

NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

I

AND so I cross into another world
shyly and in homage linger for an invitation
from this unknown that I would trespass on.

I am very glad, and all alone in the world,
all alone, and very glad, in a new world
where I am disembarked at last.

I could cry with joy, because I am in the new world,
just ventured in.

I could cry with joy, and quite freely, there is
nobody to know.

And whosoever the unknown people of this un-
known world may be
they will never understand my weeping for joy
to be adventuring among them
because it will still be a gesture of the old world I
am making
which they will not understand, because it is
quite, quite foreign to them.

II

I WAS so weary of the world
I was so sick of it
everything was tainted with myself,
skies, trees, flowers, birds, water,
people, houses, streets, vehicles, machines,
nations, armies, war, peace-talking,
work, recreation, governing, anarchy,
it was all tainted with myself, I knew it all to start
with
because it was all myself.

When I gathered flowers, I knew it was myself
plucking my own flowering.

When I went in a train, I knew it was myself
travelling by my own invention.

When I heard the cannon of the war, I listened
with my own ears to my own destruction.

When I saw the torn dead, I knew it was my own
torn dead body.

It was all me, I had done it all in my own flesh.

III

I SHALL never forget the maniacal horror of it all

in the end
when everything was me, I knew it all already, I
 anticipated it all in my soul
because I was the author and the result
I was the God and the creation at once;
creator, I looked at my creation;
created, I looked at myself, the creator:
it was a maniacal horror in the end.

I was a lover, I kissed the woman I loved,
and God of horror, I was kissing also myself.
I was a father and a begetter of children,
and oh, oh horror, I was begetting and conceiving
in my own body.

IV

AT last came death, sufficiency of death,
and that at last relieved me, I died.
I buried my beloved; it was good, I buried
 myself and was gone.
War came, and every hand raised to murder;
very good, very good, every hand raised to murder!
Very good, very good, I am a murderer!
It is good, I can murder and murder, and see
 them fall

the mutilated, horror-struck youths, a multitude
one on another, and then in clusters together
smashed, all oozing with blood, and burned in heaps
going up in a foetid smoke to get rid of them
the murdered bodies of youths and men in heaps
and heaps and heaps and horrible reeking heaps
till it is almost enough, till I am reduced perhaps;
thousands and thousands of gaping, hideous foul
dead
that are youths and men and me
being burned with oil, and consumed in corrupt
thick smoke, that rolls
and taints and blackens the sky, till at last it is
dark, dark as night, or death, or hell
and I am dead, and trodden to nought in the
smoke-sodden tomb;
dead and trodden to nought in the sour black
earth
of the tomb; dead and trodden to nought, trodden
to nought.

V

GOD, but it is good to have died and been trodden
out
trodden to nought in sour, dead earth

quite to nought
absolutely to nothing
nothing
nothing
nothing.

For when it is quite, quite nothing, then it is
everything.

When I am trodden quite out, quite, quite out
every vestige gone, then I am here
risen, and setting my foot on another world
risen, accomplishing a resurrection
risen, not born again, but risen, body the same as
before,
new beyond knowledge of newness, alive beyond
life
proud beyond inkling or furthest conception of
pride
living where life was never yet dreamed of, nor
hinted at
here, in the other world, still terrestrial
myself, the same as before, yet unaccountably new.

VI

I, IN the sour black tomb, trodden to absolute death

I put out my hand in the night, one night, and my
hand

touched that which was verily not me

verily it was not me.

Where I had been was a sudden blaze

a sudden flaring blaze!

So I put my hand out further, a little further

and I felt that which was not I,

it verily was not I

it was the unknown.

Ha, I was a blaze leaping up!

I was a tiger bursting into sunlight.

I was greedy, I was mad for the unknown.

I, new-risen, resurrected, starved from the tomb

starved from a life of devouring always myself

now here was I, new-awakened, with my hand

stretching out

and touching the unknown, the real unknown,

the unknown unknown.

My God, but I can only say

I touch, I feel the unknown!

I am the first comer!

Cortes, Pizarro, Columbus, Cabot, they are noth-

ing, nothing!

I am the first comer!
I am the discoverer!
I have found the other world!

The unknown, the unknown!
I am thrown upon the shore.
I am covering myself with the sand.
I am filling my mouth with the earth.
I am burrowing my body into the soil.
The unknown, the new world!

VII

IT was the flank of my wife
I touched with my hand, I clutched with my
hand
rising, new-awakened from the tomb!
It was the flank of my wife
whom I married years ago
at whose side I have lain for over a thousand
nights
and all that previous while, she was I, she
was I;
I touched her, it was I who touched and I who was
touched.

Yet rising from the tomb, from the black oblivion
stretching out my hand, my hand flung like a
 drowned man's hand on a rock,
I touched her flank and knew I was carried by the
 current in death
over to the new world, and was climbing out on
 the shore,
risen, not to the old world, the old, changeless I,
 the old life,
wakened not to the old knowledge
but to a new earth, a new I, a new knowledge, a
 new world of time.

Ah no, I cannot tell you what it is, the new world
I cannot tell you the mad, astounded rapture of
 its discovery.

I shall be mad with delight before I have done,
and whosoever comes after will find me in the
 new world
a madman in rapture.

VIII

GREEN streams that flow from the innermost
 continent of the new world,
what are they?

Green and illumined and travelling for ever
dissolved with the mystery of the innermost heart
of the continent
mystery beyond knowledge or endurance, so sumptuous
out of the well-heads of the new world.--
The other, she too has strange green eyes!
White sands and fruits unknown and perfumes
that never
can blow across the dark seas to our usual
world!
And land that beats with a pulse!
And valleys that draw close in love!
And strange ways where I fall into oblivion of
uttermost living!--
Also she who is the other has strange-mounded
breasts and strange sheer slopes, and white
levels.

Sightless and strong oblivion in utter life takes
possession of me!
The unknown, strong current of life supreme
drowns me and sweeps me away and holds me
down
to the sources of mystery, in the depths,
extinguishes there my risen resurrected life

and kindles it further at the core of utter mystery.

GREATHAM