Then journeying forward through the self’s wide hush
She came into a brilliant ordered Space.
There Life dwelt parked in an armed tranquillity;
A chain was on her strong insurgent heart.

Tamed to the modesty of a measured pace,
She kept no more her vehement stride and rush;
She had lost the careless majesty of her muse
And the ample grandeur of her regal force;
Curbed were her mighty pomps, her splendid waste,

Sobered the revels of her bacchant play,
Cut down were her squanderings in desire’s bazaar,
Coerced her despot will, her fancy’s dance,
A cold stolidity bound the riot of sense.
A royalty without freedom was her lot;

The sovereign throned obeyed her ministers:
Her servants mind and sense governed her house:
Her spirit’s bounds they cast in rigid lines
And guarding with a phalanx of armoured rules
The reason’s balanced reign, kept order and peace.

Her will lived closed in adamant walls of law,
Coerced was her force by chains that feigned to adorn,
Imagination was prisoned in a fort,
Her wanton and licentious favourite;
Reality’s poise and reason’s symmetry

Were set in its place sentinelled by marshalled facts,
They gave to the soul for throne a bench of Law,
For kingdom a small world of rule and line:
The ages’ wisdom, shrivelled to scholiast lines,
Shrank patterned into a copy-book device.

The Spirit’s almighty freedom was not here:
A schoolman mind had captured life’s large space,
But chose to live in bare and paltry rooms
Parked off from the too vast dangerous universe,
Fearing to lose its soul in the infinite.

Even the Idea’s ample sweep was cut
Into a system, chained to fixed pillars of thought
Or rivetted to Matter’s solid ground:
Or else the soul was lost in its own heights:
Obeying the Ideal’s high-browed law

Thought based a throne on unsubstantial air
Disdaining earth’s flat triviality:
It barred reality out to live in its dreams.
Or all stepped into a systemed universe:
Life’s empire was a managed continent,

Its thoughts an army ranked and disciplined;
Uniformed they kept the logic of their fixed place
At the bidding of the trained centurion mind.
Or each stepped into its station like a star
Or marched through fixed and constellated heavens
Or kept its feudal rank among its peers
In the sky’s unchanging cosmic hierarchy.
Or like a high-bred maiden with chaste eyes
Forbidden to walk unveiled the public ways,
She must in close secluded chambers move,
Her feeling in cloisters live or gardened paths.
Life was consigned to a safe level path,
It dared not tempt the great and difficult heights
Or climb to be neighbour to a lonely star
Or skirt the danger of the precipice
Or tempt the foam-curled breakers’ perilous laugh,
Adventure’s lyrist, danger’s amateur,
Or into her chamber call some flaming god,
Or leave the world’s bounds and where no limits are
Meet with the heart’s passion the Adorable
Or set the world ablaze with the inner Fire.
A chastened epithet in the prose of life,
She must fill with colour just her sanctioned space,
Not break out of the cabin of the idea
Nor trespass into rhythms too high or vast.
Even when it soared into ideal air,
Thought’s flight lost not itself in heaven’s blue:
It drew upon the skies a patterned flower
Of disciplined beauty and harmonic light.
A temperate vigilant spirit governed life:
Its acts were tools of the considering thought,
Too cold to take fire and set the world ablaze,
Or the careful reason’s diplomatic moves
Testing the means to a prefigured end,
Or at the highest pitch some calm Will’s plan
Or a strategy of some High Command within
To conquer the secret treasures of the gods
Or win for a masked king some glorious world,
Not a reflex of the spontaneous self,
An index of the being and its moods,
A winging of conscious spirit, a sacrament
Of life’s communion with the still Supreme
Or its pure movement on the Eternal’s road.
Or else for the body of some high Idea
A house was built with too close-fitting bricks;
Action and thought cemented made a wall
Of small ideals limiting the soul.
Even meditation mused on a narrow seat;
And worship turned to an exclusive God,
To the Universal in a chapel prayed
Whose doors were shut against the universe;
Or kneeled to the bodiless Impersonal
A mind shut to the cry and fire of love:
A rational religion dried the heart.
It planned a smooth life’s acts with ethics’ rule
Or offered a cold and flameless sacrifice.
The sacred Book lay on its sanctified desk
Wrapped in interpretation’s silken strings:
A credo sealed up its spiritual sense.