

Track 34: Section 1, lines 1 to 177

- Here from a low and prone and listless ground
The passion of the first ascent began;
A moon-bright face in a sombre cloud of hair,
A Woman sat in a pale lustrous robe.
- 5 A rugged and ragged soil was her bare seat,
Beneath her feet a sharp and wounding stone.
A divine pity on the peaks of the world,
A spirit touched by the grief of all that lives,
She looked out far and saw from inner mind
- 10 This questionable world of outward things,
Of false appearances and plausible shapes,
This dubious cosmos stretched in the ignorant Void,
The pangs of earth, the toil and speed of the stars
And the difficult birth and dolorous end of life.
- 15 Accepting the universe as her body of woe,
The Mother of the seven sorrows bore
The seven stabs that pierced her bleeding heart:
The beauty of sadness lingered on her face,
Her eyes were dim with the ancient stain of tears.
- 20 Her heart was riven with the world's agony
And burdened with the sorrow and struggle in Time,
An anguished music trailed in her rapt voice.
Absorbed in a deep compassion's ecstasy,
Lifting the mild ray of her patient gaze,
- 25 In soft sweet training words slowly she spoke:
"O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
To share the suffering of the world I came,
I draw my children's pangs into my breast.
I am the nurse of the dolour beneath the stars;
- 30 I am the soul of all who wailing writhe
Under the ruthless harrow of the Gods.
I am woman, nurse and slave and beaten beast;
I tend the hands that gave me cruel blows.
The hearts that spurned my love and zeal I serve;
- 35 I am the courted queen, the pampered doll,
I am the giver of the bowl of rice,
I am the worshipped Angel of the House.
I am in all that suffers and that cries.
Mine is the prayer that climbs in vain from earth,
- 40 I am traversed by my creatures' agonies,
I am the spirit in a world of pain.
The scream of tortured flesh and tortured hearts
Fall'n back on heart and flesh unheard by Heaven
Has rent with helpless grief and wrath my soul.
- 45 I have seen the peasant burning in his hut,
I have seen the slashed corpse of the slaughtered child,
Heard woman's cry ravished and stripped and haled
Amid the bayings of the hell-hound mob,
I have looked on, I had no power to save.
- 50 I have brought no arm of strength to aid or slay;
God gave me love, he gave me not his force.

I have shared the toil of the yoked animal drudge
Pushed by the goad, encouraged by the whip;

I have shared the fear-filled life of bird and beast,
55 Its long hunt for the day's precarious food,
Its covert slink and crouch and hungry prowl,
Its pain and terror seized by beak and claw.

I have shared the daily life of common men,
Its petty pleasures and its petty cares,
60 Its press of troubles and haggard horde of ills,
Earth's trail of sorrow hopeless of relief,
The unwanted tedious labour without joy,
And the burden of misery and the strokes of fate.

I have been pity, leaning over pain
65 And the tender smile that heals the wounded heart
And sympathy making life less hard to bear.

Man has felt near my unseen face and hands;
I have become the sufferer and his moan,
I have lain down with the mangled and the slain,
70 I have lived with the prisoner in his dungeon cell.

Heavy on my shoulders weighs the yoke of Time:
Nothing refusing of creation's load,
I have borne all and know I still must bear:
Perhaps when the world sinks into a last sleep,
75 I too may sleep in dumb eternal peace.

I have borne the calm indifference of Heaven,
Watched Nature's cruelty to suffering things
While God passed silent by nor turned to help.

Yet have I cried not out against his will,

80 Yet have I not accused his cosmic Law.

Only to change this great hard world of pain
A patient prayer has risen from my breast;
A pallid resignation lights my brow,
Within me a blind faith and mercy dwell;

85 I carry the fire that never can be quenched
And the compassion that supports the suns.

I am the hope that looks towards my God,
My God who never came to me till now;
His voice I hear that ever says 'I come':

90 I know that one day he shall come at last."

She ceased, and like an echo from below
Answering her pathos of divine complaint
A voice of wrath took up the dire refrain,
A growl of thunder or roar of angry beast,

95 The beast that crouching growls within man's depths,—
Voice of a tortured Titan once a God.

"I am the Man of Sorrows, I am he
Who is nailed on the wide cross of the universe;
To enjoy my agony God built the earth,

100 My passion he has made his drama's theme.

He has sent me naked into his bitter world
And beaten me with his rods of grief and pain
That I might cry and grovel at his feet
And offer him worship with my blood and tears.

105 I am Prometheus under the vulture's beak,

Man the discoverer of the undying fire,
In the flame he kindled burning like a moth;
I am the seeker who can never find,
I am the fighter who can never win,

110 I am the runner who never touched his goal:
Hell tortures me with the edges of my thought,
Heaven tortures me with the splendour of my dreams.
What profit have I of my animal birth;
What profit have I of my human soul?

115 I toil like the animal, like the animal die.
I am man the rebel, man the helpless serf;
Fate and my fellows cheat me of my wage.
I loosen with my blood my servitude's seal
And shake from my aching neck the oppressor's knees

120 120 Only to seat new tyrants on my back:
My teachers lesson me in slavery,
I am shown God's stamp and my own signature
Upon the sorry contract of my fate.

I have loved, but none has loved me since my birth;

125 125 My fruit of works is given to other hands.
All that is left me is my evil thoughts,
My sordid quarrel against God and man,
Envy of the riches that I cannot share,
Hate of a happiness that is not mine.

130 I know my fate will ever be the same,
It is my nature's work that cannot change:
I have loved for mine, not for the beloved's sake,
I have lived for myself and not for others' lives.
Each in himself is sole by Nature's law.

135 So God has made his harsh and dreadful world,
So has he built the petty heart of man.
Only by force and ruse can man survive:
For pity is a weakness in his breast,
His goodness is a laxity in the nerves,

140 140 His kindness an investment for return,
His altruism is ego's other face:
He serves the world that him the world may serve.
If once the Titan's strength could wake in me,
If Enceladus from Etna could arise,

145 145 I then would reign the master of the world
And like a god enjoy man's bliss and pain.
But God has taken from me the ancient Force.
There is a dull consent in my sluggish heart,
A fierce satisfaction with my special pangs

150 150 As if they made me taller than my kind;
Only by suffering can I excel.
I am the victim of titanic ills,
I am the doer of demoniac deeds;
I was made for evil, evil is my lot;

155 155 Evil I must be and by evil live;
Nought other can I do but be myself;
What Nature made me, that I must remain.
I suffer and toil and weep; I moan and hate."

And Savitri heard the voice, the echo heard
160 And turning to her being of pity spoke:
"Madonna of suffering, Mother of grief divine,
Thou art a portion of my soul put forth
To bear the unbearable sorrow of the world.

Because thou art, men yield not to their doom,
165 But ask for happiness and strive with fate;
Because thou art, the wretched still can hope.
But thine is the power to solace, not to save.
One day I will return, a bringer of strength,
And make thee drink from the Eternal's cup;
170 His streams of force shall triumph in thy limbs
And Wisdom's calm control thy passionate heart.

Thy love shall be the bond of humankind,
Compassion the bright key of Nature's acts:
Misery shall pass abolished from the earth;
175 The world shall be freed from the anger of the Beast,
From the cruelty of the Titan and his pain.
There shall be peace and joy for ever more."