

Track 18: Canto Five, Section 2, lines 85 to 168

85 A Will, a hope immense now seized his heart,
And to discern the superhuman's form
He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights,
Aspiring to bring down a greater world.
The glory he had glimpsed must be his home.

90 A brighter heavenlier sun must soon illumine
This dusk room with its dark internal stair,
The infant soul in its small nursery school
Mid objects meant for a lesson hardly learned
Outgrow its early grammar of intellect

95 And its imitation of Earth-Nature's art,
Its earthly dialect to God-language change,
In living symbols study Reality
And learn the logic of the Infinite.

100 The Ideal must be Nature's common truth,
The body illumined with the indwelling God,
The heart and mind feel one with all that is,
A conscious soul live in a conscious world.
As through a mist a sovereign peak is seen,
The greatness of the eternal Spirit appeared,

105 Exiled in a fragmented universe
Amid half-semblances of diviner things.
These now could serve no more his regal turn;
The Immortal's pride refused the doom to live
A miser of the scanty bargain made

110 Between our littleness and bounded hopes
And the compassionate Infinitudes.
His height repelled the lowness of earth's state:
A wideness discontented with its frame
Resiled from poor assent to Nature's terms,

115 The harsh contract spurned and the diminished lease.
Only beginnings are accomplished here;
Our base's Matter seems alone complete,
An absolute machine without a soul.
Or all seems a misfit of half ideas,

120 Or we saddle with the vice of earthly form
A hurried imperfect glimpse of heavenly things,
Guesses and travesties of celestial types.
Here chaos sorts itself into a world,
A brief formation drifting in the void:

125 Apings of knowledge, unfinished arcs of power,
Flamings of beauty into earthly shapes,
Love's broken reflexes of unity
Swim, fragment-mirrorings of a floating sun.
A packed assemblage of crude tentative lives

130 Are pieced into a tessellated whole.
There is no perfect answer to our hopes;
There are blind voiceless doors that have no key;
Thought climbs in vain and brings a borrowed light,
Cheated by counterfeits sold to us in life's mart,

135 Our hearts clutch at a forfeited heavenly bliss.
There is provender for the mind's satiety,
There are thrills of the flesh, but not the soul's desire.

Here even the highest rapture Time can give
Is a mimicry of ungrasped beatitudes,
140 A mutilated statue of ecstasy,
A wounded happiness that cannot live,
A brief felicity of mind or sense
Thrown by the World-Power to her body-slave,
Or a simulacrum of enforced delight
145 In the seraglios of Ignorance.
For all we have acquired soon loses worth,
An old disvalued credit in Time's bank,
Imperfection's cheque drawn on the Inconscient.
An inconsequence dogs every effort made,
150 And chaos waits on every cosmos formed:
In each success a seed of failure lurks.
He saw the doubtfulness of all things here,
The incertitude of man's proud confident thought,
The transience of the achievements of his force.
155 A thinking being in an unthinking world,
An island in the sea of the Unknown,
He is a smallness trying to be great,
An animal with some instincts of a god,
His life a story too common to be told,
160 His deeds a number summing up to nought,
His consciousness a torch lit to be quenched,
His hope a star above a cradle and grave.
And yet a greater destiny may be his,
For the eternal Spirit is his truth.
165 He can re-create himself and all around
And fashion new the world in which he lives:
He, ignorant, is the Knower beyond Time,
He is the Self above Nature, above Fate.