

Track 53: Canto Seven, Section 1, lines 1 to 118

A mind absolved from life, made calm to know,
A heart divorced from the blindness and the pang,
The seal of tears, the bond of ignorance,
He turned to find that wide world-failure's cause.

05 Away he looked from Nature's visible face
 And sent his gaze into the viewless Vast,
 The formidable unknown Infinity,
 Asleep behind the endless coil of things,
 That carries the universe in its timeless breadths

10 And the ripples of its being are our lives.
 The worlds are built by its unconscious Breath
 And Matter and Mind are its figures or its powers,
 Our waking thoughts the output of its dreams.

15 The veil was rent that covers Nature's depths:
 He saw the fount of the world's lasting pain
 And the mouth of the black pit of Ignorance;
 The evil guarded at the roots of life
 Raised up its head and looked into his eyes.

20 On a dim bank where dies subjective Space,
 From a stark ridge overlooking all that is,
 A tenebrous awakened Nescience,
 Her wide blank eyes wondering at Time and Form,
 Stared at the inventions of the living Void
 And the Abyss whence our beginnings rose.

25 Behind appeared a grey carved mask of Night
 Watching the birth of all created things.
 A hidden Puissance conscious of its force,
 A vague and lurking Presence everywhere,
 A contrary Doom that threatens all things made,

30 A Death figuring as the dark seed of life,
 Seemed to engender and to slay the world.
 Then from the sombre mystery of the gulfs
 And from the hollow bosom of the Mask
 Something crept forth that seemed a shapeless Thought.

35 A fatal Influence upon creatures stole
 Whose lethal touch pursued the immortal spirit,
 On life was laid the haunting finger of death
 And overcast with error, grief and pain
 The soul's native will for truth and joy and light.

40 A deformation coiled that claimed to be
 The being's very turn, Nature's true drive.
 A hostile and perverting Mind at work
 In every corner ensconced of conscious life
 Corrupted Truth with her own formulas;

45 Interceptor of the listening of the soul,
 Afflicting knowledge with the hue of doubt
 It captured the oracles of the occult gods,
 Effaced the signposts of Life's pilgrimage,
 Cancelled the firm rock-edicts graved by Time,

50 And on the foundations of the cosmic Law
 Erected its bronze pylons of misrule.
 Even Light and Love by that cloaked danger's spell
 Turned from the brilliant nature of the gods

55 To fallen angels and misleading suns,
Became themselves a danger and a charm,
A perverse sweetness, heaven-born malefice:
Its power could deform divinest things.

A wind of sorrow breathed upon the world;
All thought with falsehood was besieged, all act
60 Stamped with defect or with frustration's sign,
All high attempt with failure or vain success,
But none could know the reason of his fall.

The grey Mask whispered and, though no sound was heard,
Yet in the ignorant heart a seed was sown
65 That bore black fruit of suffering, death and bale.

Out of the chill steppes of a bleak Unseen
Invisible, wearing the Night's grey mask,
Arrived the shadowy dreadful messengers,
Invaders from a dangerous world of power,
70 Ambassadors of evil's absolute.

In silence the inaudible voices spoke,
Hands that none saw planted the fatal grain,
No form was seen, yet a dire work was done,
An iron decree in crooked uncials written
75 Imposed a law of sin and adverse fate.

Life looked at him with changed and sombre eyes:
Her beauty he saw and the yearning heart in things
That with a little happiness is content,
Answering to a small ray of truth or love;
80 He saw her gold sunlight and her far blue sky,
Her green of leaves and hue and scent of flowers
And the charm of children and the love of friends
And the beauty of women and kindly hearts of men,
But saw too the dreadful Powers that drive her moods
85 And the anguish she has strewn upon her ways,
Fate waiting on the unseen steps of men
And her evil and sorrow and last gift of death.

A breath of disillusion and decadence
Corrupting watched for Life's maturity
90 And made to rot the full grain of the soul:
Progress became a purveyor of Death.

A world that clung to the law of a slain Light
Cherished the putrid corpses of dead truths,
Hailed twisted forms as things free, new and true,
95 Beauty from ugliness and evil drank
Feeling themselves guests at a banquet of the gods
And tasted corruption like a high-spiced food.

A darkness settled on the heavy air;
It hunted the bright smile from Nature's lips
100 And slew the native confidence in her heart
And put fear's crooked look into her eyes.

The lust that warps the spirit's natural good
Replaced by a manufactured virtue and vice
The frank spontaneous impulse of the soul:
105 Afflicting Nature with the dual's lie,
Their twin values whetted a forbidden zest,
Made evil a relief from spurious good,
The ego battered on righteousness and sin

And each became an instrument of Hell.

- 110 In rejected heaps by a monotonous road
The old simple delights were left to lie
On the wasteland of life's descent to Night.
All glory of life was dimmed, tarnished with doubt;
All beauty ended in an aging face;
- 115 All power was dubbed a tyranny cursed by God
And Truth a fiction needed by the mind:
The chase of joy was now a tired hunt;
All knowledge was left a questioning Ignorance.