

Track 54: Section 1b, lines 200 to end

200 But Savitri replied to the dark Power:
"A dangerous music now thou findst, O Death,
Melting thy speech into harmonious pain,
And flut'st alluringly to tired hopes
Thy falsehoods mingled with sad strains of truth.

205 But I forbid thy voice to slay my soul.

My love is not a hunger of the heart,
My love is not a craving of the flesh;
It came to me from God, to God returns.

Even in all that life and man have marred,
210 A whisper of divinity still is heard,
A breath is felt from the eternal spheres.

Allowed by Heaven and wonderful to man
A sweet fire-rhythm of passion chants to love.

There is a hope in its wild infinite cry;
215 It rings with callings from forgotten heights,
And when its strains are hushed to high-winged souls
In their empyrean, its burning breath
Survives beyond, the rapturous core of suns
That flame for ever pure in skies unseen,
220 A voice of the eternal Ecstasy.

One day I shall behold my great sweet world
Put off the dire disguises of the gods,
Unveil from terror and disrobe from sin.

Appeased we shall draw near our mother's face,
225 We shall cast our candid souls upon her lap;
Then shall we clasp the ecstasy we chase,
Then shall we shudder with the long-sought god,
Then shall we find Heaven's unexpected strain.

Not only is there hope for godheads pure;
230 The violent and darkened deities
Leaped down from the one breast in rage to find
What the white gods had missed: they too are safe;
A mother's eyes are on them and her arms
Stretched out in love desire her rebel sons.

235 One who came love and lover and beloved
Eternal, built himself a wondrous field
And wove the measures of a marvellous dance.

There in its circles and its magic turns
Attracted he arrives, repelled he flees.

240 In the wild devious promptings of his mind
He tastes the honey of tears and puts off joy
Repenting, and has laughter and has wrath,
And both are a broken music of the soul
Which seeks out reconciled its heavenly rhyme.

245 Ever he comes to us across the years
Bearing a new sweet face that is the old.

His bliss laughs to us or it calls concealed
Like a far-heard unseen entrancing flute
From moonlit branches in the throbbing woods,

250 Tempting our angry search and passionate pain.
 Disguised the Lover seeks and draws our souls.
 He named himself for me, grew Satyavan.
 For we were man and woman from the first,
 The twin souls born from one undying fire.

255 Did he not dawn on me in other stars?
 How has he through the thickets of the world
 Pursued me like a lion in the night
 And come upon me suddenly in the ways
 And seized me with his glorious golden leap!

260 Unsatisfied he yearned for me through time,
 Sometimes with wrath and sometimes with sweet peace
 Desiring me since first the world began.
 He rose like a wild wave out of the floods
 And dragged me helpless into seas of bliss.

265 Out of my curtained past his arms arrive;
 They have touched me like the soft persuading wind,
 They have plucked me like a glad and trembling flower,
 And clasped me happily burned in ruthless flame.

270 I too have found him charmed in lovely forms
 And run delighted to his distant voice
 And pressed to him past many dreadful bars.
 If there is a yet happier greater god,
 Let him first wear the face of Satyavan
 And let his soul be one with him I love;
 275 So let him seek me that I may desire.

For only one heart beats within my breast
 And one god sits there throned.
 Advance, O Death,
 Beyond the phantom beauty of this world;
 For of its citizens I am not one.

280 I cherish God the Fire, not God the Dream."
 But Death once more inflicted on her heart
 The majesty of his calm and dreadful voice:
 "A bright hallucination are thy thoughts.

285 A prisoner haled by a spiritual cord,
 Of thy own sensuous will the ardent slave,
 Thou sendest eagle-poised to meet the sun
 Words winged with the red splendour of thy heart.
 But knowledge dwells not in the passionate heart;
 The heart's words fall back unheard from Wisdom's throne.

290 Vain is thy longing to build heaven on earth.
 Artificer of Ideal and Idea,
 Mind, child of Matter in the womb of Life,
 To higher levels persuades his parents' steps:
 Inapt, they follow ill the daring guide.

295 But Mind, a glorious traveller in the sky,
 Walks lamely on the earth with footsteps slow;
 Hardly he can mould the life's rebellious stuff,

Hardly can he hold the galloping hooves of sense:
His thoughts look straight into the very heavens;
300 They draw their gold from a celestial mine,
His acts work painfully a common ore.

All thy high dreams were made by Matter's mind
To solace its dull work in Matter's jail,
Its only house where it alone seems true.

305 A solid image of reality
Carved out of being to prop the works of Time,
Matter on the firm earth sits strong and sure.

It is the first-born of created things,
It stands the last when mind and life are slain,
310 And if it ended all would cease to be.

All else is only its outcome or its phase:
Thy soul is a brief flower by the gardener Mind
Created in thy matter's terrain plot;
It perishes with the plant on which it grows,
315 For from earth's sap it draws its heavenly hue:
Thy thoughts are gleams that pass on Matter's verge,
Thy life a lapsing wave on Matter's sea.

A careful steward of Truth's limited means,
Treasuring her founded facts from the squandering Power,
320 It tethers mind to the tent-posts of sense,
To a leaden grey routine clamps Life's caprice
And ties all creatures with the cords of Law.

A vessel of transmuting alchemies,
A glue that sticks together mind and life,
325 If Matter fails, all crumbling cracks and falls.

All upon Matter stands as on a rock.

Yet this security and guarantor
Pressed for credentials an impostor proves:
A cheat of substance where no substance is,
330 An appearance and a symbol and a nought,
Its forms have no original right to birth:
Its aspect of a fixed stability
Is the cover of a captive motion's swirl,
An order of the steps of Energy's dance
335 Whose footmarks leave for ever the same signs,
A concrete face of unsubstantial Time,
A trickle dotting the emptiness of Space:
A stable-seeming movement without change,
Yet change arrives and the last change is death.

340 What seemed most real once, is Nihil's show.

Its figures are snares that trap and prison the sense;
The beginningless Void was its artificer:
Nothing is there but aspects limned by Chance
And seeming shapes of seeming Energy.

345 All by Death's mercy breathe and live awhile,
All think and act by the Inconscient's grace.

Addict of the roseate luxury of thy thoughts,
Turn not thy gaze within thyself to look

350 At visions in the gleaming crystal, Mind,
Close not thy lids to dream the forms of Gods.

At last to open thy eyes consent and see
The stuff of which thou and the world are made.

Inconscient in the dumb inconscient Void
Inexplicably a moving world sprang forth:
355 Awhile secure, happily insensible,
It could not rest content with its own truth.

For something on its nescient breast was born
Condemned to see and know, to feel and love,
It watched its acts, imagined a soul within;
360 It groped for truth and dreamed of Self and God.

When all unconscious was, then all was well.

I, Death, was king and kept my regal state,
Designing my unwilling, unerring plan,
Creating with a calm insentient heart.

365 In my sovereign power of unreality
Obliging nothingness to take a form,
Infallibly my blind unthinking force
Making by chance a fixity like fate's,
By whim the formulas of Necessity,
370 Founded on the hollow ground of the Inane
The sure bizarrerie of Nature's scheme.

I curved the vacant ether into Space;
A huge expanding and contracting Breath
Harboured the fires of the universe:
375 I struck out the supreme original spark
And spread its sparse ranked armies through the Inane,
Manufactured the stars from the occult radiances,
Marshalled the platoons of the invisible dance;
I formed earth's beauty out of atom and gas,
380 And built from chemic plasm the living man.

Then Thought came in and spoiled the harmonious world:
Matter began to hope and think and feel,
Tissue and nerve bore joy and agony.

The inconscient cosmos strove to learn its task;
385 An ignorant personal God was born in Mind
And to understand invented reason's law,
The impersonal Vast throbbled back to man's desire,
A trouble rocked the great world's blind still heart
And Nature lost her wide immortal calm.

390 Thus came this warped incomprehensible scene
Of souls emmeshed in life's delight and pain
And Matter's sleep and Mind's mortality,
Of beings in Nature's prison waiting death
And consciousness left in seeking ignorance
395 And evolution's slow arrested plan.

This is the world in which thou mov'st, astray
In the tangled pathways of the human mind,
In the issueless circling of thy human life,
Searching for thy soul and thinking God is here.

400 But where is room for soul or place for God
In the brute immensity of a machine?
A transient Breath thou takest for thy soul,
Born from a gas, a plasm, a sperm, a gene,
A magnified image of man's mind for God,
405 A shadow of thyself thrown upon Space.
Interposed between the upper and nether Void,
Thy consciousness reflects the world around
In the distorting mirror of Ignorance
Or upwards turns to catch imagined stars.
410 Or if a half-Truth is playing with the earth
Throwing its light on a dark shadowy ground,
It touches only and leaves a luminous smudge.
Immortality thou claimest for thy spirit,
But immortality for imperfect man,
415 A god who hurts himself at every step,
Would be a cycle of eternal pain.
Wisdom and love thou claimest as thy right;
But knowledge in this world is error's mate,
A brilliant procuress of Nescience,
420 And human love a posturer on earth-stage
Who imitates with verve a faery dance.
An extract pressed from hard experience,
Man's knowledge casked in the barrels of Memory
Has the harsh savour of a mortal draught:
425 A sweet secretion from the erotic glands
Flattering and torturing the burning nerves,
Love is a honey and poison in the breast
Drunk by it as the nectar of the gods.
Earth's human wisdom is no great-browed power,
430 And love no gleaming angel from the skies;
If they aspire beyond earth's dullard air,
Arriving sunwards with frail waxen wings,
How high could reach that forced unnatural flight?
But not on earth can divine wisdom reign
435 And not on earth can divine love be found;
Heaven-born, only in heaven can they live;
Or else there too perhaps they are shining dreams.
Nay, is not all thou art and doest a dream?
Thy mind and life are tricks of Matter's force.
440 If thy mind seems to thee a radiant sun,
If thy life runs a swift and glorious stream,
This is the illusion of thy mortal heart
Dazzled by a ray of happiness or light.
Impotent to live by their own right divine,
445 Convinced of their brilliant unreality,
When their supporting ground is cut away,
These children of Matter into Matter die.
Even Matter vanishes into Energy's vague
And Energy is a motion of old Nought.
450 How shall the Ideal's unsubstantial hues

Be painted stiff on earth's vermilion blur,
A dream within a dream come doubly true?

How shall the will-o'-the-wisp become a star?

455 The Ideal is a malady of thy mind,
A bright delirium of thy speech and thought,
A strange wine of beauty lifting thee to false sight.

460 A noble fiction of thy yearnings made,
Thy human imperfection it must share:
Its forms in Nature disappoint the heart,
And never shall it find its heavenly shape
And never can it be fulfilled in Time.

O soul misled by the splendour of thy thoughts,
O earthly creature with thy dream of heaven,
Obey, resigned and still, the earthly law.

465 Accept the brief light that falls upon thy days;
Take what thou canst of Life's permitted joy;
Submitting to the ordeal of fate's scourge
Suffer what thou must of toil and grief and care.

470 There shall approach silencing thy passionate heart
My long calm night of everlasting sleep:
There into the hush from which thou cam'st retire."

End of Canto Two