

**Track 3: Book One, Canto Two, *The Issue*: Section 1, lines 1 to 185**

Awhile, withdrawn in secret fields of thought,  
Her mind moved in a many-imaged past  
That lived again and saw its end approach:  
Dying, it lived imperishably in her;  
05 Transient and vanishing from transient eyes,  
Invisible, a fateful ghost of self,  
It bore the future on its phantom breast.  
Along the fleeting event's far-backward trail  
Regressed the stream of the insistent hours,  
10 And on the bank of the mysterious flood  
Peopled with well-loved forms now seen no more  
And the subtle images of things that were,  
Her witness spirit stood reviewing Time.  
All that she once had hoped and dreamed and been,  
15 Flew past her eagle-winged through memory's skies.  
As in a many-hued flaming inner dawn,  
Her life's broad highways and its sweet bypaths  
Lay mapped to her sun-clear recording view,  
From the bright country of her childhood's days  
20 And the blue mountains of her soaring youth  
And the paradise groves and peacock wings of Love  
To joy clutched under the silent shadow of doom  
In a last turn where heaven raced with hell.  
Twelve passionate months led in a day of fate.  
25 An absolute supernatural darkness falls  
On man sometimes when he draws near to God:  
An hour arrives when fail all Nature's means;  
Forced out from the protecting Ignorance  
And flung back on his naked primal need,  
30 He at length must cast from him his surface soul  
And be the ungarbed entity within:  
That hour had fallen now on Savitri.  
A point she had reached where life must be in vain  
Or, in her unborn element awake,  
35 Her will must cancel her body's destiny.  
For only the unborn spirit's timeless power  
Can lift the yoke imposed by birth in Time.  
Only the Self that builds this figure of self  
Can rase the fixed interminable line  
40 That joins these changing names, these numberless lives,  
These new oblivious personalities  
And keeps still lurking in our conscious acts  
The trail of old forgotten thoughts and deeds,  
Disown the legacy of our buried selves,  
45 The burdensome heirship to our vanished forms  
Accepted blindly by the body and soul.  
An episode in an unremembered tale,  
Its beginning lost, its motive and plot concealed,  
A once living story has prepared and made  
50 Our present fate, child of past energies.  
The fixity of the cosmic sequences  
Fastened with hidden inevitable links  
She must disrupt, dislodge by her soul's force

Her past, a block on the Immortal's road,  
55 Make a rased ground and shape anew her fate.  
A colloquy of the original Gods  
Meeting upon the borders of the unknown,  
Her soul's debate with embodied Nothingness  
Must be wrestled out on a dangerous dim background:  
60 Her being must confront its formless Cause,  
Against the universe weigh its single self.  
On the bare peak where Self is alone with Nought  
And life has no sense and love no place to stand,  
She must plead her case upon extinction's verge,  
65 In the world's death-cave uphold life's helpless claim  
And vindicate her right to be and love.  
Altered must be Nature's harsh economy;  
Acquittance she must win from her past's bond,  
An old account of suffering exhaust,  
70 Strike out from Time the soul's long compound debt  
And the heavy servitudes of the Karmic Gods,  
The slow revenge of unforgiving Law  
And the deep need of universal pain  
And hard sacrifice and tragic consequence.  
75 Out of a timeless barrier she must break,  
Penetrate with her thinking depths the Void's monstrous hush,  
Look into the lonely eyes of immortal Death  
And with her nude spirit measure the Infinite's night.  
The great and dolorous moment now was close.  
80 A mailed battalion marching to its doom,  
The last long days went by with heavy tramp,  
Long but too soon to pass, too near the end.  
Alone amid the many faces loved,  
Aware among unknowing happy hearts,  
85 Her armoured spirit kept watch upon the hours  
Listening for a foreseen tremendous step  
In the closed beauty of the inhuman wilds.  
A combatant in silent dreadful lists,  
The world unknowing, for the world she stood:  
90 No helper had she save the Strength within;  
There was no witness of terrestrial eyes;  
The Gods above and Nature sole below  
Were the spectators of that mighty strife.  
Around her were the austere sky-pointing hills,  
95 And the green murmurous broad deep-thoughted woods  
Muttered incessantly their muffled spell.  
A dense magnificent coloured self-wrapped life  
Draped in the leaves' vivid emerald monotone  
And set with chequered sunbeams and blithe flowers  
100 Immured her destiny's secluded scene.  
There had she grown to the stature of her spirit:  
The genius of titanic silences  
Steeping her soul in its wide loneliness  
Had shown to her her self's bare reality  
105 And mated her with her environment.  
Its solitude greatened her human hours  
With a background of the eternal and unique.

A force of spare direct necessity  
Reduced the heavy framework of man's days  
110 And his overburdening mass of outward needs  
To a first thin strip of simple animal wants,  
And the mighty wildness of the primitive earth  
And the brooding multitude of patient trees  
And the musing sapphire leisure of the sky  
115 And the solemn weight of the slowly-passing months  
Had left in her deep room for thought and God.  
There was her drama's radiant prologue lived.  
A spot for the eternal's tread on earth  
Set in the cloistral yearning of the woods  
120 And watched by the aspiration of the peaks  
Appeared through an aureate opening in Time,  
Where stillness listening felt the unspoken word  
And the hours forgot to pass towards grief and change.  
Here with the suddenness divine advents have,  
125 Repeating the marvel of the first descent,  
Changing to rapture the dull earthly round,  
Love came to her hiding the shadow, Death.  
Well might he find in her his perfect shrine.  
Since first the earth-being's heavenward growth began,  
130 Through all the long ordeal of the race,  
Never a rarer creature bore his shaft,  
That burning test of the godhead in our parts,  
A lightning from the heights on our abyss.  
All in her pointed to a nobler kind.  
135 Near to earth's wideness, intimate with heaven,  
Exalted and swift her young large-visioned spirit  
Voyaging through worlds of splendour and of calm  
Overflew the ways of Thought to unborn things.  
Ardent was her self-poised un stumbling will;  
140 Her mind, a sea of white sincerity,  
Passionate in flow, had not one turbid wave.  
As in a mystic and dynamic dance  
A priestess of immaculate ecstasies  
Inspired and ruled from Truth's revealing vault  
145 Moves in some prophet cavern of the gods,  
A heart of silence in the hands of joy  
Inhabited with rich creative beats  
A body like a parable of dawn  
That seemed a niche for veiled divinity  
150 Or golden temple-door to things beyond.  
Immortal rhythms swayed in her time-born steps;  
Her look, her smile awoke celestial sense  
Even in earth-stuff, and their intense delight  
Poured a supernal beauty on men's lives.  
155 A wide self-giving was her native act;  
A magnanimity as of sea or sky  
Enveloped with its greatness all that came  
And gave a sense as of a greatened world:  
Her kindly care was a sweet temperate sun,  
160 Her high passion a blue heaven's equipoise.  
As might a soul fly like a hunted bird,

Escaping with tired wings from a world of storms,  
And a quiet reach like a remembered breast,  
In a haven of safety and splendid soft repose  
165 One could drink life back in streams of honey-fire,  
Recover the lost habit of happiness,  
Feel her bright nature's glorious ambience,  
And preen joy in her warmth and colour's rule.  
A deep of compassion, a hushed sanctuary,  
170 Her inward help unbarred a gate in heaven;  
Love in her was wider than the universe,  
The whole world could take refuge in her single heart.  
The great unsatisfied godhead here could dwell:  
Vacant of the dwarf self's imprisoned air,  
175 Her mood could harbour his sublimer breath  
Spiritual that can make all things divine.  
For even her gulfs were secrecies of light.  
At once she was the stillness and the word,  
A continent of self-diffusing peace,  
180 An ocean of untrembling virgin fire;  
The strength, the silence of the gods were hers.  
In her he found a vastness like his own,  
His high warm subtle ether he refound  
And moved in her as in his natural home.  
185 In her he met his own eternity.