Awhile, withdrawn in secret fields of thought,
Her mind moved in a many-imaged past
That lived again and saw its end approach:
Dying, it lived imperishably in her;

Transient and vanishing from transient eyes,
Invisible, a fateful ghost of self,
It bore the future on its phantom breast.
Along the fleeting event’s far-backward trail
Regressed the stream of the insistent hours,

And on the bank of the mysterious flood
Peopled with well-loved forms now seen no more
And the subtle images of things that were,
Her witness spirit stood reviewing Time.

All that she once had hoped and dreamed and been,
Flew past her eagle-winged through memory’s skies.
As in a many-hued flaming inner dawn,
Her life’s broad highways and its sweet bypaths
Lay mapped to her sun-clear recording view,
From the bright country of her childhood’s days

And the blue mountains of her soaring youth
And the paradise groves and peacock wings of Love
To joy clutched under the silent shadow of doom
In a last turn where heaven raced with hell.

Twelve passionate months led in a day of fate.

An absolute supernatural darkness falls
On man sometimes when he draws near to God:
An hour arrives when fail all Nature’s means;
Forced out from the protecting Ignorance
And flung back on his naked primal need,

He at length must cast from him his surface soul
And be the ungarbed entity within:
That hour had fallen now on Savitri.
A point she had reached where life must be in vain
Or, in her unborn element awake,

Her will must cancel her body’s destiny.
For only the unborn spirit’s timeless power
Can lift the yoke imposed by birth in Time.

Only the Self that builds this figure of self
Can raise the fixed interminable line

That joins these changing names, these numberless lives,
These new oblivious personalities
And keeps still lurking in our conscious acts
The trail of old forgotten thoughts and deeds,
Disown the legacy of our buried selves,

The burdensome heirship to our vanished forms
Accepted blindly by the body and soul.
An episode in an unremembered tale,
Its beginning lost, its motive and plot concealed,
A once living story has prepared and made

Our present fate, child of past energies.
The fixity of the cosmic sequences
Fastened with hidden inevitable links
She must disrupt, dislodge by her soul’s force
Her past, a block on the Immortal’s road,
Make a rased ground and shape anew her fate.
A colloquy of the original Gods
Meeting upon the borders of the unknown,
Her soul’s debate with embodied Nothingness
Must be wrestled out on a dangerous dim background:

Her being must confront its formless Cause,
Against the universe weigh its single self.
On the bare peak where Self is alone with Nought
And life has no sense and love no place to stand,
She must plead her case upon extinction’s verge,

In the world’s death-cave uphold life’s helpless claim
And vindicate her right to be and love.
Altered must be Nature’s harsh economy;
Acquittance she must win from her past’s bond,
An old account of suffering exhaust,

Strike out from Time the soul’s long compound debt
And the heavy servitudes of the Karmic Gods,
The slow revenge of unforgiving Law
And the deep need of universal pain
And hard sacrifice and tragic consequence.

Out of a timeless barrier she must break,
Penetrate with her thinking depths the Void’s monstrous hush,
Look into the lonely eyes of immortal Death
And with her nude spirit measure the Infinite’s night.
The great and dolorous moment now was close.

A mailed battalion marching to its doom,
The last long days went by with heavy tramp,
Long but too soon to pass, too near the end.

Apart amid the many faces loved,
Aware among unknowing happy hearts,

Her armoured spirit kept watch upon the hours
Listening for a foreseen tremendous step
In the closed beauty of the inhuman wilds.

A combatant in silent dreadful lists,
The world unknowing, for the world she stood:

No helper had she save the Strength within;
There was no witness of terrestrial eyes;
The Gods above and Nature sole below
Were the spectators of that mighty strife.

Around her were the austere sky-pointing hills,
And the green murmurous broad deep-thoughted woods
Muttered incessantly their muffled spell.

A dense magnificent coloured self-wrapped life
Draped in the leaves’ vivid emerald monotone
And set with chequered sunbeams and blithe flowers

Immured her destiny’s secluded scene.
There had she grown to the stature of her spirit:
The genius of titanic silences
Steeping her soul in its wide loneliness
Had shown to her self’s bare reality

And mated her with her environment.
Its solitude greatened her human hours
With a background of the eternal and unique.
A force of spare direct necessity
Reduced the heavy framework of man’s days
And his overburdening mass of outward needs
To a first thin strip of simple animal wants,
And the mighty wildness of the primitive earth
And the brooding multitude of patient trees
And the musing sapphire leisure of the sky
And the solemn weight of the slowly-passing months
Had left in her deep room for thought and God.
There was her drama’s radiant prologue lived.
A spot for the eternal’s tread on earth
Set in the cloistral yearning of the woods
And watched by the aspiration of the peaks
Appeared through an aureate opening in Time,
Where stillness listening felt the unspoken word
And the hours forgot to pass towards grief and change.
Here with the suddenness divine advents have,
Repeating the marvel of the first descent,
Changing to rapture the dull earthly round,
Love came to her hiding the shadow, Death.
Well might he find in her his perfect shrine.
Since first the earth-being’s heavenward growth began,
Through all the long ordeal of the race,
Never a rarer creature bore his shaft,
That burning test of the godhead in our parts,
A lightning from the heights on our abyss.
All in her pointed to a nobler kind.
Near to earth’s wideness, intimate with heaven,
Exalted and swift her young large-visioned spirit
Voyaging through worlds of splendour and of calm
Overflew the ways of Thought to unborn things.
Ardent was her self-poised unstumbling will;
Her mind, a sea of white sincerity,
Passionate in flow, had not one turbid wave.
As in a mystic and dynamic dance
A priestess of immaculate ecstasies
Inspired and ruled from Truth’s revealing vault
Moves in some prophet cavern of the gods,
A heart of silence in the hands of joy
Inhabited with rich creative beats
A body like a parable of dawn
That seemed a niche for veiled divinity
Or golden temple-door to things beyond.
Immortal rhythms swayed in her time-born steps;
Her look, her smile awoke celestial sense
Even in earth-stuff, and their intense delight
Poured a supernal beauty on men’s lives.
A wide self-giving was her native act;
A magnanimity as of sea or sky
Enveloped with its greatness all that came
And gave a sense as of a greatened world:
Her kindly care was a sweet temperate sun,
Her high passion a blue heaven’s equipoise.
As might a soul fly like a hunted bird,
Escaping with tired wings from a world of storms,
And a quiet reach like a remembered breast,
In a haven of safety and splendid soft repose

One could drink life back in streams of honey-fire,
Recover the lost habit of happiness,
Feel her bright nature’s glorious ambience,
And preen joy in her warmth and colour’s rule.

A deep of compassion, a hushed sanctuary,
Her inward help unbarred a gate in heaven;
Love in her was wider than the universe,
The whole world could take refuge in her single heart.
The great unsatisfied godhead here could dwell:
Vacant of the dwarf self’s imprisoned air,
Her mood could harbour his sublimer breath
Spiritual that can make all things divine.
For even her gulfs were secreries of light.
At once she was the stillness and the word,
A continent of self-diffusing peace,
An ocean of untrembling virgin fire;
The strength, the silence of the gods were hers.
In her he found a vastness like his own,
His high warm subtle ether he refound
And moved in her as in his natural home.

In her he met his own eternity.