

Track 53: Section 1, lines 1 to 199

- Then pealed the calm inexorable voice:
Abolishing hope, cancelling life's golden truths,
Fatal its accents smote the trembling air.
- That lovely world swam thin and frail, most like
5 Some pearly evanescent farewell gleam
On the faint verge of dusk in moonless eves.
- "Prisoner of Nature, many-visioned spirit,
Thought's creature in the ideal's realm enjoying
Thy unsubstantial immortality
- 10 The subtle marvellous mind of man has feigned,
This is the world from which thy yearnings came.
- When it would build eternity from the dust,
Man's thought paints images illusion rounds;
Prophesying glories it shall never see,
- 15 It labours delicately among its dreams.
- Behold this fleeing of light-tasselled shapes,
Aerial raiment of unbodied gods;
A rapture of things that never can be born,
- 20 Hope chants to hope a bright immortal choir;
Cloud satisfies cloud, phantom to longing phantom
Leans sweetly, sweetly is clasped or sweetly chased.
- This is the stuff from which the ideal is formed:
Its builder is thought, its base the heart's desire,
But nothing real answers to their call.
- 25 The ideal dwells not in heaven, nor on the earth,
A bright delirium of man's ardour of hope
Drunk with the wine of its own fantasy.
- It is a brilliant shadow's dreamy trail.
- 30 Thy vision's error builds the azure skies,
Thy vision's error drew the rainbow's arch;
Thy mortal longing made for thee a soul.
- This angel in thy body thou callst love,
Who shapes his wings from thy emotion's hues,
In a ferment of thy body has been born
- 35 And with the body that housed it it must die.
- It is a passion of thy yearning cells,
It is flesh that calls to flesh to serve its lust;
It is thy mind that seeks an answering mind
- 40 And dreams awhile that it has found its mate;
- 40 It is thy life that asks a human prop
To uphold its weakness lonely in the world
Or feeds its hunger on another's life.
- A beast of prey that pauses in its prowl,
It crouches under a bush in splendid flower
- 45 To seize a heart and body for its food:
This beast thou dreamst immortal and a god.
- O human mind, vainly thou torturtest
An hour's delight to stretch through infinity's
- Long void and fill its formless, passionless gulfs,
- 50 Persuading the insensible Abyss

- To lend eternity to perishing things,
And trickst the fragile movements of thy heart
With thy spirit's feint of immortality.
- 55 All here emerges born from Nothingness;
Encircled it lasts by the emptiness of Space,
Awhile upheld by an unknowing Force,
Then crumbles back into its parent Nought:
Only the mute Alone can for ever be.
- In the Alone there is no room for love.
- 60 In vain to clothe love's perishable mud
Thou hast woven on the Immortals' borrowed loom
The ideal's gorgeous and unfading robe.
The ideal never yet was real made.
- 65 Imprisoned in form that glory cannot live;
Into a body shut it breathes no more.
Intangible, remote, for ever pure,
A sovereign of its own brilliant void,
Unwillingly it descends to earthly air
To inhabit a white temple in man's heart:
- 70 70 In his heart it shines rejected by his life.
Immutable, bodiless, beautiful, grand and dumb,
Immobile on its shining throne it sits;
Dumb it receives his offering and his prayer.
It has no voice to answer to his call,
- 75 75 No feet that move, no hands to take his gifts:
Aerial statue of the nude Idea,
Virgin conception of a bodiless god,
Its light stirs man the thinker to create
An earthly semblance of diviner things.
- 80 80 Its hued reflection falls upon man's acts;
His institutions are its cenotaphs,
He signs his dead conventions with its name;
His virtues don the Ideal's skiey robe
And a nimbus of the outline of its face:
- 85 85 He hides their littleness with the divine Name.
Yet insufficient is the bright pretence
To screen their indigent and earthy make:
Earth only is there and not some heavenly source.
- 90 90 If heavens there are they are veiled in their own light,
If a Truth eternal somewhere reigns unknown,
It burns in a tremendous void of God;
For truth shines far from the falsehoods of the world;
How can the heavens come down to unhappy earth
- 85 85 How shall the Ideal tread earth's dolorous soil
Where life is only a labour and a hope,
A child of Matter and by Matter fed,
A fire flaming low in Nature's grate,
A wave that breaks upon a shore in Time,
- 95 95 A journey's toilsome trudge with death for goal?
- 100 100 The Avatars have lived and died in vain,

- Vain was the sage's thought, the prophet's voice;
In vain is seen the shining upward Way.
- 105 Earth lies unchanged beneath the circling sun;
She loves her fall and no omnipotence
Her mortal imperfections can erase,
Force on man's crooked ignorance Heaven's straight line
Or colonise a world of death with gods.
- 110 O traveller in the chariot of the Sun,
High priestess in thy holy fancy's shrine
Who with a magic ritual in earth's house
Worshippest ideal and eternal love,
What is this love thy thought has deified,
This sacred legend and immortal myth?
- 115 It is a conscious yearning of thy flesh,
It is a glorious burning of thy nerves,
A rose of dream-splendour petalling thy mind,
A great red rapture and torture of thy heart.
A sudden transfiguration of thy days,
120 It passes and the world is as before.
- A ravishing edge of sweetness and of pain,
A thrill in its yearning makes it seem divine,
A golden bridge across the roar of the years,
A cord tying thee to eternity.
- 125 And yet how brief and frail! how soon is spent
This treasure wasted by the gods on man,
This happy closeness as of soul to soul,
This honey of the body's companionship,
This heightened joy, this ecstasy in the veins,
130 This strange illumination of the sense!
- If Satyavan had lived, love would have died;
But Satyavan is dead and love shall live
A little while in thy sad breast, until
His face and body fade on memory's wall
135 Where other bodies, other faces come.
- When love breaks suddenly into the life
At first man steps into a world of the sun;
In his passion he feels his heavenly element:
But only a fine sunlit patch of earth
- 140 The marvellous aspect took of heaven's outburst;
The snake is there and the worm in the heart of the rose.
A word, a moment's act can slay the god;
Precarious is his immortality,
He has a thousand ways to suffer and die.
- 145 Love cannot live by heavenly food alone,
Only on sap of earth can it survive.
For thy passion was a sensual want refined,
A hunger of the body and the heart;
Thy want can tire and cease or turn elsewhere.
- 150 Or love may meet a dire and pitiless end
By bitter treason, or wrath with cruel wounds
Separate, or thy unsatisfied will to others

- Depart when first love's joy lies stripped and slain:
A dull indifference replaces fire
- 155 Or an endearing habit imitates love:
An outward and uneasy union lasts
Or the routine of a life's compromise:
Where once the seed of oneness had been cast
Into a semblance of spiritual ground
- 160 By a divine adventure of heavenly powers
Two strive, constant associates without joy,
Two egos straining in a single leash,
Two minds divided by their jarring thoughts,
Two spirits disjoined, for ever separate.
- 165 Thus is the ideal falsified in man's world;
Trivial or sombre, disillusion comes,
Life's harsh reality stares at the soul:
Heaven's hour adjourned flees into bodiless Time.
- 170 Death saves thee from this and saves Satyavan:
He now is safe, delivered from himself;
He travels to silence and felicity.

Call him not back to the treacheries of earth
And the poor petty life of animal Man.
- 175 In my vast tranquil spaces let him sleep
In harmony with the mighty hush of death
Where love lies slumbering on the breast of peace.
- 180 And thou, go back alone to thy frail world:
Chastise thy heart with knowledge, unhood to see,
Thy nature raised into clear living heights,
The heaven-bird's view from unimagined peaks.
- 185 For when thou givest thy spirit to a dream
Soon hard necessity will smite thee awake:
Purest delight began and it must end.

Thou too shalt know, thy heart no anchor swinging,
Thy cradled soul moored in eternal seas.
- 190 Vain are the cycles of thy brilliant mind.

Renounce, forgetting joy and hope and tears,
Thy passionate nature in the bosom profound
Of a happy Nothingness and worldless Calm,
Delivered into my mysterious rest.
- 195 One with my fathomless Nihil all forget.

Forget thy fruitless spirit's waste of force,
Forget the weary circle of thy birth,
Forget the joy and the struggle and the pain,
The vague spiritual quest which first began
When worlds broke forth like clusters of fire-flowers,
And great burning thoughts voyaged through the sky of mind
And Time and its aeons crawled across the vasts
And souls emerged into mortality."