THE POEMS OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you Which shall be the darkness of God.

T. S. Eliot, East Coker

A  We walk in darkness
   From a lightless dawn
   Towards the mystery of a dark twilight.
   Where is the light,
   The light that shines,
   The light that enlightens,
   The light that hunts on the celestial meadow?
   Is it perhaps within the eye of Milton?
   Is it without?
   Is there a light that glows upon a sightless world?

B  Is there a light for sanctuaries
   And another for street corners?
   A hidden light for dead stars
   Made manifest in visible galaxies?
   A light for the destitute,
   A light for the rich,
   For the woman selling pleasure in dark alleys,
   For the dark alleys of hopes forlorn,
   For unredeemable moments
   And moments of redeeming grace?

C  The ALL is a penetrating darkness
   Vested with a blind insight,
   A cunning eye yet pure
   As that of little children heavenly chosen
   To see the darkness of eternal light,
   Above, below, around and within the central point.

   *   *   *

A  We walk in darkness
We dance between the broken swords
Of fear and pride,
Of lust and aspiration.
Cities of despair are swept by winds
Of unattainable desires. The bird of night
Devours the bird of dim sunset,
But next comes the dawn
Spit by darkness in the bowl of heaven.
Darkness at the beginning and at the end.
Behind the veil we glimpse darkness of God.
Before the veil is darkness of the blind.
The veil is also darkness
Where wrath and love are interlaced,
A checker cloth of nights and days,
Spun on wheels of longing and remorse.
No light pierces the darkness
Except the light of darkness,
The void abyss, the silence of stillness.
We walk in darkness.
Behind the veil we glimpse darkness of God.
Lack of vision or shortsightedness are night monsters
That gnaw the entrails of wisdom,
Yet wisdom is also dark.
Light blossoms on the trees of non-existence.

* * *

Is there a light for sanctuaries?
Is there faith alone for priests,
Charity alone for churches,
And only hope for the flock of western hills?
The narcissus of tender love
Mirrors itself in all the pools of glory,
In all the drops of autumnal rainbow,
In all the wells of traveller’s routes,
Even in cheap wines of prostitutes
And the saliva of drunken men.
Light is but a labarum
In the battle of earthly power.
“We are the light.” “This is the light.”
“We give you light.” Say men to other men.
Say nations to other nations. Backed all
By glimmering swords of light.
The light of one creed against another creed.
The light of reason against the light of heart.
Shouting as they pace upon the brink of death.
There is no light for sanctuaries.
Light is a labarum redeemed by blood.
Martyrs are lights but for another world,
Where there is no need of light.
The Lamb of Light was slain to lead
To supreme darkness all the lesser lights.
**C**

*The ALL is a penetrating darkness.*

We sense it before they ray of birth
After the amen of our earthly tomb.
We catch it here, here, here...
We catch it now, now, now...
By not stepping forward
Nor retracing steps that are unretraceable.
When the whispering voice of Self
Whispers no more demanding permanence,
Security, self-enjoyment and its constant repetition.
Darkness is disintegration of Self,
Utter Nothingness without utterance
Of the Word that leads to action,
Of the Verb that springs from images.
The cloud casts its shadow upon the grave
From which there is no twig of Resurrection,
But the final return of the Pilgrim
With wounded heart and bleeding hands
To the dry cistern and the empty home.
*The ALL is a penetrating darkness.*
*Darkness is disintegration of Self.*
*Darkness is vision supreme and unalloyed.*
*Darkness is the peaceful Angel of Death.*
We are darkness, Oh my God,
Thou art my darkness, my dark bottomless pit.

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**THE POEM OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT**

**A**

*There is a leaven in the bread of angels*

There is a black spot in the celestial light.
Between Father and Son is Satan... the black
Bottomless pit of Mystery Unreaveled.
He sets and stops the Wheel of Destiny.
Where is the robe of glory aglowing and aflame?
Where is the well of solitary grace?
Where is the blossom of the Eastern Garden?
Where is the seedless fruit of Paradise?

**B**

*O, Secret Angel, whisper to my soul*

Some new message; display to me the mirrors
Of earthly enchantment, that I may see the Earth,
That I may feel the throbs of her maternal heart
Closer to mine, that her rivers and my rivers
May flow together to the encircling sea!
Empty is the cup of Sentiment,
Pale is the lamp of Reason, immature the will.
No vision and no view. A hungry monster
Eating this side and the other side of self.

C

_The Conscious and the Unconscious! Lucifer!
_That which laughs the star, laughs the lake, men laugh,
The thorn, the spear, the nails, the crown.
Give me the Cross to lay my heart upon.
Draw around the circle. My heart the center.
Plunge me in the tenebrae of Calvary. Behold!

* * *

A

_There is a leaven in the bread of angels_
That none detects but the agonizing souls.
Bird of sunlight with outstretched wings,
One bathed in pale, glimmering rays of dawn,
The other in purple dusk. Children of men,
Like vesperal leaves blown by Autumn Winds
From fruit to snow, dance in soft air,
Play with the moon, mirror themselves
On starry pools and shining waves,
Sing to the great accord of nested woods
Or to the bewitching monologues of nightingales.
Spring is here out of the winter grave,
The teeming forest out of the Earth’s entrails.
Hovering over is the Bird Inmortal
Dying and rising in the eternal now.
I bend my knee upon the ground of hope.
But hope then becomes pale as an elusive memory...
From eastern gleam springs a sun tearful and weak
Like a decrepit man fading with age.
The stars smile with mirth of cherubic indifference
Upon a barren world, flowerless and fruitless.
What mirage is this? Promise and failure
Embrace each other, above, below, here, hereafter.
Does it come from Heaven’s unbending justice
Or from Hell’s unquenchable thirst for death?

* * *

B

_O, Secret Angel, whisper to my soul:_
  “Behold the world, and walk in misery
Inhaling its dust of sadness, its aspirations
Of subtle selfishness, its dreams of grandeur
That end in tears and blood! Drink heavily
From this tremendous cup of initiations
Into the bacchic mysteries of pleasure,
Into the raptures of ecstatic love;
Down to the Earth’s and up to Heaven’s realms.”
Let us raise the cup and follow the Toast-Master
Of this unhappy world. A toast, for what?
For the health of Ideologies, the amorphous monsters
On million eyes, million mouths, million claws,
Devouring everything, bloodless and cold.
For the “standard of living” the new Angel
Of our earthly paradise, holding the plated urn
Of milk and honey, radios, cars, refrigerators
And the babush toys of physical commodities.
Toast—Master! Let us drink for Religions,
The frozen waters of Jacob’s well
Served by the Churches in stony jars of dogmas.
Or let us drink for Despair and Anguish,
For Word—Analysis and Mathematics, the pillars
Of our contemporary Philosophy. No! For War,
Weapons, bombs. For a maddening Rock—and Roll!

* * *

The Conscious and the Unconscious; Lucifer;
He has marked humanity with the sign of arrogance.
Each man is. Each man does. Each toils. Each counts
And each recounts. Each One! O, the endless endeavour
To divest the Self of Being that is Not—Being,
Of doing that is undoing, of toils that are futile,
Of counts and recounts of Non—Essentials. How to end
That which has an end? Lucifer leads along the path
That culminates in some kind of apotheosis.
Yet his real path must lead to failure.
For failure is his highest gift.
It is only when the mind sinks low in hope,
When the soul vainly knocks at the gate of pain,
When the heart is but a pool of icy tears
And life a Wall for wailing Temples unrecoverable.
It is only then that light—of—sense becomes
Night of the Spirit... the unfathomable Night...
The deep Beyond, boundless, timeless, meaningless;
All devouring like the winds of Death
That lash the shores of this terrestrial life
And shatter to pieces the treasures of this Earth.
O, welcome Night! Embrace me. Enfold me.
Swallow me up into the Essential Nothingness.
The Unconscious is at last the Light Supreme.
The Light! The Dark! Alas! ... Darkness of God!

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