On passed she in her spirit’s upward route.
An ardent grandeur climbed mid ferns and rocks,
A quiet wind flattered the heart to warmth,
A finer perfume breathed from slender trees.
All beautiful grew, subtle and high and strange.
Here on a boulder carved like a huge throne
A Woman sat in gold and purple sheen,
Armed with the trident and the thunderbolt,
Her feet upon a couchant lion’s back.
A formidable smile curved round her lips,
Heaven-fire laughed in the corners of her eyes;
Her body a mass of courage and heavenly strength,
She menaced the triumph of the nether gods.
A halo of lightnings flamed around her head
And sovereignty, a great cestus, zoned her robe
And majesty and victory sat with her
Guarding in the wide cosmic battlefield
Against the flat equality of Death
And the all-levelling insurgent Night
The hierarchy of the ordered Powers,
The high changeless values, the peaked eminences,
The privileged aristocracy of Truth,
And in the governing Ideal’s sun
The triumvirate of wisdom, love and bliss
And the sole autocracy of the absolute Light.
August on her seat in the inner world of Mind,
The Mother of Might looked down on passing things,
Listened to the advancing tread of Time,
Saw the irresistible wheeling of the suns
And heard the thunder of the march of God.
Amid the swaying Forces in their strife
Sovereign was her word of luminous command,
Her speech like a war-cry rang or a pilgrim chant.
A charm restoring hope in failing hearts
Aspired the harmony of her puissant voice:
“O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
I have come down into the human world
And the movement watched by an unsleeping Eye
And the dark contrariety of earth’s fate
And the battle of the bright and sombre Powers.
I stand upon earth’s paths of danger and grief
And help the unfortunate and save the doomed.
To the strong I bring the guerdon of their strength,
To the weak I bring the armour of my force;
To men who long I carry their coveted joy:
I am fortune justifying the great and wise
By the sanction of the plaudits of the crowd,
Then trampling them with the armed heel of fate.
My ear is leaned to the cry of the oppressed,
I topple down the thrones of tyrant kings:
A cry comes from proscribed and hunted lives
Appealing to me against a pitiless world,

A voice of the forsaken and desolate
And the lone prisoner in his dungeon cell.
Men hail in my coming the Almighty's force
Or praise with thankful tears his saviour Grace.
I smite the Titan who bestrides the world
And slay the ogre in his blood-stained den.
I am Durga, goddess of the proud and strong,
And Lakshmi, queen of the fair and fortunate;
I wear the face of Kali when I kill,
I trample the corpses of the demon hordes.

I am charged by God to do his mighty work,
Uncaring I serve his will who sent me forth,
Reckless of peril and earthly consequence.
I reason not of virtue and of sin
But do the deed he has put into my heart.

I fear not for the angry frown of Heaven,
I flinch not from the red assault of Hell;
I crush the opposition of the gods,
Tread down a million goblin obstacles.
I guide man to the path of the Divine
And guard him from the red Wolf and the Snake.
I set in his mortal hand my heavenly sword
And put on him the breastplate of the gods.
I break the ignorant pride of human mind
And lead the thought to the wideness of the Truth;

I rend man's narrow and successful life
And force his sorrowful eyes to gaze at the sun
That he may die to earth and live in his soul.
I know the goal,
I know the secret route;
I have studied the map of the invisible worlds;
I am the battle's head, the journey's star.

But the great obstinate world resists my Word,
And the crookedness and evil in man's heart
Is stronger than Reason, profounder than the Pit,
And the malignancy of hostile Powers

Puts craftily back the clock of destiny
And mightier seems than the eternal Will.
The cosmic evil is too deep to unroot,
The cosmic suffering is too vast to heal.
A few I guide who pass me towards the Light;
A few I save, the mass falls back unsaved;
A few I help, the many strive and fail.
But my heart I have hardened and I do my work:
Slowly the light grows greater in the East,
Slowly the world progresses on God’s road.

275  His seal is on my task, it cannot fail:
I shall hear the silver swing of heaven’s gates
When God comes out to meet the soul of the world.”

280  She spoke and from the lower human world
An answer, a warped echo met her speech;
The voice came through the spaces of the mind
Of the dwarf-Titan, the deformed chained god
Who strives to master his nature’s rebel stuff
And make the universe his instrument.

285  The Ego of this great world of desire
Claimed earth and the wide heavens for the use
Of man, head of the life it shapes on earth,
Its representative and conscious soul,
And symbol of evolving light and force
And vessel of the godhead that must be.

290  A thinking animal, Nature’s struggling lord,
Has made of her his nurse and tool and slave
And pays to her as wage and emolument
Inescapably by a deep law in things
His heart’s grief and his body’s death and pain:

295  His pains are her means to grow, to see and feel;
His death assists her immortality.
A tool and slave of his own slave and tool,
He praises his free will and his master mind
And is pushed by her upon her chosen paths;

300  Possessor he is possessed and, ruler, ruled,
Her conscious automaton, her desire’s dupe.
His soul is her guest, a sovereign mute, inert,
His body her robot, his life her way to live,
His conscious mind her strong revolted serf.

305  The voice rose up and smote some inner sun.
“I am the heir of the forces of the earth,
Slowly I make good my right to my estate;
A growing godhead in her divinised mud,
I climb, a claimant to the throne of heaven.

310  The last-born of the earth I stand the first;
Her slow millenniums waited for my birth.
Although I live in Time besieged by Death,
Precarious owner of my body and soul
Housed on a little speck amid the stars,

315  For me and my use the universe was made.
Immortal spirit in the perishing clay,
I am God still unevolved in human form;
Even if he is not, he becomes in me.
The sun and moon are lights upon my path;

320  Air was invented for my lungs to breathe,
Conditioned as a wide and wall-less space
For my winged chariot’s wheels to cleave a road,
The sea was made for me to swim and sail
And bear my golden commerce on its back:

325  It laughs cloven by my pleasure’s gliding keel,
I laugh at its black stare of fate and death.
The earth is my floor, the sky my living’s roof.
All was prepared through many a silent age,
God made experiments with animal shapes,

330  Then only when all was ready I was born.
I was born weak and small and ignorant,
A helpless creature in a difficult world
Travelling through my brief years with death at my side;
I have grown greater than Nature, wiser than God.

335  I have made real what she never dreamed,
I have seized her powers and harnessed for my work,
I have shaped her metals and new metals made;
I will make glass and raiment out of milk,
Make iron velvet, water unbreakable stone,

340  Like God in his astuce of artist skill,
Mould from one primal plasm protean forms,
In single Nature multitudinous lives,
All that imagination can conceive
In mind intangible, remould anew

345  In Matter’s plastic solid and concrete.
No magic can surpass my magic’s skill.
There is no miracle I shall not achieve.
What God imperfect left, I will complete,
Out of a tangled mind and half-made soul

350  His sin and error I will eliminate;
What he invented not, I shall invent:
He was the first creator, I am the last.
I have found the atoms from which he built the worlds:
The first tremendous cosmic energy

355  Missioned shall leap to slay my enemy kin,
Expunge a nation or abolish a race,
Death’s silence leave where there was laughter and joy.
Or the fissured invisible shall spend God’s force
To extend my comforts and expand my wealth,

360  To speed my car which now the lightnings drive
And turn the engines of my miracles.
I will take his means of sorcery from his hands
And do with them greater wonders than his best.
Yet through it all I have kept my balanced thought;

365  I have studied my being, I have examined the world,
I have grown a master of the arts of life.
I have tamed the wild beast, trained to be my friend;
He guards my house, looks up waiting my will.
I have taught my kind to serve and to obey.
I have used the mystery of the cosmic waves
To see far distance and to hear far words;
I have conquered Space and knitted close all earth.
Soon I shall know the secrets of the Mind;
I play with knowledge and with ignorance
And sin and virtue my inventions are
I can transcend or sovereignly use.
I shall know mystic truths, seize occult powers.
I shall slay my enemies with a look or thought,
I shall sense the unspoken feelings of all hearts
And see and hear the hidden thoughts of men.
When earth is mastered, I shall conquer heaven;
The gods shall be my aides or menial folk,
No wish I harbour unfulfilled shall die:
Omnipotence and omniscience shall be mine.”

And Savitri heard the voice, the warped echo heard
And turning to her being of power she spoke:
“Madonna of might, Mother of works and force,
Thou art a portion of my soul put forth
To help mankind and help the travail of Time.

Because thou art in him, man hopes and dares;
Because thou art, men’s souls can climb the heavens
And walk like gods in the presence of the Supreme.
But without wisdom power is like a wind,
It can breathe upon the heights and kiss the sky,
It cannot build the extreme eternal things.
Thou hast given men strength, wisdom thou couldst not give.
One day I will return, a bringer of light;
Then will I give to thee the mirror of God;
Thou shalt see self and world as by him they are seen
Reflected in the bright pool of thy soul.
Thy wisdom shall be vast as vast thy power.
Then hate shall dwell no more in human hearts,
And fear and weakness shall desert men’s lives,
The cry of the ego shall be hushed within,
Its lion roar that claims the world as food,
All shall be might and bliss and happy force.”