

[ 35 ]

So she must have been pleased with us,  
who did not forgo our heritage

at the grave-edge;  
she must have been pleased

with the straggling company of the brush **and** quill  
who did not deny their birthright;

she must have been pleased with us,  
for she looked so kindly at us

under her drift of veils,  
and she carried a book.

[ 260 ]

[ 36 ]

Ah (you say), this is Holy Wisdom,  
*Santa Sophia*, the SS of the *Sanctus Spiritus*,

so by facile reasoning, logically  
the incarnate symbol of the Holy Ghost;

your Holy Ghost was an apple-tree  
smouldering—or rather now burgeoning

with flowers; the fruit of the Tree?  
this is the new Eve who comes

clearly to return, to retrieve  
what she lost the race,

given over to sin, to death;  
she brings the Book of Life, obviously.

[ 262 ]

[ 37 ]

This is a symbol of beauty (you continue),  
she is Our Lady universally,

I see her as you project her,  
not out of place

flanked by Corinthian capitals,  
or in a Coptic nave,

or frozen above the centre door  
of a Gothic cathedral;

you have done very well by her  
(to repeat your own phrase),

you have carved her tall and unmistakable,  
a hieratic figure, the veiled Goddess,

whether of the seven delights,  
whether of the seven spear-points.

[ 264 ]

O yes—you understand, I say,  
this is all most satisfactory,

but she wasn't hieratic, she wasn't frozen,  
she wasn't very tall;

she is the Vestal  
from the days of Numa,

she carries over the cult  
of the *Bona Dea*,

she carries a book but it is not  
the tome of the ancient wisdom,

the pages, I imagine, are the blank pages  
of the unwritten volume of the new;

all you say, is implicit,  
all that and much more;

but she is not shut up in a cave  
like a Sibyl; she is not

imprisoned in leaden bars  
in a coloured window;

she is Psyche, the butterfly,  
out of the cocoon.