

Beyond It All

A poem written as a play.

Persons in the play:

A grown man with a strong, steady voice ("A Voice" and "The Voice").

A young man, preferably in his late twenties ("He").

Another young man with a voice that is noticeably different ("Himself").

Scene:

A wide-open beach where waves come sweeping in from the ocean. Parts of the beach are slightly elevated, forming great expanses of dry, golden sand where one may sit and ponder existential questions while resting one's eyes on the vastness of the sea and on the distant horizon, which almost blends with the sky. Behind this great beach, hills and gentle mountains rise green and partly forested into the changing skies. A lone individual, the young man, is seen sitting on the sands with his face against the water, his back erect and his eyes almost closed, as if meditating or absorbed in thinking or in prayers. It is late in the afternoon. The sun is low and sinking, and the soft, yellow light permeates the landscape, creating an increasingly ethereal, otherworldly atmosphere. The shrill, frenzied cries of foraging seabirds mix with the heavy, rhythmic sound of waves that break upon hitting land and flow across the glistening flats before retracting and seeping into the sand.

A Voice. [The elderly man, whose person is hidden from view.]

I can feel that you are sitting by the sea again.

He. [The young man. Interrupted in his solemn contemplation, but not incredibly surprised, he opens his eyes and tries to locate the area where the voice has its origin. His vision is temporarily obscured by shimmering tears, and the look on his face is that of one who for a long time has been agonized by painful thoughts and difficult feelings. The voice, though, does not come from a specific place. It is simply there.]

And so I am.

The Voice.

I can see that you are staring at the waves again.

He.

I am indeed.

The Voice.

I can hear that you are crying out in silence again.

He.

I am.

The Voice.

I can sense that you are asking for fulfillment of that wish again.

He.

I am.

The Voice.

It would be better if you gave it up and waited.

He.

Please, don't leave me in this misery.

Don't leave me trapped in this reality another year.

The Voice.

I never leave, and that you know,

Although you sometimes make me wish I could.

He.

Then help me to the exit,

So that I may undertake the journey of my dreams.

The Voice.

It is too early,

And you have no idea how great a challenge it will be.

Live out your life. Prepare.

He.

My affection for the present world is great,

But my affection for the previous was greater still,

And my affection for her could not have been described;

I will find no lasting consolation here;

Prepare me for that journey now,

Prepare me now,

Or you will have to see me fasting on this doorstep



Till my breath and life expires.

The Voice.

It would be irresponsible of me
To grant you such a privilege.
Too quickly could it prove a curse,
A scourge beyond your human comprehension.
You would encounter places on the way
Where even I may not be able to assist you.
Quite possibly,
You would be lost beyond recovery forever.

He.

I must find my love and world again,
Or be in agony forever more.
Give me the best assistance that you can,
That is all I ask.
I will blame nobody but myself
If I should fail.

The Voice.

I hear your words,
But realize that you would risk it all
Without knowing what I mean by all,
And only if you fail will you be brought to see
The nature of the jeopardy that you accepted.

He.

I know enough to make a choice.

The Voice.

Rarely have I run into such persistence in a human being.

He.

Remembering where human spirits came from,
You should not be surprised.

The Voice.

Never do I remember or forget;
Be careful with those human terms,
And origin
Is far from all.
Far more vital

Is what happens on the way.

He.

I apologize. I sometimes speak discourteously.

The Voice.

You need not apologize to me.
Did ever any of the glinting fishes in the water
Insult the ocean by the manner of their swimming?
It is your self that needs the humbling and redeeming pain
In which all true apologies have root.

[Being embarrassed, he does not find an answer. For a few seconds, there is total silence.]

The Voice.

Well then, my son,
Having felt your yearning for near thirty years,
Having observed your steady growth,
Having heard your many prayers,
And this being our twenty-seventh conversation of this kind,

Yes, I will help you depart

And make the journey to that place beyond
That is remembered in the ancient fire
That is governing the beating of your heart ...

[Hearing this, he lifts his bowed-down head, and an expression of surprise lights up his anguished face. Then, not being able to contain his feelings anymore, he starts crying, and violently, so that his entire body is set trembling, but the tears are tears of relief. The sun is about to dip beneath the faint horizon, and the drifting clouds will soon be transformed into a flaming red of rarely seen intensity. The day is almost over.]

Hardly ever have I decided to respond with action
To a pining;
Hardly ever did I choose to help a soul annul a past event
Afflicting it;
Only when observing such purity of aim
As I have seen in you,
Only to aid in the attainment of such noble goals as yours,
Is it possible to justify an interference
With what the augmentation of the universe

Does bring about.

He.

I want to thank you, but
What deeds or words could possibly be great enough?
At the moment, I can only praise your magnanimity in silence.

The Voice.

The completion of your venture, if you make it,
Will be reward enough.

[The dark is falling, but the clouds have dissolved, and the first stars have begun twinkling in the deep blue evening sky.]

The Voice.

Are you then ready?
Once performed, the act is irreversible;
An entrance will appear before you;
Simultaneously wonderful and dire;
And there will be no turning back;
The swathe that you are wearing now
Will never know the warming sun again.
From then on,
The far side of the mirror will be yours to know,
For better and for worse,
And though you will see through the glass
And sense the objects that are there
Crossing it will be impossible.

[A few seconds pass.]

He.

I am as ready as I'll ever be.

The Voice.

So let it happen,
But first,
You need to have some knowledge
Of the stages of your journey.
But how can I describe them to a man
That has not crossed the Bar?

He.

Although my memories of it seem dreams,
And though I was not yet a man,
I've surely done the crossing once before.
Use the best descriptions that you have,
My understanding will uncover ways
To go beyond the letters of the words,
When your descriptions sink into the chasms of my mind.

The Voice.

Very well.

[A fissure opens in the sky between them; a window into space, not limited by time or distances, the content of which will change as the presentation progresses.]

The first one, though undoubtedly a challenge,
Is the easy phase,
Your current world, first seeming huge,
Will shrink,
You will see the floating city
And its countless, colored lights
Against the scintillating, quiet black,
The marble walls, gleaming in the freezing sun,
Above the blue,
And then you'll pass the silver of the moon;
The mines, the crystal domes;

Don't think about it for too long,
That goes for everything that you'll encounter
On your journey.
Never be distracted from your ultimate objective,
If you are, the objects that divert you will entrap you
And, if you don't escape, destroy your soul forever.

He.

So there is truth to what the ancients told about Medusa?

The Voice.

There is indeed, my son.

Well,

As the blue and silver disappear behind you,
Fix your vision on the distant red
And you'll be there;

Above the city of illuminated towers,
Wherefrom a web of greenery
Transforms the reddish soil
As Genesis progresses.
A lovely sight is it,
But you must bid farewell to it and leave,
And that will be the last of human constructs which you'll pass.

He.
The very last?

The Voice.
The last but one surviving Voyager,
Out of the Voyagers of golden hopes,
But that is still to come.
Go on,
And head for mighty Jupiter;
The giant of undying storms
Who in its region holds
The ice-covered Europa moon,
Where hidden oceans,
Excited by volcanic heat,
Give sustenance to incandescent woods
Inhabited by creatures that would make you faint
And fall into the solemn depths,
But do not halt;
Pass by,
And gently skirt the rings of glittering
Magnificence that lie ahead,
Where, some way in, the misty peach of Titan
Harbors tiny life-forms in its juicy heart
Which are as quaint as any you have ever seen.
But keep your curiosity in check;
Move on,
And when you hear a chilling hymn,
Let the nature of the Sirens come to mind,
And stay away from where it emanates;
The two volupt'ous sisters in the shades of blue;
Do not even acknowledge their existence;
Head off fast and leave the realm of planets
Circling the Sun forever;
Never will your sight
Distinguish them again.

He.
Shall I never lay eyes on planets again?

The Voice.
Be calm, my son;
Many lovely planets will be yours to gaze upon
When the second phase is underway, and,
Should you entirely succeed,
You will indeed know worlds again,
But not like those that mortal humans know.

But to continue where we were;

The influence of sunlight will be waning
As the compass I will give you points into the area
Of murkiness and swirling rocks.
You will desire the pleasing light of day
More than you desired any object back on Earth
But such desires have to be resisted;
Allow the needle of the compass to command,
And cross the dodgy belt with nimbleness,
To enter what to you might seem a void,
But only infinitely further on,
When the harshest phase commences
Will you truly come to know what voids are,
And even voids are not devoid of all,
As you will see,
But leave the thought of that for now,
As we proceed to look at what you'll spot
As you prepare to leave the sphere of Helios behind.

He.
What a lovely image you are showing me,
And how that lime-green light is flaring up and dying
And returning, ever-changing, like a thin, translucent
Piece of silken cloth, blowing moonlit in the midnight breeze.
It seems to be behaving like the fluctuating, eerie glow
That I well know from icy regions here on Earth,
Only in an even grander manner,
And extending further than my earthbound mind
Can comprehend.

Oh, the glory of your manifested dreams

Brings me to tears,
I cannot even faintly understand
The splendor of your boundless thoughts,
But help me, Father;
Oh, help me if you can,
If there are still some strings in me
That might yield pure and gracious notes
After all the wrongs I have committed,
And all the wounds I have received
During my demanding wandering on wintry Earth;
Help me contribute to your glory
However insignificant my contribution proves to be.

Oh, how many in this dire world
Who blatantly deny you,
And worse,
How many that detract from
And destroy the glory you provide,
Or haughtily refuse
Even to look!
I tried to stay erect;
To keep my pathway clean
And not fall down,
But it is hard to walk erect
When there is sewage all around you;
I pity those who fail and fall,
More than I can tell in words,
And I fear that I might be among them.

The Voice.

Not to worry, son,
There are no grounds for such intense anxiety
That I can locate on the pages of your life,
And rest assured; I know them all.
If such were there,
The opportunity that you accepted
Would never have been yours to choose.

As for the many that you cry for,
You do already know the truth
Of what intrepid minds discerned
Millennia ago;
The kind that you have been acquainted with

By being born into it,
Has always, since its vehicle for the encapsulated soul
Was liberated from the jail of instincts,
Had the freedom to make choices,
But liberty entails responsibility,
And thus, accountability,
And every single soul that leads a human life
Will come to know the consequences of its choices
For itself, and for the future and the greater world,
And every single soul will through the detriment,
Impediment or progress it created by its actions
Or non-action during freedom,
Find just rewards and penalties;

The only two redeeming factors being
The limits of the knowledge
Available when choices were produced,
And, last but most important,
True, unselfish love.

[The image displayed in the fissure of the Heliosphere, an image which is actually not just an image, but a view of the object itself, continues to change. There is a brief silence.]

The Voice.

Enough of that for now;
I must go on;
Your transformation cannot safely be postponed too long
As the window for your leaving,
Like the window for a launch
Might close,
And another one might not be ready
Before the next time leaves are budding
In this capricious land,
So feed your memory with my display;
The recollection will be needed rather soon.

[The fissure alters and shows the solar system from outside.]

The aurora that incited awe in you
Skirts the edge of the transparent eggshell
That guards the egg where Helios sits like a yolk
Nourishing the fetus of the thinking kind

I hope to grow into a greater being
That better can exploit the possibilities
Of the eternal soul,
And that may leave its nest before the yolk is gone
And be my noble representative by helping Genesis
Expand into still barren worlds,
And battle the relentless adversary
Causing pandemonium throughout my dreams.

He.

How often I have noticed, Master
That Nature's structures and phenomena
Are echoed in still larger ones,
And thought: "It is indeed as if an ancient order
Of unspeakable and never-ending loveliness
Pervades it all,"
And during my encounters with the one
We should not name
It was by way of such uplifting signs alone
That hope was kept aflaming in my heart
And the distant light of greatness
Sustained before my eyes,
And now I see the echoes here as well;
How true the hope I clung to was,
But as you know,
I could not help but fear
That I was merely living in a self-delusion;
My faith kept wavering,
My doubts were strong,
And still you came to me,
Without a trace of wrath,
And listened to my childlike questions,
And now, today
You've even granted all I wished for;
Why, my Master, why such mildness
And such kindness
When every one of those distrustful thoughts I had
Lies naked and illuminated in the light
Of your unbounded knowledge?

*[The view of space is temporarily obscured, and the fissure is filled by short-lived images
from the young man's life.]*

The Voice.

No human faith
Was ever free of errors,
Such are the imperfections,
The many limitations,
Of the thinking kind on Earth,
That a measure of uncertainty
Is unavoidable and necessary;
It shows a basic insight
Into what humans are,
And the kin of this uncertainty
Is the virtue of humility.

Far worse than lack of certainty
Is certainty that leaves no room
For understanding that each human mind
Has flaws, and that it only with great difficulty
Might foster the ability to peek beyond its boundaries;
The kin of total certainty
Is the vice of arrogance,
And the road from arrogance to evil
Has often proved a short one.

Reflect on this, and you will realize with ease
Why reasonable doubt and its effects
Are never held against an individual
When the time for validation of his days has come;
Any other action would be vengeful and unjust,
And only humans and the Head of Chaos,
Do ever long for vengeance and injustice.

The one necessity, in order to avoid creating
Some dire penalties ahead of you
Is this:
The opening of hearts to hope
And selfless love,

And that, my son, you did,

And if you wish to lubricate your wheels some more,
And bend the rails that lie before you
Into the higher realms
Of time and space,

An honorable course in spite of doubts
And obstacles;
A life in service of the good and just,
Will aid your wheels in turning smoothly later on
And help that bending of the railway happen,
And I can tell you this;
There is still oil left in the hubs
That you will soon rely on;
The golden oil from gracious deeds committed
In the very place which holds the objects
Of your ardent longing.

As for what you felt
When seeing sacred structures,
Those feelings have their origin
In memories contained within your fire;
Although suppressed since early birth
Due to deficiencies in human brains,
They still make structures that your soul has tasted
Reverberate in complex corridors
Submerged beneath the fusing water
Of temporary, shallow consciousness,
And this is also why a sudden feeling
That seemingly has no good reason
In certain cases is a better guide
Than anything the logic of the earthly mind
Can possibly uncover and present.

Back to where we were now;
I can allow no more digressions
No more delays that might endanger
Your departure.

[The rift clears, and again acts as a shortcut for viewing places far away in space.]

The eggshell of auroras
Is where the winds,
From your star, and from others
Do collide, and, having lost their force,
Come to a poignant, short-lived halt
Which you must pass,
And pass you will,
Provided that your effort is determined,

And as you exit, say farewell,
For you will never know the influence of Sol again.

And then,
Emerged and ready for the second stage
Of your demanding journey,
This unobstructed view of nearby suns
In the enormous spiral of the Milky Way
Will for a moment be your property;
The territory of the three uneven sisters;
The brightest and most lovely being called
Alpha Centauri A
In human terminology,
But even greater beauty has the realm
Of Sirius,
Which lie approximately twice as far away,
Where one star failed, but where its twin
Lives on in youthful, ice-blue glory
Though as you know;
The ones who live intensely
Will be the first to perish,
And so the avid Sirius
Will never in its haste have time
To father any thinking kind.

Not so with Epsilon Eridani
A unpretentious one,
Where ancestors of you, that is;
Your current biological encasement,
Discerned an extrasolar planet.
I can disclose no more till later
Or strings of fate would be disrupted,
And merely for the sake of curiosity.

He.
I hear a strange, unsettling sound
Originating from the aperture you opened;
It seems like that of distant choirs
Singing chants in cloisters on a quiet morning.
It is slightly intermingled with a droning, though,
Which makes me think of flying bumblebees,
Those gentle beings that still haunt my memories
Of sun-lit childhood hours,

Pollinating countless flowers in the fruit trees
High up in lofty boughs below the sky.

*[The opening briefly shows scenes from sunny summer days in his childhood forest, and
the scenes are not merely moving pictures; they are the actual events.]*

The Voice.

It is the sound that will escort the ember
Of your essence
As you proceed through interstellar space
Where nothing can obstruct your hearing;
It is the sound of myriad connections and occurrences
Behind the tapestries of cosmos;
Behind what you, still being human,
Think of as the universe,

It is the whispering behind the carpet
Of the greatest theatre that ever was,
The sound of Dreaming, if you will;
The greatest genesis of all
In never-ending change and progress.

It is a sound
That no existing earthly ear can sense,
But you perceive it now
Because my demonstration of how places are
Behind the glass which seems a mirror
To the human race,
Makes more than what you normally would hear
Perceptible to human faculties.

Well,
Enough on interesting areas
In the vicinity of Sol in Via Lactea;
We cannot even briefly look at all of them
Or we would spend more earthly years on that alone
Than even Pax Romana once made calm;
So do not settle down
In any of those worlds close by;
For you must head for something else entirely;

Andromeda, the little cloud beside the constellation
Of the Wingéd Horse,

But remember; constellations are illusions only,
Figments that will change with vantage point and time,
So find the galaxy Andromeda
And do not let your vision leave,
Then make your gaze one filled with yearning,
And your gaze will bring you to Andromeda
With such a speed that you will seem to move
More speedily than anything you ever knew
But movements happening behind the mirror glass,
The glass which you will soon see through,
Are not at all like those occurring here,
On the opaque, reflective side.

And as the coiling Milky Way starts fading,
Look back just once, and shed a tear
At the immensity of gyiring beauty
That humans thought The Winter Road,
The Fair Cow's Way, or even
Stream of Heaven,
For you will never know
The galaxy that cradles Earth again.

Then let immensity turn tiny,
And tininess turn vast;
The princess comes before you, looking splendid,
Having hair of glowing gold,
And being dressed in cyan blue;
She is a gorgeous one, Andromeda,
But be not led astray by her;
If you are, the marvels of her billions
Might seize your heart for centuries,
Until the ember of your essence
Is utterly exhausted, dead, extinguished,
And can never be revived again.

He.

I must admit that I was puzzled,
Even frustrated at times,
When watching humans studying
The wonders of the cosmos and the world;

Ignoring the apparent beauty
Such as that I now am shown,

They unabashedly called everything a game
Of dice;
The hoof-marks of a beast run wild,

And for some years I even listened,
Uncertain which was better; my own heart
Or their cold logic, finally deciding on
A mixture of the two;
At first an odd concoction,
Acceptable, but unresolved;
I kept on searching and amending,
Endeavoring unconsciously

To shatter my confine.

My Master,
How dazzling those days still are
Before my inner sight;
The ones that saw the lifting of the veil
That had descended on my human eyes;
How overwhelmed I was by beauty,
How sensitive I suddenly became
To the intrinsic greatness,
The wonders that would budge and change me
And make my consciousness anew;
A consciousness that lets the River through.

And after that,
My puzzlement grew even greater,
As I with eyes refreshed viewed those
I was to think were wise and educated;
Men and women
Who due to education ought to have no veil
Across their eyes,
But whose sight, in spite of their purported learning,
Indeed was far more clouded than my own had been,
And to this day,
Their ignorance surprises me,
Though I am equally perplexed by obstinate believers
Who snub sound reason, and reject the undisputable,
Disrupting science for the sake of their unconscious fear.

The Voice.

I force no mind to see the many signs
Or to interpret them in other ways
Than it most fancies and feels justified,
And free will does indeed make destiny
A game of dice sometimes;
If will could not throw dice,
It would not be a free one.

The same applies to the autonomy
Of every true creation;
Without a certain independence,
No creation could be called complete.

Though only to a limited degree
Are these considerations fully relevant;
Beyond the many imperceptible constrictions
Within which free will lives,
There are no games of dice,
And beyond the countless fashioned fabrics
Within which sovereignty resides and acts
There is no independence;

My son, if you could penetrate it all
With clear and unconstrained perception,
As you might in the distant future do,
You would see what cannot be expressed
In human words,
Nor possibly translated into human thought;
The largest clockwork you could ever know;
The widest river you could ever swim;
The deepest ocean you could ever dive;
The brightest brilliance you could ever find;
And even that would be but tokens of activity beneath
For even massive clocks need maintenance,
And even rivers that seem endless have an origin,
And even oceans that seem free are governed,
And even light which blinds its witness has a source.

He.

Would the place of which you speak
By any chance resemble that which I,
In certain treasured moments,
Have experienced,

If only very briefly,
And which I feel a yearning for which often is as strong
As that for where I came from, far beyond?

No words can quite convey the exaltation
With which I was infused,
But you can see those moments in my memory unaided;

My own remembrance of them seems to be
A dawn more beautiful than any of a worldly day,
A dawn viewed through the bars of tiny windows
In a prison wall,
Which I climbed up to when the guards were not alert.
Please tell me, was there any truth in what I sensed?

The Voice.

There was more truth
Than you can know;
You caught a glimpse,
A glimpse indeed;
Such as a human with some effort might,

But now my lecture must continue;
Time is turning precious,
Thus, what I show will be but sketches
Of the stretches of dark space
That you will cross,
And I can merely give you hints of what they hold;
Of the amazing, drifting clouds
Of star-birth and of forming worlds,
And all I can suggest of transformations in between
Will be like nothing but some leaves in autumn winds
When later you compare this session with the changes
Which you will have to overcome when moving
Between the major phases that remain.
But drafts should be enough to get you going,
And even if we had a hundred years,
My demonstration would make nothing more
Than simple outlines;
Such is the complexity and depth of what you face;
You will most definitely have to use your better judgment
As your foremost guide,
And one out of the judges in your lonesome soul

Will be the more important;
The umpire of the loving heart.

With this in mind, employ the vigor of your senses
And fix your full attention
On the rift you have before you;
Andromeda, though truly lovely in its garments
Of translucent hues,
Is not a place for you;
And do not mourn it,
Even if you should feel so inclined;
The spouse of brave Perseus is but one of many;
Of billions, multitudes of billions,
As visionary Sagan knew and wrote;
Galaxies of all appearances,
Distributed through space like pearls
Of gleaming morning dew in one great web,
More intricate and three-dimensional
Than any spider ever made.

Some pearls are close to one another,
Forming clusters of companionship,
And some are more alone
And drift in regal solitude,
And some form groups which then form endless chains
Which now and then cross other endless trains;
The points of contact looking much the same
As those that see the threads in cobwebs meet,
And in this manner they go on and on,
Endlessly, in human terms,
And almost endlessly indeed,
Looking from afar like Christmas lighting;
Like tiny bulbs a-glowing on the blackened trees,
Or like the neural network of the human brain.

As for you, my son,
You need to follow one such string to reach the goal
You have been yearning for,
So leave the group of pearls belonging to the Milky Way
And to Andromeda,
And to the clouds named after brave Magellan,
And search the universe that comes within
The grasp of vision;

The winding mesh of shining gems
That seems to fade into infinity,
Until you spot a filament that clearly differs;
It has no human name,
And even sharp-eyed human telescopes
Have only seen a tiny, fuzzy fraction of its total length,
But I will tell you how to recognize its special properties;
Its most important signature is piercing color;
A flawless, potent blue that radiates straight through
Your frightened essence;
A color that no earthly retina did ever catch,
There is no need for fear, however;
If you hold onto true intensions,
The light will only aid and strengthen you,

But be forewarned; It burns deceit and hatred,
As well as the self-righteous lack of tolerance
Exhibited by those who dare monopolize
The never-ending river of Divinity;
It burns such primitive and petty traits
Like dried-up timber in a white-hot furnace
But do not think of it as vengeance
Exacted by an angered mind;
It is in no way retribution,
Such words apply exclusively to worldly matters,
And were invented by the human brain.
The one and only reason for the burning
Is incompatibility between such light
And savage choices;
It is as natural and unavoidable
As when the prairie catches fire
Because a thunderbolt strikes withered grass,
And when there is no dry grass left,
Combustion ends
And new life springs,
Rising in the manner of a phoenix
From what seemed sure and merciless destruction.

But like I said, no need to worry,
Provided that you keep attention pinned
On your objective.
You may feel pain, but it will pass,
So do proceed to near it,

Even if it seems too far away,
And in a while, an instant really,
You will be homing in on it,
But when your vision starts discerning
The galaxies of which the string consists,
You have come close enough,
And if the galaxies start breaking up
Into the countless worlds they do consist of,
You have come dangerously close,
For if your curiosity is not restrained,
Or your amazement not sufficiently controlled,
You will most surely be engulfed
By what you find,
And possibly consumed forever.

So find a distance that is safe,
And let the shining string provide you with directions,
As you set the ember of your essence into motion
By purifying mind and will,
And as time passes, and you pass countless gems,
Never fail to heed the guidance of the filament
That they compose;
The structure that for ages will go on ahead of you,
Continually showing more to you
Of what it is;
Thousands of new pearls per what you call a second;
Billions of new stars per what you call a heartbeat;
Millions of new worlds,
This is what the filament continually will display,
While also constantly departing into darkness far away,
Creating the impression that it has no end,
All the more because you will be moving faster
Than your world-locked mind can presently conceive.

But do not lose your courage,
For this one promise I can give you:
Have fortitude, and you will find the end,
As surely as a boat that heeds the current of a waterway
Will slip into the salty ocean
If it has a sober captain.

When time at last has come
For you to leave your guide

Of piercing, purging, purifying blue,
A bend of unmistakable appearance
Will show up ahead
As the filament begins to turn,
While further on,
In the direction you have long been following
There will be no other strings to see,
No stars that twinkle in the depths of blackness,
No clouds that gyre in the burning cold,
No, nothing will there be to see,
And still there will be all
That ever really was,
And even though you have put all behind you,
There will be more ahead of you than ever.

It is the border of the human universe,
My son,
The moving edge
Which always will be out of human reach,
And in this borderland you might see lights
Not too unlike the ones that mark the end
Of solar realms;
Auroras, flaring up and dying
Across the vast, invisible horizon,
Where Genesis expands into what always was
While deep down being part of it;
It must indeed seem paradoxical to beings limited,
But trust my words; accept it as the truth,
For at the ultimate, impenetrable level way below,
Or at the highest peak; both sentences are valid,
There are no contradictions or absurdities;
At that concluding plane, there is but oneness,
Truly indestructible and never-ending;
A unity that will outlast all else;
An ocean of illuminated, living water
Knowing neither floor nor surface;
A consciousness divine and always dreaming;
Removed, but omnipresent, all at once;
Removed from you, while being you,
Allow my words an honest entry;
Then you might one day grasp,
If only for a fleeting, overwhelming moment,
The undeniable veracity of what I tell you.

[The young man wants to speak, but the voice continues.]

But I will talk no more of this for now,
For words can form but allegories of the deeper planes,
And will be misinterpreted too easily;
You have no choice but to show patience
Until the day when other languages are spoken
By your mind,
And such a day will surely be possessed by you
If you keep your ember radiant
Throughout the journey,
And lead a life of rectitude
When you reach home.

I was showing you the border of the universe
Inhabited by humans;
The changing, blurry edge
That marks the ending of the second phase;
You may rejoice, my son,
If you accomplish this,
But with restraint and caution,
For soon the third phase must commence;
The third and last before reentry,
But also the most taxing of them all,

So when you pass the unseen rim
And seem to enter utter loneliness,
Remember how Endeavour carried on,
And let the compass guide you,
As when you in a mountain snowstorm cannot see,
And must rely on the magnetic pole.
But first, look back and see if you can spot the string
Which holds the Milky Way,
Then say good bye,
For you will never know this universe again,
Unless an incident like that which brought you here
Should happen for a second time,
And that is too unlikely to be worth considering.
Then, as a final preparation,
Make a heartfelt prayer
In order to consolidate your weary mind,
For if you are not vigilant,
Then you could very quickly cease to be,

As, due to the autonomy of which I spoke,
You might run into independent forces,
Randomly distributed in pockets,
That will attempt to have you join their ranks
Of chaos and sedition.

And if you,
Facing distances that seem impossible
To ever cross,
Feel that your resolve is dwindling,
Take comfort in the sound
That will stay with you;
The sound that you already have detected;
The one that will escort you
Till the journey is completed
Provided that you listen for it zealously.

And of the goal ahead,
I cannot tell you much
For fear of compromising its integrity;
Eavesdropping for evil purposes is rife,
But cannot be put down without infringing
On self-rule,
And such an action would endanger
Far too much.
This I tell you, though:
Your recollection is impressively correct;
The goal, your home, is there,
And you will surely reach it in the end
If caution and endurance are
Unswervingly exhibited.

[It is nearly dark. Only a faint blue glow, almost black to the naked eye, persists in the western sky. The fissure that showed the various stages collapses and disappears. There is a short silence.]

He.
Is it then time?

The Voice.
It is indeed.

[A brief interlude.]

The Voice.
My son,
Considering the road
That you have chosen,
It is not with an easy heart
That I let death take you away.
I wish you all the fortune
That the cosmos may bestow upon you;
I can do no more for now.
May your journey be successful,
May you enter into love and valiance
When you arrive,
And may we later meet again.

One last advice:
Do not call upon me
Unless all other options are exhausted,
And keep in mind that there are places
Where inattentiveness might bring you into situations
Where even I cannot intrude to help.

He.
That I have accepted.

The Voice.
So let it be.
Farewell, my child.

He.
Farewell.

[Most of the stars have become clearly visible in the night sky. The water of the sea laps quietly against the unseen beach. Sitting on the sand, barely visible against the sea, he appears to lose consciousness gradually, then lies down on the ground, as if slowly surrendering to sleep. After that, he is seen from above, lying calm and almost outstretched at the fringe of the dry land. His eyes seem to be gazing firmly at the stars, his eyelids move just once or twice while his lips slowly utter some unknown word, then his face comes to a complete standstill. Seconds pass, but his eyes remain wide open and his lips do not move. A lone tear leaves his left eye and lingers for a moment on his face, then drops from his chin and disappears into the sand. Utter darkness has descended on the landscape around him.]

[*]

A new stage: The location is somewhere in space, not too far from Earth. The blue oceans and the white, drifting clouds are seen below. In the other directions, there is blackness, but also the twinkling of countless stars. A faint, uncanny sound, not unlike that of distant singing, pervades the ambience. Then, all of a sudden, the young man is heard speaking, which is particularly surprising since he is nowhere to be seen.

He.

Oh, dear,
Oh, dear,
Has it actually happened?
How wonderful the oceans look from here,
How stunning are their shades of blue,
Their shimmering in endless sunlight,
And the twirling filaments of white upon them
And the continents they cradle in their bosoms ...
Though far above,
I hear the breaking of a billion waves,
And the singing of a million birds at sea,
And, oh, the lamentations of a thousand lonesome whales;
How truly staggering Creation is;
How dizzying the energy of breathing Life;
Oh, how truly beautiful is not the world
That is forever lost
Through death and strife?

And, oh,
How frighteningly beautiful
The space around it is,
The space that it is dashing through
With such commendable serenity;
The space, the space
Of velvet dark, and scattered stars,
And emptiness,
Or emptiness, it seems;
An emptiness that is
And still is not ...

Himself. [Representing a different part of the same being]

Well, you have really done it this time, Michael.
Yes, you have really done it now.
Oh, dear,
What trials I would have avoided

If you and I were not inseparably linked together.

He.

But lo, behold;
The sights and sounds of this new sphere
Go far beyond my powers of appreciation and expression.
What did I do?
How did I wind up here?

Himself.

Come on, my friend,
Do not tell me that you still do not recall
Your recent dying;
The shedding of your earthbound shell
That freed you from imprisonment
Just instances ago?

He.

Hey, give me time to reconsolidate my dazzled mind, ok?
This isn't something we do every day.
I need to liberate my mind from all the staleness
That, after thirty years in prison, still impairs me;
Just like a butterfly that, having left its pupa,
Must fill its wings with blood and let them dry
Before it may attempt to use them,
So I must gather strength before I may look back
And see my memories with clarity;
My being is a river in upheaval
That must be calmed before the rocks below
Can be discerned, and what they tell be fully understood.

But, I am beginning to recall it all;
Though slowly,
It is all coming back to me,
I do remember now,
Remember now,
Remember ...

How I saw the whole world stir;
Oh, how I saw the whole world change,

Oh, how I do;

I am intoxicated, dizzy, dying;
Intoxicated with the wine of death;
Lo, all around me, all is flowing, growing, altering
As if insanity has entered time.
The clouds, the days and nights, the greenery,
The weeks and years, the ice and snow, the falling leaves,
The grass, the sea, the cities great, the human life,
It is all moving at a frenzied speed,
It is all coming, going and returning
Disappearing and appearing like the thunderbolts
Of raging storms,
Or like the shining bodies of a school of fish;
I see a thousand skyscrapers crop up and crumble;
I see the pyramids reduced to dust, and new ones rise;
I see the earth itself erupt, and new lands green,
The mountains fall, the smoke comes billowing
From bombed-out, burned-out conurbations,
A new Republic finds foundation,
Another Caesar has success,
Another thought is born again,
What strange and awful glory that is in it all,
What beauty with each budding spring,
What poignancy with every fall,
And how each coiling round explores new ground,
And how each eddy is the previous in newfound form,
And how they all increase and gain,
And give the Intellect unchartered lanes.

And I, myself, I age,
And suddenly, I have turned old;
My hands all wrinkles, hair all white,
My body frail, and clothed in rags,

I cry,
I cheer,
I curse,
I praise,
I pray for clemency,
I fall
And die ...

And then,
As if awakened from a crazy dream,

I see my body, lying lifeless on a windswept beach
As if it was just some outgrown, discarded skin,
Already decomposing and disintegrating,
And while I watch, astounded by the strange display,
A wave arrives and sweeps the parts,
The bones, the clothes, what there remains,
Out to the sea,

And as I, left behind; confounded,
And, admittedly, a bit concerned,
Am standing on the sands in solitude,
I feel a call and turn to look;
Turn west, from where a gale is briskly blowing
And there I see a pitch-black void;
A hole that has replaced the western sky
Around which everything is eddying
And all the fabric of the world seems warped,
As if it was but water in a draining pond.

Nearly hypnotized am I;
Awestruck, almost crying,
The power of the spectacle before me
Is more than I can bear;
I will be crushed, I feel,

But then I hear the promise from my Master
Echo in my fearful mind, the promise
And his kind advice,
And so, recovering my courage;
Concentrating;
Gathering my strength;
Remembering my distant goal;
My world, my love, the needed journey,
I gaze into the black with calm defiance,
And, with the speed of lightning,
As if I were a silver arrow,
I shoot into the swirling void,
Perceiving ripples all around me,
And then, away and gone,
I faint and dream and feel a stream,
Dream long, I think,
And wake up here.

Himself.

Well then,
Now that past events have been recalled,
And the occurrences have firmly been established
And accepted,
I suppose there is no point in questioning
The wisdom of our action;
There can, undoubtedly, be no return to life on Earth.
I have but one suggestion;
That we proceed to do what we were told;
That we begin the talked-of journey rather soon;
For staying here will certainly not bring us any benefits;
The view is great, but cannot help us reach the goal,
So let us end this idleness
And move.

He.

Just one moment now;
Have you had a thorough look
At what we are?
I try to judge where ember ends
And space begins,
Or rather, if I have a visibility or not,
And what I see fills me with fear,
For even though I still feel every limb I owned
Down there,
I cannot see a thing of what I am;
It is as if my body is still with me,
But in a state of absolute transparency;
I am reminded of the stories I was told
By people of ill fate;
People who had lost an arm or leg,
And still felt aches where nothing was,
As if its phantom were still there.

Wait a minute, though;
If I employ my concentration to the fullest,
I think I can discern a sign of my existence;
A faintly glowing, gas-like substance
Which roughly occupies the place my body did,
But I have nothing I can touch it with;
No hands with skin and fingers,
No feet with toes and nails,

And I suspect that what I see is not
Material in nature.
Indeed,
I feel as if I am suspended in a saline sea;
I have no sense of weight at all,
But still experience the subtle flow of space around me,
And look,
Now the substance is in change;
Its colors fluctuating like the bioluminescence
In the ribbons of a deep-sea jellyfish,
Adrift in the intriguing black abysses
Of the earthly oceans.
I must exclaim:
I did not know that such an elegance
Is an intrinsic part of what we are.

Himself.

If it is not too much to ask,
I would prefer to see some action
Rather quickly,
As there is much we must accomplish
To reach our home and be reborn,
And as we shall have lots of time
For pondering our nature later.
If you recall the reason why you asked to be released,
And why your wish was granted,
I think you will agree that we should do our best
To prove that we are worthy of the freedom
That was given,
And thus show eagerness and strength of will
And not inactiveness and hesitation.

He.

I do, I do,
I was just overpowered by my feelings;
If you show more serenity and I am less emotional,
We should do well,
I am ready to begin
When you are.

Himself.

Then think of her,
And feel the joy,

Of being free.



He.

I think of her,
And of my world,
And feel the joy
Of newfound spring;
Of being free
To leave at last.

Himself.

Farewell to Earth,
Then off we go,
Never to come back again.

He.

Farewell to Earth,
Forgive me, Earth,
I heed the call
Of former joy;
Of former love
That would not leave;
Now off we go,

Himself.

Forever more.

He.

Forever more.

Good bye to all.