secrecies of the soul
And the miracle of the never-dying fire,
155
It spoke to some first inexpressible ecstasy
Hidden in the creative beat of Life;
Out of the nether unseen deeps it tore
Its lure and magic of disordered bliss,
Into earth-light poured its maze of tangled charm
And heady draught of Nature’s primitive joy
And the fire and mystery of forbidden delight
Drunk from the world-libido’s bottomless well,
160
But dreamed a vintage of glory of life’s gods,
And felt as celestial rapture’s golden sting.
The cycles of the infinity of desire
And the mystique that made an unrealised world
Wider than the known and closer than the unknown
In which hunt for ever the hounds of mind and life,
165
Tempted a deep dissatisfied urge within
To long for the unfulfilled and ever far
And make this life upon a limiting earth
A climb towards summits vanishing in the void,
A search for the glory of the impossible.
It dreamed of that which never has been known,
It grasped at that which never has been won,
It chased into an Elysian memory
The charms that flee from the heart’s soon lost delight;
170
It dared the force that slays, the joys that hurt,
The imaged shape of unaccomplished things
And the summons to a Circean transmuting dance
And passion’s tenancy of the courts of love
And the wild Beast’s ramp and romp with Beauty and Life.
It brought its cry and surge of opposite powers,
175
Its moments of the touch of luminous planes,
Its flame-ascentions and sky-pitched vast attempts,
Its fiery towers of dream built on the winds,
Its sinkings towards the darkness and the abyss,
Its honey of tenderness, its sharp wine of hate,
180
Its changes of sun and cloud, of laughter and tears,
Its bottomless danger-pits and swallowing gulfs,
Its fear and joy and ecstasy and despair,
Its occult wizardries, its simple lines
And great communions and uplifting moves,
185
Its faith in heaven, its intercourse with hell.
These powers were not blunt with the dead weight of earth,
They gave ambrosia’s taste and poison’s sting.
There was an ardour in the gaze of Life
That saw heaven blue in the grey air of Night:
The impulses godward soared on passion’s wings.
Mind’s quick-paced thoughts floated from their high necks,
A glowing splendour as of an irised mane,
A parure of pure intuition’s light;
Its flame-foot gallop they could imitate:
Mind’s voices mimicked inspiration’s stress,
Its ictus of infallibility,
A trenchant blade that shore the nets of doubt,
Its sword of discernment seemed almost divine.
Yet all that knowledge was a borrowed sun’s;
The forms that came were not heaven’s native births:
An inner voice could speak the unreal’s Word;
Its puissance dangerous and absolute
Could mingle poison with the wine of God.
On these high shining backs falsehood could ride;
Truth lay with delight in error’s passionate arms
Gliding downstream in a blithe gilded barge:
She edged her ray with a magnificent lie.
Here in Life’s nether realms all contraries meet;
Truth stares and does her works with bandaged eyes
And Ignorance is Wisdom’s patron here:
Those galloping hooves in their enthusiast speed
Could bear to a dangerous intermediate zone
Where Death walks wearing a robe of deathless Life.
Or they enter the valley of the wandering Gleam
Whence, captives or victims of the specious Ray,
Souls trapped in that region never can escape.
Agents, not masters, they serve Life’s desires
Toiling for ever in the snare of Time.
Their bodies born out of some Nihil’s womb
Ensnare the spirit in the moment’s dreams,
Then perish vomiting the immortal soul
Out of Matter’s belly into the sink of Nought.
Yet some uncaught, unslain, can warily pass
Carrying Truth’s image in the sheltered heart,
Pluck Knowledge out of error’s screening grip,
Break paths through the blind walls of little self,
Then travel on to reach a greater life.
All this streamed past her and seemed to her vision’s sight
As if around a high and voiceless isle
A clamour of waters from far unknown hills
Swallowed its narrow banks in crowding waves
And made a hungry world of white wild foam:
Hastening, a dragon with a million feet,
Its foam and cry a drunken giant’s din,
Tossing a mane of Darkness into God’s sky,
It ebbed receding into a distant roar.
Then smiled again a large and tranquil air:
Blue heaven, green earth, partners of Beauty’s reign,
Lived as of old, companions in happiness;
And in the world’s heart laughed the joy of life.
All now was still, the soil shone dry and pure.
Through it all she moved not, plunged not in the vain waves.
Out of the vastness of the silent self
Life’s clamour fled; her spirit was mute and free.