

Track 20: Canto Five, Section 4 lines 240 to 328

240 In a divine retreat from mortal thought,
In a prodigious gesture of soul-sight,
His being towered into pathless heights,
Naked of its vesture of humanity.

As thus it rose, to meet him bare and pure

245 A strong Descent leaped down. A Might, a Flame,
A Beauty half-visible with deathless eyes,
A violent Ecstasy, a Sweetness dire,
Enveloped him with its stupendous limbs
And penetrated nerve and heart and brain

250 That thrilled and fainted with the epiphany:
His nature shuddered in the Unknown's grasp.

In a moment shorter than death, longer than Time,
By a Power more ruthless than Love, happier than Heaven,
Taken sovereignly into eternal arms,

255 Haled and coerced by a stark absolute bliss,
In a whirlwind circuit of delight and force
Hurried into unimaginable depths,
Upborne into immeasurable heights,
It was torn out from its mortality

260 And underwent a new and boundless change.

An Omniscient knowing without sight or thought,
An indecipherable Omnipotence,
A mystic Form that could contain the worlds,
Yet make one human breast its passionate shrine,

265 Drew him out of his seeking loneliness
Into the magnitudes of God's embrace.

As when a timeless Eye annuls the hours
Abolishing the agent and the act,
So now his spirit shone out wide, blank, pure:

270 His wakened mind became an empty slate
On which the Universal and Sole could write.

All that represses our fallen consciousness
Was taken from him like a forgotten load:
A fire that seemed the body of a god

275 Consumed the limiting figures of the past
And made large room for a new self to live.

Eternity's contact broke the moulds of sense.

A greater Force than the earthly held his limbs,
Huge workings bared his undiscovered sheaths,

280 Strange energies wrought and screened tremendous hands
Unwound the triple cord of mind and freed
The heavenly wideness of a Godhead's gaze.

As through a dress the wearer's shape is seen,
There reached through forms to the hidden absolute

285 A cosmic feeling and transcendent sight.
Increased and heightened were the instruments.

Illusion lost her aggrandising lens;
As from her failing hand the measures fell,
Atomic looked the things that loomed so large.

290 The little ego's ring could join no more;
In the enormous spaces of the self
The body now seemed only a wandering shell,

His mind the many-frescoed outer court
Of an imperishable Inhabitant:
295 His spirit breathed a superhuman air.
The imprisoned deity rent its magic fence.
As with a sound of thunder and of seas,
Vast barriers crashed around the huge escape.
Immutably coeval with the world,
300 Circle and end of every hope and toil
Inexorably drawn round thought and act,
The fixed immovable peripheries
Effaced themselves beneath the Incarnate's tread.
The dire velamen and the bottomless crypt
305 Between which life and thought for ever move,
Forbidden still to cross the dim dread bounds,
The guardian darknesses mute and formidable,
Empowered to circumscribe the wingless spirit
In the boundaries of Mind and Ignorance,
310 Protecting no more a dual eternity
Vanished rescinding their enormous role:
Once figure of creation's vain ellipse,
The expanding zero lost its giant curve.
The old adamantine vetoes stood no more:
315 Overpowered were earth and Nature's obsolete rule;
The python coils of the restricting Law
Could not restrain the swift arisen God:
Abolished were the scripts of destiny.
There was no small death-hunted creature more,
320 No fragile form of being to preserve
From an all-swallowing Immensity.
The great hammer-beats of a pent-up world-heart
Burst open the narrow dams that keep us safe
Against the forces of the universe.
325 The soul and cosmos faced as equal powers.
A boundless being in a measureless Time
Invaded Nature with the infinite;
He saw unpathed, unwalled, his titan scope.