

Track 48: Section 3, lines 221 to end

At first in a blind stress of woods she moved
With strange inhuman paces on the soil,
Journeying as if upon an unseen road.

225 Around her on the green and imaged earth
The flickering screen of forests ringed her steps;
Its thick luxurious obstacle of boughs
Besieged her body pressing dimly through
In a rich realm of whispers palpable,
230 And all the murmurous beauty of the leaves
Rippled around her like an emerald robe.

But more and more this grew an alien sound,
And her old intimate body seemed to her
A burden which her being remotely bore.

235 Herself lived far in some uplifted scene
Where to the trance-claimed vision of pursuit,
Sole presences in a high spaceless dream,
The luminous spirit glided stilly on
And the great shadow travelled vague behind.

240 Still with an amorous crowd of seeking hands
Softly entreated by their old desires
Her senses felt earth's close and gentle air
Cling round them and in troubled branches knew
Uncertain treadings of a faint-foot wind:
245 She bore dim fragrances, far callings touched;
The wild bird's voice and its winged rustle came
As if a sigh from some forgotten world.

250 Earth stood aloof, yet near: round her it wove
Its sweetness and its greenness and delight,
Its brilliance suave of well-loved vivid hues,
Sunlight arriving to its golden noon,
And the blue heavens and the caressing soil.

The ancient mother offered to her child
Her simple world of kind familiar things.

255 But now, as if the body's sensuous hold
Curbing the godhead of her infinite walk
Had freed those spirits to their grander road
Across some boundary's intangible bar,
The silent god grew mighty and remote
260 In other spaces, and the soul she loved
Lost its consenting nearness to her life.

265 Into a deep and unfamiliar air
Enormous, windless, without stir or sound
They seemed to enlarge away, drawn by some wide
Pale distance, from the warm control of earth
And her grown far: now, now they would escape.

Then flaming from her body's nest alarmed
Her violent spirit soared at Satyavan.

270 Out mid the plunge of heaven-surrounded rocks
So in a terror and a wrath divine
From her eyrie streams against the ascending death,
Indignant at its crouching point of steel,
A fierce she-eagle threatened in her brood,
Borne on a rush of puissance and a cry,

Outwinging like a mass of golden fire.

275 So on a spirit's flaming outrush borne
She crossed the borders of dividing sense;
Like pale discarded sheaths dropped dully down
Her mortal members fell back from her soul.

A moment of a secret body's sleep,
280 Her trance knew not of sun or earth or world;
Thought, time and death were absent from her grasp:
She knew not self, forgotten was Savitri.

All was the violent ocean of a will
Where lived captive to an immense caress,
285 Possessed in a supreme identity,
Her aim, joy, origin, Satyavan alone.

Her sovereign prisoned in her being's core,
He beat there like a rhythmic heart,—herself
But different still, one loved, enveloped, clasped,
290 A treasure saved from the collapse of space.

Around him nameless, infinite she surged,
Her spirit fulfilled in his spirit, rich with all Time,
As if Love's deathless moment had been found,
A pearl within eternity's white shell.

295 Then out of the engulfing sea of trance
Her mind rose drenched to light streaming with hues
Of vision and, awake once more to Time,
Returned to shape the lineaments of things
And live in borders of the seen and known.

300 Onward the three still moved in her soul-scene.

As if pacing through fragments of a dream,
She seemed to travel on, a visioned shape
Imagining other musers like herself,
By them imagined in their lonely sleep.

305 Ungrasped, unreal, yet familiar, old,
Like clefts of unsubstantial memory,
Scenes often traversed, never lived in, fled
Past her unheeding to forgotten goals.

In voiceless regions they were travellers
310 Alone in a new world where souls were not,
But only living moods: a strange hushed weird
Country was round them, strange far skies above,
A doubting space where dreaming objects lived
Within themselves their one unchanged idea.

315 Weird were the grasses, weird the treeless plains;
Weird ran the road which like fear hastening
Towards that of which it has most terror, passed
Phantasmal between pillared conscious rocks
Sombre and high, gates brooding, whose stone thoughts
320 Lost their huge sense beyond in giant night.

Enigma of the Inconscient's sculptural sleep,
Symbols of the approach to darkness old
And monuments of her titanic reign,
Opening to depths like dumb appalling jaws
325 That wait a traveller down a haunted path
Attracted to a mystery that slays,
They watched across her road, cruel and still;

Sentinels they stood of dumb Necessity,
Mute heads of vigilant and sullen gloom,
330 Carved muzzle of a dim enormous world.

Then, to that chill sere heavy line arrived
Where his feet touched the shadowy marches' brink,
Turning arrested luminous Satyavan
Looked back with his wonderful eyes at Savitri.

335 But Death pealed forth his vast abysmal cry:
"O mortal, turn back to thy transient kind;
Aspire not to accompany Death to his home,
As if thy breath could live where Time must die.

Think not thy mind-born passion strength from heaven
340 To uplift thy spirit from its earthly base
And, breaking out from the material cage,
To upbuoy thy feet of dream in groundless Nought
And bear thee through the pathless infinite.

Only in human limits man lives safe.

345 Trust not in the unreal Lords of Time,
Immortal deeming this image of thyself
Which they have built on a Dream's floating ground.

Let not the dreadful goddess move thy soul
To enlarge thy vehement trespass into worlds
350 Where it shall perish like a helpless thought.

Know the cold term-stones of thy hopes in life.

Armed vainly with the Ideal's borrowed might,
Dare not to outstep man's bound and measured force:
Ignorant and stumbling, in brief boundaries pent,
355 He crowns himself the world's mock suzerain,
Tormenting Nature with the works of Mind.

O sleeper, dreaming of divinity,
Wake trembling mid the indifferent silences
In which thy few weak chords of being die.

360 Impermanent creatures, sorrowful foam of Time,
Your transient loves bind not the eternal gods."

The dread voice ebbed in the consenting hush
Which seemed to close upon it, wide, intense,
A wordless sanction from the jaws of Night.

365 The Woman answered not.

Her high nude soul,
Stripped of the girldle of mortality,
Against fixed destiny and the grooves of law
Stood up in its sheer will a primal force.

Still like a statue on its pedestal,
370 Lone in the silence and to vastness bared,
Against midnight's dumb abysses piled in front
A columned shaft of fire and light she rose.

End of Canto One