

Track 7: Canto 4, Section 1, lines 1 to 258

The world-ways opened before Savitri.
At first a strangeness of new brilliant scenes
Peopled her mind and kept her body's gaze.
But as she moved across the changing earth
5 A deeper consciousness welled up in her:
A citizen of many scenes and climes,
Each soil and country it had made its home;
It took all clans and peoples for her own,
Till the whole destiny of mankind was hers.
10 These unfamiliar spaces on her way
Were known and neighbours to a sense within,
Landscapes recurred like lost forgotten fields,
Cities and rivers and plains her vision claimed
Like slow-recurring memories in front,
15 The stars at night were her past's brilliant friends,
The winds murmured to her of ancient things
And she met nameless comrades loved by her once.
All was a part of old forgotten selves:
Vaguely or with a flash of sudden hints
20 Her acts recalled a line of bygone power,
Even her motion's purpose was not new:
Traveller to a prefigured high event,
She seemed to her remembering witness soul
To trace again a journey often made.
25 A guidance turned the dumb revolving wheels
And in the eager body of their speed
The dim-masked hooded godheads rode who move
Assigned to man immutably from his birth,
Receivers of the inner and outer law,
30 At once the agents of his spirit's will
And witnesses and executors of his fate.
Inexorably faithful to their task,
They hold his nature's sequence in their guard
Carrying the unbroken thread old lives have spun.
35 Attendants on his destiny's measured walk
Leading to joys he has won and pains he has called,
Even in his casual steps they intervene.
Nothing we think or do is void or vain;
Each is an energy loosed and holds its course.
40 The shadowy keepers of our deathless past
Have made our fate the child of our own acts,
And from the furrows laboured by our will
We reap the fruit of our forgotten deeds.
But since unseen the tree that bore this fruit
45 And we live in a present born from an unknown past,
They seem but parts of a mechanic Force
To a mechanic mind tied by earth's laws;
Yet are they instruments of a Will supreme,
Watched by a still all-seeing Eye above.
50 A prescient architect of Fate and Chance
Who builds our lives on a foreseen design
The meaning knows and consequence of each step
And watches the inferior stumbling powers.

55 Upon her silent heights she was aware
Of a calm Presence throned above her brows
Who saw the goal and chose each fateful curve;
It used the body for its pedestal;
The eyes that wandered were its searchlight fires,
The hands that held the reins its living tools;
60 All was the working of an ancient plan,
A way proposed by an unerring Guide.
Across wide noons and glowing afternoons,
She met with Nature and with human forms
And listened to the voices of the world;
65 Driven from within she followed her long road,
Mute in the luminous cavern of her heart,
Like a bright cloud through the resplendent day.
At first her path ran far through peopled tracts:
Admitted to the lion eye of States
70 And theatres of the loud act of man,
Her carven chariot with its fretted wheels
Threaded through clamorous marts and sentinel towers
Past figured gates and high dream-sculptured fronts
And gardens hung in the sapphire of the skies,
75 Pillared assembly halls with armoured guards,
Small fanes where one calm Image watched man's life
And temples hewn as if by exiled gods
To imitate their lost eternity.
Often from gilded dusk to argent dawn,
80 Where jewel-lamps flickered on frescoed walls
And the stone lattice stared at moonlit boughs,
Half-conscious of the tardy listening night
Dimly she glided between banks of sleep
At rest in the slumbering palaces of kings.
85 Hamlet and village saw the fate-wain pass,
Homes of a life bent to the soil it ploughs
For sustenance of its short and passing days
That, transient, keep their old repeated course,
Unchanging in the circle of a sky
90 Which alters not above our mortal toil.
Away from this thinking creature's burdened hours
To free and griefless spaces now she turned
Not yet perturbed by human joys and fears.
Here was the childhood of primaeval earth,
95 Here timeless musings large and glad and still,
Men had forborne as yet to fill with cares,
Imperial acres of the eternal sower
And wind-stirred grass-lands winking in the sun:
Or mid green musing of woods and rough-browed hills,
100 In the grove's murmurous bee-air humming wild
Or past the long lapsing voice of silver floods
Like a swift hope journeying among its dreams
Hastened the chariot of the golden bride.
Out of the world's immense unhuman past
105 Tract-memories and ageless remnants came,
Domains of light enfeoffed to antique calm
Listened to the unaccustomed sound of hooves
And large immune entangled silences

Absorbed her into emerald secrecy
110 And slow hushed wizard nets of fiery bloom
Environed with their coloured snare her wheels.
The strong importunate feet of Time fell soft
Along these lonely ways, his titan pace
Forgotten and his stark and ruinous rounds.

115 The inner ear that listens to solitude,
Leaning self-rapt unboundedly could hear
The rhythm of the intenser wordless Thought
That gathers in the silence behind life,
And the low sweet inarticulate voice of earth
120 In the great passion of her sun-kissed trance
Ascended with its yearning undertone.
Afar from the brute noise of clamorous needs
The quieted all-seeking mind could feel,
At rest from its blind outwardness of will,
125 The unwearied clasp of her mute patient love
And know for a soul the mother of our forms.
This spirit stumbling in the fields of sense,
This creature bruised in the mortar of the days
Could find in her broad spaces of release.

130 Not yet was a world all occupied by care.
The bosom of our mother kept for us still
Her austere regions and her musing depths,
Her impersonal reaches lonely and inspired
And the mightinesses of her rapture haunts.

135 Muse-lipped she nursed her symbol mysteries
And guarded for her pure-eyed sacraments
The valley clefts between her breasts of joy,
Her mountain altars for the fires of dawn
And nuptial beaches where the ocean couched
140 And the huge chanting of her prophet woods.
Fields had she of her solitary mirth,
Plains hushed and happy in the embrace of light,
Alone with the cry of birds and hue of flowers,
And wildernesses of wonder lit by her moons
145 And grey seer-evenings kindling with the stars
And dim movement in the night's infinitude.
August, exulting in her Maker's eye,
She felt her nearness to him in earth's breast,
Conversed still with a Light behind the veil,
150 Still communed with Eternity beyond.
A few and fit inhabitants she called
To share the glad communion of her peace;
The breadth, the summit were their natural home.
The strong king-sages from their labour done,
155 Freed from the warrior tension of their task,
Came to her serene sessions in these wilds;
The strife was over, the respite lay in front.
Happy they lived with birds and beasts and flowers
And sunlight and the rustle of the leaves,
160 And heard the wild winds wandering in the night,
Mused with the stars in their mute constant ranks,
And lodged in the mornings as in azure tents,

And with the glory of the noons were one.
Some deeper plunged; from life's external clasp
165 Beckoned into a fiery privacy
In the soul's unprofaned star-white recess
They sojourned with an everliving Bliss;
A Voice profound in the ecstasy and the hush
They heard, beheld an all-revealing Light.

170 All time-made difference they overcame;
The world was fibred with their own heart-strings;
Close drawn to the heart that beats in every breast,
They reached the one self in all through boundless love.

Attuned to Silence and to the world-rhyme,
175 They loosened the knot of the imprisoning mind;
Achieved was the wide untroubled witness gaze,
Unsealed was Nature's great spiritual eye;
To the height of heights rose now their daily climb:
Truth leaned to them from her supernal realm;

180 Above them blazed eternity's mystic suns.
Nameless the austere ascetics without home
Abandoning speech and motion and desire
Aloof from creatures sat absorbed, alone,
Immaculate in tranquil heights of self

185 On concentration's luminous voiceless peaks,
World-naked hermits with their matted hair
Immobile as the passionless great hills
Around them grouped like thoughts of some vast mood
Awaiting the Infinite's behest to end.

190 The seers attuned to the universal Will,
Content in Him who smiles behind earth's forms,
Abode ungrieved by the insistent days.

About them like green trees girdling a hill
Young grave disciples fashioned by their touch,
195 Trained to the simple act and conscious word,
Greatened within and grew to meet their heights.

Far-wandering seekers on the Eternal's path
Brought to these quiet founts their spirit's thirst
And spent the treasure of a silent hour
200 Bathed in the purity of the mild gaze
That, uninsistent, ruled them from its peace,
And by its influence found the ways of calm.

The Infants of the monarchy of the worlds,
The heroic leaders of a coming time,
205 King-children nurtured in that spacious air
Like lions gambolling in sky and sun
Received half-consciously their godlike stamp:
Formed in the type of the high thoughts they sang
They learned the wide magnificence of mood

211 That makes us comrades of the cosmic urge,
No longer chained to their small separate selves,
Plastic and firm beneath the eternal hand,
Met Nature with a bold and friendly clasp
And served in her the Power that shapes her works.

215 One-souled to all and free from narrowing bonds,
Large like a continent of warm sunshine
In wide equality's impartial joy,

These sages breathed for God's delight in things.
Assisting the slow entries of the gods,
220 Sowing in young minds immortal thoughts they lived,
Taught the great Truth to which man's race must rise
Or opened the gates of freedom to a few.
Imparting to our struggling world the Light
They breathed like spirits from Time's dull yoke released,
225 Comrades and vessels of the cosmic Force,
Using a natural mastery like the sun's:
Their speech, their silence was a help to earth.
A magic happiness flowed from their touch;
Oneness was sovereign in that sylvan peace,
230 The wild beast joined in friendship with its prey;
Persuading the hatred and the strife to cease
The love that flows from the one Mother's breast
Healed with their hearts the hard and wounded world.
Others escaped from the confines of thought
235 To where Mind motionless sleeps waiting Light's birth,
And came back quivering with a nameless Force,
Drunk with a wine of lightning in their cells;
Intuitive knowledge leaping into speech,
Seized, vibrant, kindling with the inspired word,
240 Hearing the subtle voice that clothes the heavens,
Carrying the splendour that has lit the suns,
They sang Infinity's names and deathless powers
In metres that reflect the moving worlds,
Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.
245 Some lost to the person and his strip of thought
In a motionless ocean of impersonal Power,
Sat mighty, visioned with the Infinite's light,
Or, comrades of the everlasting Will,
Surveyed the plan of past and future Time.
250 Some winged like birds out of the cosmic sea
And vanished into a bright and featureless Vast:
Some silent watched the universal dance,
Or helped the world by world-indifference.
Some watched no more merged in a lonely Self,
255 Absorbed in the trance from which no soul returns,
All the occult world-lines for ever closed,
The chains of birth and person cast away:
Some unaccompanied reached the Ineffable.