

**Track 07: Canto Three, Section 3, lines 437 to 574**

Only awhile at first these heavenlier states,  
These large wide-poised upliftings could endure.  
The high and luminous tension breaks too soon,  
440 The body's stone stillness and the life's hushed trance,  
The breathless might and calm of silent mind;  
Or slowly they fail as sets a golden day.  
The restless nether members tire of peace;  
A nostalgia of old little works and joys,  
445 A need to call back small familiar selves,  
To tread the accustomed and inferior way,  
The need to rest in a natural pose of fall,  
As a child who learns to walk can walk not long,  
Replace the titan will for ever to climb,  
450 On the heart's altar dim the sacred fire.  
An old pull of subconscious cords renews;  
It draws the unwilling spirit from the heights,  
Or a dull gravitation drags us down  
To the blind driven inertia of our base.  
455 This too the supreme Diplomat can use,  
He makes our fall a means for greater rise.  
For into ignorant Nature's gusty field,  
Into the half-ordered chaos of mortal life  
The formless Power, the Self of eternal light  
460 Follow in the shadow of the spirit's descent;  
The twin duality for ever one  
Chooses its home mid the tumults of the sense.  
He comes unseen into our darker parts  
And, curtained by the darkness, does his work,  
465 A subtle and all-knowing guest and guide,  
Till they too feel the need and will to change.  
All here must learn to obey a higher law,  
Our body's cells must hold the Immortal's flame.  
Else would the spirit reach alone its source  
470 Leaving a half-saved world to its dubious fate.  
Nature would ever labour unredeemed;  
Our earth would ever spin unhelped in Space,  
And this immense creation's purpose fail  
Till at last the frustrate universe sank undone.  
475 Even his godlike strength to rise must fall:  
His greater consciousness withdrew behind;  
Dim and eclipsed, his human outside strove  
To feel again the old sublimities,  
Bring the high saving touch, the ethereal flame,  
480 Call back to its dire need the divine Force.  
Always the power poured back like sudden rain,  
Or slowly in his breast a presence grew;  
It clambered back to some remembered height  
Or soared above the peak from which it fell.

485 Each time he rose there was a larger poise,  
A dwelling on a higher spirit plane;  
The Light remained in him a longer space.  
In this oscillation between earth and heaven,  
In this ineffable communion's climb  
490 There grew in him as grows a waxing moon  
The glory of the integer of his soul.  
A union of the Real with the unique,  
A gaze of the Alone from every face,  
The presence of the Eternal in the hours  
495 Widening the mortal mind's half-look on things,  
Bridging the gap between man's force and Fate  
Made whole the fragment-being we are here.  
At last was won a firm spiritual poise,  
A constant lodging in the Eternal's realm,  
500 A safety in the Silence and the Ray,  
A settlement in the Immutable.  
His heights of being lived in the still Self;  
His mind could rest on a supernal ground  
And look down on the magic and the play  
505 Where the God-child lies on the lap of Night and Dawn  
And the Everlasting puts on Time's disguise.  
To the still heights and to the troubled depths  
His equal spirit gave its vast assent:  
A poised serenity of tranquil strength,  
510 A wide unshaken look on Time's unrest  
Faced all experience with unaltered peace.  
Indifferent to the sorrow and delight,  
Untempted by the marvel and the call,  
Immobile it beheld the flux of things,  
515 Calm and apart supported all that is:  
His spirit's stillness helped the toiling world.  
Inspired by silence and the closed eyes' sight  
His force could work with a new luminous art  
On the crude material from which all is made  
520 And the refusal of Inertia's mass  
And the grey front of the world's Ignorance  
And nescient Matter and the huge error of life.  
As a sculptor chisels a deity out of stone  
He slowly chipped off the dark envelope,  
525 Line of defence of Nature's ignorance,  
The illusion and mystery of the Inconscient  
In whose black pall the Eternal wraps his head  
That he may act unknown in cosmic Time.  
A splendour of self-creation from the peaks,  
530 A transfiguration in the mystic depths,  
A happier cosmic working could begin  
And fashion the world-shape in him anew,  
God found in Nature, Nature fulfilled in God.

535 Already in him was seen that task of Power:  
Life made its home on the high tops of self;  
His soul, mind, heart became a single sun;  
Only life's lower reaches remained dim.  
But there too, in the uncertain shadow of life,  
There was a labour and a fiery breath;  
540 The ambiguous cowed celestial puissance worked  
Watched by the inner Witness's moveless peace.  
Even on the struggling Nature left below  
Strong periods of illumination came:  
Lightnings of glory after glory burned,  
545 Experience was a tale of blaze and fire,  
Air rippled round the argosies of the Gods,  
Strange riches sailed to him from the Unseen;  
Splendours of insight filled the blank of thought,  
Knowledge spoke to the inconscient stillnesses,  
550 Rivers poured down of bliss and luminous force,  
Visits of beauty, storm-sweeps of delight  
Rained from the all-powerful Mystery above.  
Thence stooped the eagles of Omniscience.  
A dense veil was rent, a mighty whisper heard;  
555 Repeated in the privacy of his soul,  
A wisdom-cry from rapt transcendences  
Sang on the mountains of an unseen world;  
The voices that an inner listening hears  
Conveyed to him their prophet utterances,  
560 And flame-wrapped outbursts of the immortal Word  
And flashes of an occult revealing Light  
Approached him from the unreachable Secrecy.  
An inspired Knowledge sat enthroned within  
Whose seconds illumined more than reason's years:  
565 An ictus of revealing lustre fell  
As if a pointing accent upon Truth,  
And like a sky-flare showing all the ground  
A swift intuitive discernment shone.  
One glance could separate the true and false,  
570 Or raise its rapid torch-fire in the dark  
To check the claimants crowding through mind's gates  
Covered by the forged signatures of the gods,  
Detect the magic bride in her disguise  
Or scan the apparent face of thought and life.