

Track 40: Section 6, lines 524 to end

A third creation now revealed its face.
525 A mould of body's early mind was made.
A glint of light kindled the obscure World-Force;
It dowered a driven world with the seeing Idea
And armed the act with thought's dynamic point:
A small thinking being watched the works of Time.
530 A difficult evolution from below
Called a masked intervention from above;
Else this great, blind inconscient universe
Could never have disclosed its hidden mind,
Or even in blinkers worked in beast and man
535 The Intelligence that devised the cosmic scheme.
At first he saw a dim obscure mind-power
Moving concealed by Matter and dumb life.
A current thin, it streamed in life's vast flow
Tossing and drifting under a drifting sky
540 Amid the surge and glimmering tremulous wash,
Released in splash of sense and feeling's waves.
In the deep midst of an insentient world
Its huddled waves and foam of consciousness ran
Pressing and eddying through a narrow strait,
545 Carrying experience in its crowded pace.
It flowed emerging into upper light
From the deep pool of its subliminal birth
To reach some high existence still unknown.
There was no thinking self, aim there was none:
550 All was unorganised stress and seekings vague.
Only to the unstable surface rose
Sensations, stabs and edges of desire
And passion's leaps and brief emotion's cries,
A casual colloquy of flesh with flesh,
555 A murmur of heart to longing wordless heart,
Glimmerings of knowledge with no shape of thought
And jets of subconscious will or hunger's pulls.
All was dim sparkle on a foaming top:
It whirled around a drifting shadow-self
560 On an inconscient flood of Force in Time.
Then came the pressure of a seeing Power
That drew all into a dancing turbid mass
Circling around a single luminous point,
Centre of reference in a conscious field,
565 Figure of a unitary Light within.
It lit the impulse of the half-sentient flood,
Even an illusion gave of fixity
As if a sea could serve as a firm soil.
That strange observing Power imposed its sight.
570 It forced on flux a limit and a shape,
It gave its stream a lower narrow bank,
Drew lines to snare the spirit's formlessness.
It fashioned the life-mind of bird and beast,
The answer of the reptile and the fish,
575 The primitive pattern of the thoughts of man.

A finite movement of the Infinite
Came winging its way through a wide air of Time;
A march of knowledge moved in Nescience
And guarded in the form a separate soul.

580 Its right to be immortal it reserved,
But built a wall against the siege of death
And threw a hook to clutch eternity.
A thinking entity appeared in Space.
A little ordered world broke into view

585 Where being had prison-room for act and sight,
A floor to walk, a clear but scanty range.
An instrument-personality was born,
And a restricted clamped intelligence
Consented to confine in narrow bounds

590 Its seeking; it tied the thought to visible things,
Prohibiting the adventure of the Unseen
And the soul's tread through unknown infinities.
A reflex reason, Nature-habit's glass
Illumined life to know and fix its field,

595 Accept a dangerous ignorant brevity
And the inconclusive purpose of its walk
And profit by the hour's precarious chance
In the allotted boundaries of its fate.
A little joy and knowledge satisfied

600 This little being tied into a knot
And hung on a bulge of its environment,
A little curve cut off in measureless Space,
A little span of life in all vast Time.
A thought was there that planned, a will that strove,

605 But for small aims within a narrow scope,
Wasting unmeasured toil on transient things.
It knew itself a creature of the mud;
It asked no larger law, no loftier aim;
It had no inward look, no upward gaze.

610 A backward scholar on logic's rickety bench
Indoctrinated by the erring sense,
It took appearance for the face of God,
For casual lights the marching of the suns,
For heaven a starry strip of doubtful blue;

615 Aspects of being feigned to be the whole.
There was a voice of busy interchange,
A market-place of trivial thoughts and acts:
A life soon spent, a mind the body's slave
Here seemed the brilliant crown of Nature's work,

620 And tiny egos took the world as means
To sate awhile dwarf lusts and brief desires,
In a death-closed passage saw life's start and end
As though a blind alley were creation's sign,
As if for this the soul had coveted birth

625 In the wonderland of a self-creating world
And the opportunities of cosmic Space.
This creature passionate only to survive,
Fettered to puny thoughts with no wide range
And to the body's needs and pangs and joys,

630 This fire growing by its fuel's death,
Increased by what it seized and made its own:
It gathered and grew and gave itself to none.
Only it hoped for greatness in its den
And pleasure and victory in small fields of power
635 And conquest of life-room for self and kin,
An animal limited by its feeding-space.
It knew not the Immortal in its house;
It had no greater deeper cause to live.
In limits only it was powerful;
640 Acute to capture truth for outward use,
Its knowledge was the body's instrument;
Absorbed in the little works of its prison-house
It turned around the same unchanging points
In the same circle of interest and desire,
645 But thought itself the master of its jail.
Although for action, not for wisdom made,
Thought was its apex—or its gutter's rim:
It saw an image of the external world
And saw its surface self, but knew no more.
650 Out of a slow confused embroiled self-search
Mind grew to a clarity cut out, precise,
A gleam enclosed in a stone ignorance.
In this bound thinking's narrow leadership
Tied to the soil, inspired by common things,
655 Attached to a confined familiar world,
Amid the multitude of her motivated plots,
Her changing actors and her million masks,
Life was a play monotonously the same.
There were no vast perspectives of the spirit,
660 No swift invasions of unknown delight,
No golden distances of wide release.
This petty state resembled our human days
But fixed to eternity of changeless type,
A moment's movement doomed to last through Time.
665 Existence bridge-like spanned the inconscient gulfs,
A half-illumined building in a mist,
Which from a void of Form arose to sight
And jutted out into a void of Soul.
A little light in a great darkness born,
670 Life knew not where it went nor whence it came.
Around all floated still the nescient haze.

End of Canto Four