

Track 16: Canto Four, Section 7, lines 843 to end

This is the sailor on the flow of Time,
This is World-Matter's slow discoverer,
845 Who, launched into this small corporeal birth,
Has learned his craft in tiny bays of self,
But dares at last unplumbed infinitudes,
A voyager upon eternity's seas.

In his world-adventure's crude initial start
850 Behold him ignorant of his godhead's force,
Timid initiate of its vast design.
An expert captain of a fragile craft,
A trafficker in small impermanent wares,
At first he hugs the shore and shuns the breadths,
855 Dares not to affront the far-off perilous main.

He in a petty coastal traffic plies,
His pay doled out from port to neighbour port,
Content with his safe round's unchanging course,
He hazards not the new and the unseen.

860 But now he hears the sound of larger seas.
A widening world calls him to distant scenes
And journeyings in a larger vision's arc
And peoples unknown and still unvisited shores.

On a commissioned keel his merchant hull
865 Serves the world's commerce in the riches of Time
Severing the foam of a great land-locked sea
To reach unknown harbour lights in distant climes
And open markets for life's opulent arts,
Rich bales, carved statuettes, hued canvases,
870 And jewelled toys brought for an infant's play
And perishable products of hard toil
And transient splendours won and lost by the days.

Or passing through a gate of pillar-rocks,
Venturing not yet to cross oceans unnamed
875 And journey into a dream of distances
He travels close to unfamiliar coasts
And finds new haven in storm-troubled isles,
Or, guided by a sure compass in his thought,
He plunges through a bright haze that hides the stars,
880 Steering on the trade-routes of Ignorance.

His prow pushes towards undiscovered shores,
He chances on unimagined continents:
A seeker of the islands of the Blest,
He leaves the last lands, crosses the ultimate seas,
885 He turns to eternal things his symbol quest;
Life changes for him its time-constructed scenes,
Its images veiling infinity.

Earth's borders recede and the terrestrial air
Hangs round him no longer its translucent veil.

890 He has crossed the limit of mortal thought and hope,
He has reached the world's end and stares beyond;
The eyes of mortal body plunge their gaze
Into Eyes that look upon eternity.

A greater world Time's traveller must explore.

895 At last he hears a chanting on the heights

And the far speaks and the unknown grows near:
 He crosses the boundaries of the unseen
 And passes over the edge of mortal sight
 To a new vision of himself and things.

900 He is a spirit in an unfinished world
 That knows him not and cannot know itself:
 The surface symbol of his goalless quest
 Takes deeper meanings to his inner view;
 His is a search of darkness for the light,

905 Of mortal life for immortality.
 In the vessel of an earthly embodiment
 Over the narrow rails of limiting sense
 He looks out on the magic waves of Time
 Where mind like a moon illumines the world's dark.

910 There is limned ever retreating from the eyes,
 As if in a tenuous misty dream-light drawn,
 The outline of a dim mysterious shore.
 A sailor on the Inconscient's fathomless sea,
 He voyages through a starry world of thought

915 On Matter's deck to a spiritual sun.
 Across the noise and multitudinous cry,
 Across the rapt unknowable silences,
 Through a strange mid-world under supernal skies,
 Beyond earth's longitudes and latitudes,

920 His goal is fixed outside all present maps.
 But none learns whither through the unknown he sails
 Or what secret mission the great Mother gave.
 In the hidden strength of her omnipotent Will,
 Driven by her breath across life's tossing deep,

925 Through the thunder's roar and through the windless hush,
 Through fog and mist where nothing more is seen,
 He carries her sealed orders in his breast.
 Late will he know, opening the mystic script,
 Whether to a blank port in the Unseen

930 He goes or, armed with her fiat, to discover
 A new mind and body in the city of God
 And enshrine the Immortal in his glory's house
 And make the finite one with Infinity.

935 Across the salt waste of the endless years
 Her ocean winds impel his errant boat,
 The cosmic waters plashing as he goes,
 A rumour around him and danger and a call.
 Always he follows in her force's wake.

940 He sails through life and death and other life,
 He travels on through waking and through sleep.
 A power is on him from her occult force
 That ties him to his own creation's fate,
 And never can the mighty Traveller rest
 And never can the mystic voyage cease

945 Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man's soul
 And the morns of God have overtaken his night.
 As long as Nature lasts, he too is there,
 For this is sure that he and she are one;
 Even when he sleeps, he keeps her on his breast:

950 Whoever leaves her, he will not depart
 To repose without her in the Unknowable.
 There is a truth to know, a work to do;
 Her play is real; a Mystery he fulfils:
 There is a plan in the Mother's deep world-whim,
955 A purpose in her vast and random game.
 This ever she meant since the first dawn of life,
 This constant will she covered with her sport,
 To evoke a Person in the impersonal Void,
 With the Truth-Light strike earth's massive roots of trance,
960 Wake a dumb self in the inconscient depths
 And raise a lost Power from its python sleep
 That the eyes of the Timeless might look out from Time
 And the world manifest the unveiled Divine.
 For this he left his white infinity
965 And laid on the spirit the burden of the flesh,
 That Godhead's seed might flower in mindless Space.

End of Canto Four