

**Track 58: Section 2b, lines 462 to 596**

But to the woman Death the god replied,  
With the ironic laughter of his voice  
Discouraging the labour of the stars:

465 "Even so men cheat the Truth with splendid thoughts.

Thus wilt thou hire the glorious charlatan, Mind,  
To weave from his Ideal's gossamer air  
A fine raiment for thy body's nude desires  
And thy heart's clutching greedy passion clothe?

470 Daub not the web of life with magic hues:  
Make rather thy thought a plain and faithful glass  
Reflecting Matter and mortality,  
And know thy soul a product of the flesh,  
A made-up self in a constructed world.

475 Thy words are large murmurs in a mystic dream.  
For how in the soiled heart of man could dwell  
The immaculate grandeur of thy dream-built God,  
Or who can see a face and form divine  
In the naked two-legged worm thou callest man?

480 O human face, put off mind-painted masks:  
The animal be, the worm that Nature meant;  
Accept thy futile birth, thy narrow life.

For truth is bare like stone and hard like death;  
Bare in the bareness, hard with truth's hardness live."

485 But Savitri replied to the dire God:  
"Yes, I am human. Yet shall man by me,  
Since in humanity waits his hour the God,  
Trample thee down to reach the immortal heights,  
Transcending grief and pain and fate and death.

490 Yes, my humanity is a mask of God:  
He dwells in me, the mover of my acts,  
Turning the great wheel of his cosmic work.

I am the living body of his light,  
I am the thinking instrument of his power,  
495 I incarnate Wisdom in an earthly breast,  
I am his conquering and unslayable will.

The formless Spirit drew in me its shape;  
In me are the Nameless and the secret Name."

500 Death from the incredulous Darkness sent its cry:  
"O priestess in Imagination's house,  
Persuade first Nature's fixed immutable laws  
And make the impossible thy daily work.

How canst thou force to wed two eternal foes?

Irreconcilable in their embrace

505 They cancel the glory of their pure extremes:  
An unhappy wedlock maims their stunted force.

How shall thy will make one the true and false?

Where Matter is all, there Spirit is a dream:  
If all are the Spirit, Matter is a lie,

510 And who was the liar who forged the universe?

The Real with the unreal cannot mate.

He who would turn to God, must leave the world;  
He who would live in the Spirit, must give up life;  
He who has met the Self, renounces self.

515 The voyagers of the million routes of mind  
Who have travelled through Existence to its end,  
Sages exploring the world-ocean's vasts,  
Have found extinction the sole harbour safe.

520 Two only are the doors of man's escape,  
Death of his body Matter's gate to peace,  
Death of his soul his last felicity.

In me all take refuge, for I, Death, am God."

But Savitri replied to mighty Death:

525 "My heart is wiser than the Reason's thoughts,  
My heart is stronger than thy bonds, O Death.

It sees and feels the one Heart beat in all,  
It feels the high Transcendent's sunlike hands,  
It sees the cosmic Spirit at its work;  
In the dim Night it lies alone with God.

530 My heart's strength can carry the grief of the universe  
And never falter from its luminous track,  
Its white tremendous orbit through God's peace.

It can drink up the sea of All-Delight  
And never lose the white spiritual touch,

535 The calm that broods in the deep Infinite."

He said, "Art thou indeed so strong, O heart,  
O soul, so free? And canst thou gather then  
Bright pleasure from my wayside flowering boughs,  
Yet falter not from thy hard journey's goal,

540 Meet the world's dangerous touch and never fall?

Show me thy strength and freedom from my laws."

But Savitri answered, "Surely I shall find  
Among the green and whispering woods of Life  
Close-bosomed pleasures, only mine since his,  
545 Or mine for him, because our joys are one.

And if I linger, Time is ours and God's,  
And if I fall, is not his hand near mine?

All is a single plan; each wayside act  
Deepens the soul's response, brings nearer the goal."

550 Death the contemptuous Nihil answered her:  
"So prove thy absolute force to the wise gods,  
By choosing earthly joy! For self demand  
And yet from self and its gross masks live free.

555 Then will I give thee all thy soul desires,  
All the brief joys earth keeps for mortal hearts.

Only the one dearest wish that outweighs all,  
Hard laws forbid and thy ironic fate.

My will once wrought remains unchanged through Time,  
And Satyavan can never again be thine."

560 But Savitri replied to the vague Power:  
"If the eyes of Darkness can look straight at Truth,  
Look in my heart and, knowing what I am,  
Give what thou wilt or what thou must, O Death.  
Nothing I claim but Satyavan alone."

565 There was a hush as if of doubtful fates.  
As one disdainful still who yields a point  
Death bowed his sovereign head in cold assent:  
"I give to thee, saved from death and poignant fate  
Whatever once the living Satyavan  
570 Desired in his heart for Savitri.

Bright noons I give thee and unwounded dawns,  
Daughters of thy own shape in heart and mind,  
Fair hero sons and sweetness undisturbed  
Of union with thy husband dear and true.

575 And thou shalt harvest in thy joyful house  
Felicity of thy surrounded eyes.

Love shall bind by thee many gathered hearts.

The opposite sweetness in thy days shall meet  
Of tender service to thy life's desired  
580 And loving empire over all thy loved,  
Two poles of bliss made one, O Savitri.

Return, O child, to thy forsaken earth."

But Savitri replied, "Thy gifts resist.

Earth cannot flower if lonely I return."

585 Then Death sent forth once more his angry cry,  
As chides a lion his escaping prey:  
"What knowst thou of earth's rich and changing life  
Who thinkst that one man dead all joy must cease?

Hope not to be unhappy till the end:  
590 For grief dies soon in the tired human heart;  
Soon other guests the empty chambers fill.

A transient painting on a holiday's floor  
Traced for a moment's beauty love was made.

Or if a voyager on the eternal trail,  
595 Its objects fluent change in its embrace  
Like waves to a swimmer upon infinite seas."