



PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Collected Poems

ANTHOLOGY RECONSIDERATION FILE

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS

EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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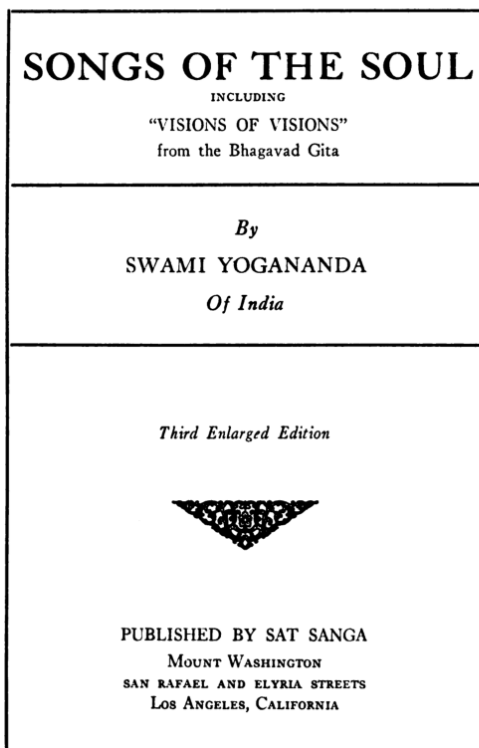
ARCHIVAL IMAGES

Portraits and documentary publication witnesses



*Paramahansa Yogananda, photograph reproduced in the 1946 first edition of *Autobiography of a Yogi*.*

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Title page of the Los Angeles third enlarged edition of Songs of the Soul (1925).

Whispers from Eternity

UNIVERSAL SCIENTIFIC PRAYERS
AND POEMS

By
SWAMI YOGANANDA
II



PUBLISHED BY YOGODA AND SAT-SANGA
MOUNT WASHINGTON CENTER
880 San Rafael Avenue
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
1929

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UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Title page of Whispers from Eternity (Los Angeles, 1929).

INTRODUCTION

A focused account of the poet, the books, and the editorial method

Biography

Paramahansa Yogananda was born Mukunda Lal Ghosh in Gorakhpur, India, on 5 January 1893. Drawn early to religious practice, he became a disciple of Sri Yukteswar Giri, graduated from the University of Calcutta in 1915, and entered the monastic order. In 1917 he established a school that joined ordinary education to his methods of physical, mental, and spiritual development.

Invited to address the International Congress of Religious Liberals, Yogananda arrived in Boston in 1920. That year he founded Self-Realization Fellowship as the American vehicle for his teaching. A transcontinental lecture campaign brought him to Los Angeles, where in 1925 he established the organization's international headquarters at Mount Washington. Los Angeles remained the central base of his public work for more than twenty-five years.

His first poetry collection, *Songs of the Soul*, appeared in Boston in 1923. The enlarged third edition, issued at Mount Washington in 1925, adds a distinctly American and Californian geography to devotional lyrics: city streets, factory labor, the Mohawk Trail, Pike's Peak, the Grand Canyon, and Luther Burbank. Its final "Vision of Visions" recasts a chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* as an extended English lyric.

Whispers from Eternity (Los Angeles, 1929) is a hybrid work of prayer-demands, instruction, chants, and poems. Its lyric section contains several of Yogananda's most durable poems, including "Two Black Eyes," "Samadhi," "God! God! God!," and "God's Boatman." The conjunction of printed lyric, public performance, translation, and spiritual exercise makes the books unusually important evidence of Los Angeles literary culture beyond conventional little-magazine modernism.

Yogananda's later *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946) made him internationally known. He died in Los Angeles on 7 March 1952, shortly after speaking at a banquet honoring the Indian ambassador. His Mount Washington institution and Los Angeles publications remain central to his literary as well as religious

legacy.

Editorial Note

This reading file separates the poetry from the surrounding spiritual instruction while preserving the complete books in the author folder. The first section selects seventeen poems from the Los Angeles 1925 *Songs of the Soul*; the second prints twelve poems from the 1929 *Whispers from Eternity* lyric section.

The 1923 first edition of *Songs of the Soul* was consulted for edition history. Where a poem reappears later with modest alteration, it is printed once and the later appearance is recorded. “Om” is represented by its later 1929 form. Scan-induced wraps were rejoined, clear authorial indentation and stanza divisions retained, and OCR spacing around punctuation and hyphenated compounds normalized.

ORIGINAL FRONT MATTER

Dedication and Amelita Galli-Curci's 1929 foreword

Dedication to *Whispers from Eternity*

Dedicated unto all the soul-temples of Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, Hebrews and Hindus, wherein the Cosmic Heart is throbbing equally always—and unto all the multi-colored lamps of various true teachings, in which shines the same one white flame of God—and unto all churches, mosques, viharas, tabernacles, and temples of the world, wherein our own One Father dwells impartially in the fullness of His glory.

Foreword by Amelita Galli-Curci

In *Whispers from Eternity* by our Swami Yogananda, we are taught to pray to our Heavenly Father by demanding instead of begging, and thus not limit ourselves to the law of beggary. The Swami explains in the beginning why all our prayers are not answered. All the property belonging to a father can be claimed by his son, but not by a beggar. That is why the Swami tells us that, in order to demand, we must first revive our forgotten identity with the Father by deep meditation, and that we must learn to remember by right living that God made us in His Image.

In this sacred book we are shown how to resurrect dead, old-fashioned prayers, and through their living qualities bring response from the silent Almighty. Instead of parroting dead prayers, we learn to saturate them with God-invoking love.

We are taught how to avoid two extremes—egotistical guidance from self, and blind, passive dependence on God. It teaches us how to use our own God-given Will and Concentration, guided not by ego but by God, in making life successful in every way. Consequently, the Swami writes: ‘I will reason, I will will, I will act; but guide Thou my reason, will and activity to the right thing that I should do.’

The prayers in this book serve to bring God closer, by describing the feelings which directly arise from actual God-contact. God is expressed here as

something definite and tangible. The Cosmic Idol is the grand conception of the Infinite and Invisible made finite, tangible and visible. Nature, man, mind, and every visible object are all taken as materials to build a colossal Divine Idol, on which we can easily concentrate.

Followers of all religions can drink from this fountain of universal prayers. These prayers are an answer to the modern scientific mind, seeking God intelligently. This book gives us a great variety of prayers, which enables one to choose that prayer most suited and helpful to his particular need.

My humble request to the reader I express in the following lines: Pass not by, with hurried intellectual reading, the mines of realization hidden beneath the soil of words in this sacred book. But, as the Swami says, daily and repeatedly dig deep into them with the pickaxe of your attentive, reverential and meditative study, when you will find the priceless gem of self-realization.

Amelita Galli-Curci

September 23, 1929

Yogananda's Foreword to 'Vision of Visions'

The eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, of which 'Vision of Visions' is a lyrical rendition interwoven with an interpretation of its spiritual significance, is the consummation of the teachings of the Book. It describes how the Lord Krishna, the Warrior-Prophet, blessed Arjuna, his devotee, with the great yogic vision of the cosmic drama of life and death, enacted on the Infinite Body of the Lord by Himself. Arjuna, still human, was perplexed, being unable to reconcile the benign aspect of the Lord with His destructive aspect: doing good to men and the world as a whole on the one hand, and bringing death and destruction to countless creatures and worlds on the other.

It has been shown here that life and death are both momentary scenes in the cosmic drama, meant not to hurt or please anybody, but designed to afford infinite opportunities to the Lord's children for the attainment of higher and higher states of evolution through apparently unpleasant disturbances caused by great changes. The relative value of life and death in this Drama, which is a dream in comparison with the Reality of the Lord, is the same. This vision represents the great Cosmic Law as seen not from the point of view of finite creatures, but from that of the Lord Himself. Hence this allows no room for the finite questioning of Arjuna as to whether the Lord is benign or

destructive. To Him, to destroy life is not an absence of benignity, nor to give life a presence of it, as is the case with us. The Lord views life and death as forms of change only, according to His Cosmic Law. A law is law. It has been His nature, and always will be. There is no question about benignity or otherwise.

Nevertheless, it describes the Lord as leading this Cosmos with all its individuals to higher and higher stages of unfoldment. Every individual is expected to do his duty unattached, with the consciousness of an intelligent agent merely, that he can reach those higher stages easily, and finally be in tune with that Great Being.

SONGS OF THE SOUL (1925): SELECTED POEMS

Book One | Devotional lyric and the American journey

Consecration

At Thy feet I come to shower
All my full heart's rhyming flower,
Of Thy breath born,
By Thy love grown,

With my lonely seeking found,
By hands Thou gavest picked and bound;

For Thee the sheaves
Within these leaves:
Of my life's season
The choicest flowers,
With petals soulful spread,
Their humble perfume shed;

Hands folded now come to give
What's Thine receive!

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), p. 7.

Soul Is Marching On

The shining stars are sunk in darkness,
The weary sun is dead at night,
The moon's soft smile doth fade anon,—
But still my soul is marching on.

The grinding wheel of Time has crushed
Full many a life of moon and star
And many a brightly smiling morn;
But still my soul is marching on.

The flowers bloomed, then hid in gloom,
The bounty of the trees did cease,
Colossal men have come and gone;—
But still my soul is marching on.

The aeons one by one are flying,
The arrows one by one are gone,
Dimly, slowly life is fading,—
But still my soul is marching on.

Darkness, death and failures vied,
To block my path they fiercely tried;
My fight with jealous Nature's strong;
But still my soul is marching on.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 8-9.

Thou in Me

When I smile
Thou dost smile through me;
When cry
In me Thou dost weep,
When I wake
Thou greetest me,
When I walk
Thou art with me.
Thou dost smile and weep,
Thou dost wake and walk
Like me; my Likeness Thou:
But when I dream,
Thou are awake;
When I stumble,
Thou art sure;
When I die
Thou art my life.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), p. 11.

Thy Call

When lost I roam
I hear Thy call to home—
In whistling breeze
Or rustling leaves of trees.

When drunk in folly
I wander gaily
By the sandy shore,—
Who wakes me with a sudden roar?

When clouds do spread a veil
My precious joy to steal,
Who tears the sheet away
To burst in redd'ning ray?

When dark night blinds,
And my movements binds,—
Who shows my path and th' dark beguiles
With mildly mocking moonlit smiles?

The million starry stares,
The waking sunny glares,
The river's ever-murmuring air
Thy sure and silent call declare.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 12-13.

One That's Everywhere

The tree sighs,
The wind plays,
The sun smiles,
The river moves;
Feigning dread the sky is blushing red
At the creeping sun's gentle tread.
The earth changes robes
Of black and star-lit night
For dazzling golden light.
Dame Nature loves herself t' array
In changing seasons' colors gay;
The murmuring brook e'er tries to tell
In lisping sounds so well
Of the hidden thought
By inner spirit brought.
The birds aspire to sing
Of things unknown that swell within.
But man first speaks in language true
Both loud and clear, with meaning new,
Of what all else before
Had failed to full declare:—
Of One That's everywhere.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), p. 14.

Whispers

Leaves do sigh,
They can not speak
Of One that's high.
The birds do sing,
They can not say
What in their bosom springs.
The beasts do howl
With muffled soul;
They can never say as nigh
As doth in their feelings lie.
Since I can sing or say or cry
I will mighty try
To pour out whispers Thine,-one and each
That to heart doth softly reach.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), p. 15.

I Am Here

I roamed alone by ocean's shore
 And watched: the wrestling, brawling waves did roar
 Alive with Thy own restless Life.
 Thy angry mood and ripply quiver,
 Thy wrathful vastness made me shiver;
 I turned away from heated strife.—
 A kindly waving tree
 Caught my roving eye so free
 To comfort me with gentler look sublime
 That I did feel was Thine.—
 I saw the gaugeless mystic sky,
 And down its valley dark I ran to pry
 At Thee, and play with Thee;—
 I failed to find Thy hiding Body,
 Yet I felt everywhere
 That Thou wert always near,
 Playing at hide and seek with me,—
 Receding when I almost touched Thee
 As to find Thee I groped blindfold—
 In ignorant darkness old.
 I left my search in dim despair;
 Thou Royal, Sly Eluder!—
 In haste I hied away from Thee
 And I retired within me:
 When lo! some Unseen Hand
 Did quickly snatch away the all-black band
 That did my eyes enfold
 That were so numb and cold,
 And in troth I felt quite keen:
 Someone beside me stood unseen
 And whispered to me, cool and clear,
 “Hello, playmate, I am here!”

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 21-22. Reprinted with textual changes in *Whispers from Eternity* (1929), pp. 194-196; the later appearance is recorded here rather than printed as a duplicate.

Eternity

Oh, will that day arrive
When I shall ceaselessly ask, and drive
Eternal questions
Into Thine ear, O Eternity, and await solution
As to how weak weeds do grow and stand unbent,
Unshak'n beneath the trampling current;
How the storm did wreck titanic things, rooted trees,
And quick disturbed the mighty seas;
How the first spark blinked, and the first tree,
The first goldfish, the first blue bird so free
And the first crooning baby
In this wonder house made their visit and entry.
They come, I see;
Their growth alone I watch;
Thy Cosmic Moulding Hand
That secret works on land and seas
I wish to seize,
O Eternity!

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), p. 41.

At the Roots of Eternity

With sailing clouds and plunging breeze,
With swaying trees and youthful, stormy seas,
With whirling planets I wildly play
In some absorbing way
But not alway;—
At close of day
I lay
My eager hands at the roots of Eternity
To seize and own its nectar free.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), p. 48.

Nature's Nature

Away, ye muses, all away,
Away with songs of finch and fay,
Away the jaundiced sight
That conflagrates the firefly's light
To bonfire,—
That sets ablaze at once
Your musing's burning lamps;
That ornaments with rhymes
The penury-stricken looks betimes;
That over-clothes the Logic lord
With fancy-swollen words.
Away, the partial love
That 'boldens nature to sit above
Her Maker!

This day I fasten eye-lid doors,
With absence wax my ears,
With languor all congeal my tongue, my touch, my tears,—
That I myself may pore
 Upon the things behind, ahead
 Of the darkness 'round me spread.
I lock Dame Nature out
With all her fickle rout:
Somewhere here
In the darkness drear
I myself with cheer
My course will steer
In the path
E'er sought by all:
Its magnet-call
I hear.

Not here, not here
Apollo would his burning chariot steer;
Nor Dian dares to peep
Into the sacred silence deep.

Not here, not here
The mounts nor rebel waves, nor far or near,

Can make me full of fear, nor evermore
Their dreadful grandeur adore.

Not here, not here
The soft capricious wiles of flowers,
Nor swarming storm clouds' sweeping terror,
Nor doomsday's thunder roar
Dismantling earth and stars,
The cosmic beauties all to mar;
 Dishevelling of trees
 And light-haired skies,
 Nor nature's murderous mutiny
 Nor man's exploding destiny
Can touch me here.

Not here, not here—
Through mind's strong iron bars
No gods nor goblins, no men nor nature
Without my pass dare enter.
I look behind, ahead,
And on naught but darkness tread.
In wrath I strike, and set it ablaze
With the immortal spark of thought,
By the friction—process brought
Of concentration
And distraction;—
The darkness burns
With a million tongues,
And now I spy
All past, all distant things as nigh.

I smile serene
As I expose to gaze
In wisdom's brilliant blaze
All charms of the Hidden Home Unseen:
The Home of Nature's birth,
The planets' moulding hearth,
The factory whence all forms of fairies start,
The bards, colossal minds and hearts,
The gods and all,
And all, and all!

Away, Away
With all the lightsome lays;—
Oh, I'll now portray
In humble way,
And try to lisp half-truths
Of wordless charms of Thee Unseen
To whom Nature her nature owes, and sheen.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 56-60.

My Native Land

The friendly sky,
Inviting shades of banian tree,
The holy Ganges flowing by,—
How can I forget thee!

I love the waving corn
Of India's fields so bright,
Oh, better than those Heav'nly grown
By deathless gods of might.

My soul's broad love so grand
Was born here first below,—
In my own native land,
On India's sunny soil aglow.

I love thy breeze,
I love thy moon,
I love thy hills and seas,
In thee I wish to cease, or swoon.

Thou taught'st me first to love
Thy sky, the stars, the God above;
So my first homage meets,
O India, at thy feet!

From thee I now have learn'd to see,
To love all lands alike as thee;
I bow to thee, my native land,
The Mother of my love so grand.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 85-86.

On Coming to the New-Old Land of America

Sleeping memories
Of friends once more to be
Did greet me—sailing o'er the sea,—
 Sensing my coming
The Pilgrim Land to adore,
The distant sleeping shore
Lay in the twinkling night,
Dim through the vanished light,
 The breeze wafted strong
 Strange thoughts
 That my brain did throng,
 Hopes sweet and richly wrought.

The raven-winged gloom did perch
On the portals of my mind and search
My soul, my strength to awe;
Yet crowds with joy oh, then, I saw
 Of phantom friends
 Now come to lend
 Their cheer,
 And end my fear!

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 87-88.

The Toiler's Lay

From school of life,
From bossy duty's binding day,
From hours of dollar-strife
I wish I were a run-away!

From chasing worry hound
I'll fly one day,
From crowds and throngs around
I wish I were a run-away!

From greedy food
That steals its way,
From luring dainties' tempting mood.
I wish I were a run-away!

From homely cups and chairs and couch
The call of grassy-bed today
My heart doth snatch;—
I wish I were a run-away!

From nature's given cup,
My hollow hands, I'll drink
At the streamlet's bounteous brink;
With finger forks I'll eat the meat
Of fresh plucked fruits from trees, my seat
All snug beneath the shady trees,
Enliv'n'd by birds and bumble bees,
Fanned by mothering air,—
From care and tear
I'll bathe my weary mind
In new-made joyous day:
Away dish-washing, cups and saucers, all away!
For just a day
I wish I were a run-away!

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 89-90.

City Drum

'Tis morn
The rolling wheels are on
Of a marching world
So strong.

I love to be roused
From a silent sleep
By the early hum
Of the active city drum.

The drum beats
To loudly greet
All those heroes true
That would die or do,—
To meet the morning's foe
Of worry or of woe
With a dauntless smile,
And thus success beguile

Unto the happy camp
Where peace e'er burns its lamp.
The city's drum
With its noisy hum
Announces true and strong
The world is marching on.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 91-92.

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado

Who reigns in this Canyon
Deep and grand with measureless space?
The Sun or Moon?
Who in jealousy vie
To drive away in swiftness
The demon of darkness
And try
To wake the sleeping motley colors
And splendor
To decorate in glory
The crowded temple peaks both young and hoary
Who though different yet in unison
Do welcome all to see the One.

The temple of Siva and Rama
In silence worship the one Brahma.
Who reigns here?
To inspire
All eyes, all minds, all sects, all creeds,
To suit their all aesthetic needs
And make them in awe and reverence
Bow to the Spirit of Vastness that here reigns.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), p. 105.

Luther Burbank

Beatific Burbank

The great reformer Luther thou art

Of living plants and flowers

(Of all moods,

The tender ones, the stubborn growing ones,

Or the cactus rude).

Thy peaceful ways

The cruel cactus took

And its armored thorns forsook

And learned to sacrifice its meat

For all to eat.

Ten score years the hard-shelled stubborn walnut tree

Took to fully grow—

Thy care did soften its shell and taught it nine score years to throw.

The flower-smile on thy face

Tells thou art nurtured on Nature's green breast bedecked with petals' lace.

Soul met soul so free

And I saw thee

A God-grown mental lotus-flower

Just opening tender

Not only to cast the beauty rays

Of thy plant knowledge and its supreme ways

To your fellow man,

But also gently turning to the Mighty Invisible Sun

That lights little plants, distant stars, the bursting bubble, thee and me and man.

Thou didst not ask, "Who thou art?"

But understood my speaking heart,

Our souls touched and we saw

We had but one goal, one task, one law,

By knowledge to break

The walls of dogma dark.

On the ocean's surface is diversity

Beneath lies all the waves in One Unity.

We both dived deep—

Thou thru living waves of plants

And I thru waves of human minds.

We found we meet beneath
(As all deep divers do
On a vast expanse of Unity)
In this great Truth-Sea.
Thou dost dread isms and dogmas
So do I all man-made false enigmas.
We outcasts know but one bright
Truth-made path of light.
God didst make thee and all in His image,
Certes thou hast broken the dogmas of age
By creating new fruits, new plants,
And shown the world in wonder
The Creator's child too a creator.

We go not in
That's why we say
"He's far away, O far away."
He dost not hide from us
But we from him.
Let's rush
Within let's go
Lo!
He's there always.

O Santa Rosa
Blest thou art to have blown
The perfume of thy one great flower
For distant people of the earth to enjoy its shower
Of scent so sweet.
If Nature makes some imperfect plant,
Burbank by his magic wand
Its invading germs disbands.
Or creates new kinds
With new coats, quickened in age and color.—

There's a suggestion for you, dear world,
That his life imparts.—
If weak, afflicted, or error-fixed thou art,
Thou canst (if thy reason starts
In the direction right
With determined might

To become all free)
Be what thy soul wishes and works to be.
Santa Rosa, thy flower the ages shall not fade,
In the soil of memories ever-fresh it shall live endless decades.

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 108-111.

Vision of Visions

Arjuna said:

“Beloved Lord,
Adored of gods,
Behold, behold
Thy body holds
All fleshly tenants, seers fine,
The diverse saints divine.

Dwelling deep in mystery cave,
The Serpent Nature's forceful crave,
Though fierce and subtle, now is tame,
Forgetful of her deadly game;
And Sovran Brahma, God of gods,
On lotus seat is snug secured.
O Cosmic-Bodied Lord of worlds,
Oh, I behold, again behold
Thee all and everywhere
Thy countless arms and trunks and eyes!
Yet, drooping dark my knowledge lies
About Thy birth and reign and presence here.

This day,
O Blazing, Furious Flame,
O Blinding Ray,
Thy focussed power's aglow: Thy Name
Spreads everywhere
To dark'st abysmal lair.
Thou, gilded with a crown of stars,
And wielding mace of sovereign power,
Thou whirlest forth, O Burning Phoebus,
Thy evolution's circling discus.
Immortal Brahma, all Supreme,
Thou Cosmic Shelter, Wisdom's Theme,
Eternal *Dharma's guardian true,
Thou diest not I ever knew!

O Birthless, Fleshless, Deathless One,
Unseen, thy endless, working arms,
Thy Ever-Watching Eyes!
The suns and moons and staring skies,

Thy Selfborn Lustre shields from harm,
And the distant creation warms.
O Sovereign Soul, this earth and gods.

**Religion, or Self-Expression.*

All high-abodes and all encircling spheres,
Directions all, and earthly sods,
By Thee pervaded, far and near,
And worldly beings, struck by fear,
Thy wondrous form adore.
In Thee the gods their entry make
With folded hands, afraid, some pray to shelter take
In Thee. The seers great, on Heaven's path successful ones,
With superb hymns of peace do worship Thee and Thee alone.
The eleven lamps of Heaven.
The twelve bright suns,
The grizzly Eight,
The starry lustres great,
Aspiring hermits, gods,
The agents of the Cosmic Lord,
The twin-born princes strong,
Of valor known so long,
Two-score and nine noil breezes' force,
That binds the atoms close,
The long-passed guardian spirits all,
The demi-goblins, gods and demons tall,
Mighty ones in Spirit's path,
In wonder all behold Thy blazoned worth.
I Thee behold
Colossal-armed, with countless cheeks,
And starry eyes, with endless hands, and legs adorned
With lotus feet.
Thy chasmed mouth, with doomsday's teeth
Doth yawn to swallow swooning worlds around,
And leaves a distilled joyous awe in me.
Thy grandeur I and all are wonder-struck to see.
The bowels of the void deep are filled with Thee
Thy diverse hues and gaping mouths and lustre-smeared body,
O *Vishnu of the flaming sight,
Thou now awest me, my peace dost fright.
Ferocious teeth and deadly fires do howl

In mouths of Thine which at me scowl.

Directions four are lost and gone,
I find no peace alone.
Cosmic Guardian, Lord of gods,
Be pleased t' accept my humble words.

**The Great Spirit.*

The Ego, Karma, Senses great abide
And wait to leap upon our Wisdom's chiefs.
And yet they both do ride
The race of death, to fall and hide
For e'er in Thy devouring mouth,
Adorned with crushing cruel teeth uncouth.
The victor and the vanquished must,
(Thy offsprings both, the righteous and ungodly ones,)
Thy love still claim, yet all some day shall kiss the dust,
And sleep on common floor of earth.
The shattered skulls of some are seen,
As caught Thy greedy teeth between.

As diverse, restless, watery waves
Of river branches all do crave
To force through crowded wavelets' way,
And meet where Neptune's home long lay,
So the heroic streams of life
Do plunge to meet in maddest strife
At Thy foaming mouth of sea,
Where sparkling lives do dance so free:
As insects lost in beauty's game
All swiftly, thoughtless rush to flame,
So fog-born passion's fires pretend
To glow like Heav'nly light of Thine,
And draw on mortals to attend
The trumpet call to deathly line.
Thy mouth ablaze
Doth bring to gaze
Its leaping tongues to lick
The angry blood of strong and weak.
Thou Gourmand God dost eat
With hunger Infinite;

O Vishnu, Thou dost scorch
The worlds with All-pervading fiery torch.

Be pleased, O Prime of gods;
I ache to know Thee, Primeval Lord.
O tell, Thou, O Fiery Mood,
Who art yet so good,—
Thy Royal Will,
I know not still.”

The Lord sang:
“Am Endless Doom,
Ready to room
In burning maw
Of mine the weaklings' awe
And all the mortal meat
Of weary worlds of deathly change, and treat
Them with my nectar life
To new and fearless, better strife.
E'en if thou dost not slay
These wicked warriors all in war array,
They surely certain have to fall,
Ah, in my teeth-of-law, withal.
Arise, awake! Arise, awake!
Oh, dash to war thy foe, the flesh a captive make,
And seize the victor's fame,
With battle-hunted game,
Wealth of the King
Of Peace, and Heaven's Kingdom bring.
I know right now the happenings all
Which mystic future forth doth call,
And thus thy foes and warriors true,
Long, long ago I slew
Ere thy agent-hand,
That I would wield to land
Thy foes on death's dim shore, could understand.
My agent thou,
Oh, this is how
I work my plans in universe
Through instruments diverse;

'Tis I who slew and yet will slay the senses' train
Through thee, as through both past and future ones, my soldiers sane.”

Publication. *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925), pp. 114-122.
Yogananda describes it as a lyrical rendition of chapter 11 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

WHISPERS FROM ETERNITY (1929): CHANTS AND POEMS

Book Two | Visionary poems and Los Angeles publication

My India

Not where the musk of happiness blows,
Not in the land where darkness and fears never tread,
Not in the homes of perpetual smiles,
Not in the Heaven or Land of Prosperity,
Would I be born—
If I have to put on a mortal garb again,—
A thousand famines may prowl
And tear my flesh,
Yet would I love to be again
In my Hindustan.
A million thieves of disease
May try to steal the fleeting health of flesh,
Or the clouds of Fate
May shower scalding drops of searing sorrow—
Yet would I there
In India love to re-appear!
Is this, my love, a blind sentiment
Which beholds not the pathways of reason?
Ah, no! I love India—
For I learned first to love God and all beautiful things there.
Some teach to seize the fickle dew-drop—Life—
Sliding down the lotus leaf of Time.
Some build stubborn hopes
Around the gilded, brittle body-bubble.
But India taught me to love
The soul of deathless beauty in the dewdrop or the bubble,
Not their fragile frames.
Her sages taught me to find my Self
Buried beneath the ash heaps
Of incarnations and ignorance.
Through many a land
Of power, plenty and science,
My soul, garbed as an Oriental
Or an Occidental, traveled far and wide,
Seeking Itself:
At last in India to find Itself.
If mortal fires blaze all her homes and golden paddy fields,
Yet to sleep on her ashes and dream immortality,

O, India, I will be there!
The guns of science and matter
Have boomed on her shores,
Yet she is unconquered.
Her soul is free evermore!
Her soldier-saints are away
To rout with Realization's Ray
The bandits of Hate, Prejudice, Patriotic Selfishness,
And burn the walls of Separation dark
Which lie 'tween children of the One, One Father.
The Western brothers by matter's might have conquered my land;
Blow, blow aloud, her conch-shells all!
India now invades with love, to conquer their souls.
Better than Heaven or Arcadia,
I love Thee, O my India,
And Thy love I shall give
To every brother-nation that lives.
God made the earth, and man made his confining countries,
And their fancy-frozen boundaries.
But with the New-Found-Love I behold—
The borderland of my India expanding into the world.
Hail, mother of religions, lotus, scenic beauty and Sages!
Thy wide doors are open,
Welcoming God's true sons through all the ages,
Where Ganges, woods, Himalayan caves and men dream God.
I am hallowed; my body touched that sod!

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), pp. 189-192.

Two Black Eyes

When my brother
Or my teacher
Stormed me,
In the haven of my mother's two black eyes
I found my retreat.
She died—
And I cried—
And I sought those lost two eyes everywhere.
I searched in the stars
Until bedimmed by my tears,
They twinkled black eyes everywhere.
But they were not those which I lost!
There were many black eyes
That sought to mother me,
But they were not those that I loved!
Looking, searching for her everywhere,
I found my Divine Mother;
And in Her Love
I found my mother's love,
And in Her Omnipresent Eyes
I found those lost two black eyes.

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), p. 193.

Samadhi

Vanished are the veils of light and shade,
Lifted the vapours of sorrow,
Sailed away the dawn of fleeting joy;
Gone the mirage of the senses,
Love, hate, health, disease, life and death,
Away are these false shadows on the screen of duality.
Waves of laughter, scyllas of sarcasm, whirlpools of melancholy,
Melting in the vast sea of Bliss.
Bestilled is the storm of Maya
By the magic wand of Intuition deep.
The universe, a forgotten dream,
Lurks subconsciously,
Ready to invade my newly-wakened memory divine.
I exist without the Cosmic Shadow,
But it could not live bereft of Me—
As the sea exists without the waves,
But they breathe not without the sea.
Dreams, wakings, states of deep Turia sleep,
Present, past, future, no more for me,
But the ever-present, all-flowing I, I, everywhere.
Consciously enjoyable,
Beyond the imagination of all expectancy,
Is this my samadhi state.
Planets, stars, stardust, earth,
Volcanic bursts of doomsday cataclysms,
Creation's moulding furnace,
Glaciers of silent X-rays,
Burning floods of electrons,
Thoughts of men, past, present, future,
Every blade of grass, myself and all,
Each particle of creation's dust,
Anger, greed, good, bad, salvation, lust,
I swallowed up—transmuted them
Into one vast ocean of blood
Of my own One Being!
Smouldering joy, oft-puffed by unceasing meditation
Which blinded my tearful eyes—
Burst into eternal flames of Bliss

And consumed my tears, my peace, my frame and everything.
Thou art I, I am Thou,
Knowing, Knower, Known, as One!
One tranquilised, unbroken thrill of eternal, living,
Ever-new Peace!
Not an unconscious state,
Or mental chloroform
Without wilful return....
Samadhi is but an extension of my realm of consciousness,
Beyond the limits of my mortal frame,
To the boundaries of Eternity—
From whence I, the Cosmic Sea,
Watch the little ego floating in Me.
Every sparrow, each grain of sand, falls not without My sight.
All space floats like an iceberg in My mental sea.
I am the Colossal Container of all things made!
By deeper, longer, continuous, thirsty, guru-given meditation,
This celestial samadhi is attained.
All the mobile murmurs of atoms are heard;
The dark earth, the mountains and seas are molten liquid!
The flowing sea changes into vapours of nebulae!
OM blew o'er the vapours and they opened their veils,
Revealing a sea of shining electrons,
Till, at the last sound of the Cosmic Drum,
Grosser light vanished in Eternal Rays
Of All-pervading-Cosmic-Joy.
From Joy we come—
For Joy we live—
In the Sacred Joy we melt.
I, the ocean of mind, drink all creation's waves.
The four veils of solid, liquid, vapour, light—
Lifted aright.
Myself, in everything
Entered the Great Myself.
Gone forever, the fitful, flickering
Shadows of a mortal memory.
Spotless is my mental sky,
Below, ahead and high above.
Eternity and I one united Ray—

I, a tiny bubble of laughter,
Have become the Sea of Mirth Itself.

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), pp. 197-201. The source's explanatory prose note on samadhi, pp. 201-203, is not part of the poem and is omitted.

Om

Whence, whence this soundless roar doth come,
 When drowseth matter's dreary drum?
 On Shores of Bliss, Om, booming, breaks!
 All earth, all heaven, all body shakes!
 Cords bound to flesh are broken all,
 Vibrations burst, meteors fall!
 The hustling heart, the boasting breath,
 No more shall cause the Yogi's death;
 All Nature lies in darkness soft,
 Dimness of starlight seen aloft;
 Subconscious dreams have gone to bed
 'Tis then that one doth hear Om's tread;
 The bumble bee now hums along—
 Hark! Baby Om doth sing His song!
 From Krishna's flute the call is sweet:
 'Tis time the Wat'ry God to meet!
 Now, the God of Fire is singing!
 Om! Om! Om! His harp is ringing!
 God of Prana now is sounding—
 Wondrous, breathing-bells resounding!
 O! Upward climb the Living Tree;
 Hark to the Cosmic Symphony.
 From Om, the soundless roar! From Om
 *See glossary.
 The call for light o'er dark to roam.
 From Om the music of the spheres!
 From Om the mist of Nature's tears!
 All things of earth and heav'n declare,
 OM! OM! Resounding everywhere!

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), pp. 204-205. This later form is printed instead of duplicating the earlier poem of the same title in *Songs of the Soul*.

God! God! God!

From the depths of slumber,
As I ascend the spiral stairways of wakefulness,
I will whisper:
Thou art the food, and when I break my fast
Of nightly separation from Thee,
I will taste Thee, and mentally say:
God! God! God!
No matter where I go, the spotlight of my mind
Will ever keep turning on Thee;
And in the battle din of activity, my silent warcry will be:
God! God! God!
When boisterous storms of trials shriek,
And when worries howl at me,
I will drown their noises by loudly chanting:
God! God! God!
When my mind weaves dreams
With threads of memories,
Then on that magic cloth will I emboss:
God! God! God!
Every night, in time of deepest sleep,
My peace dreams and calls, Joy! Joy! Joy!
And my joy comes singing evermore:
God! God! God!
In waking, eating, working, dreaming, sleeping,
Serving, meditating, chanting, divinely loving,
My Soul will constantly hum, unheard by any:
God! God! God!

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), pp. 206-207.

All Bow to Thee

Thou art the One Infinite of the monist;
Thou art God and Nature of the dualist;
Thou art the finite many of the polytheist;
Thou art everything, O God, of the pantheist.
Thou art the God of monists, dualists, polytheists and pantheists.
Thou art both the Infinite Ocean and all its waves of finite creation,
Because Thou art everything—
The souls of monism, dualism, polytheism, pantheism,
All bow to Thee!

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), p. 208.

God's Boatman

I want to ply my boats many times,
Across the gulf-after-death,
And return to earth's shores
From my home in heaven.
I want to load my boat
With those waiting, thirsty ones,
That are left behind,
And carry them by the opal pool
Of iridescent joy—
Where my Father distributes
His all-desire-quenching Liquid Peace.
O! I will come again and again!
Crossing a million crags of suffering;
With bleeding feet, I will come,
If need be, a trillion times,
As long as I know
One stray brother is left behind.
I want Thee, God, O,
That I may give Thee to all!
I want salvation,
That I may give it to all!
Free me then, O God,
From the bondage of the body—
That I may show others
How they can free themselves!
I want Thy everlasting happiness,
Only that I may share it with others—
That I may show all my brothers
The way to happiness, forever and forever,
In Thee.

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), pp. 209-210.

Flight!

I closed my eyes and saw the skies
Of dim opalescent infinity spread 'round me.
The grey chariot of the dawn of awakening,
Displaying searchlight eyes,
Came and took me away.
I zoomed through space—
Boring through the ether of mystery.
I passed through age-hidden spiral nebulae.
Willy-nilly, I went on and on,
Left, right, north, south, above and below.
I found no landing.
I went through many tailspins of distractions,
But I spun through limitlessness.
I whirled through an eternal furnace of lights.
At last, bit by bit, my plane melted
In that transmuting flame;
And then, bit by bit, my body melted
In that purifying fire.
Bit by bit my thoughts melted—
My feelings became pure liquid light.

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), p. 211.

My Devotion

O Thou Mother of all conscious things,
Be Thou consciously receptive to my prayers.
Through Thee I know that I know;
And Thou knowest all I know,
So Thou knowest my prayers.
And knowing and feeling Thee constantly thus,
I know Thou art I, I am Thou.
My little wavelet has vanished in Thee.
I know Thou alone existed;
And Thou alone dost exist now and ever will.
Thou art impersonal, invisible,
Unseen, formless, omnipresent,
But forever I want to worship Thee
As both personal and impersonal; by my devotion—
I beheld Thee
Sometimes as Krishna,
Sometimes as Christ,
Personal, visible and imprisoned
In the little space
Hidden within the temple of my love.
O Invisible, just as Thou didst freeze
Thy unseen Infinitude
Into the sea of cosmic finitude,
So do Thou appear unto me—
Visible and living—
That I may serve Thee.
I want to see Thee as the ocean of life
With and without the ripples of finite creation.
O Creator of all things,
I want to worship Thee both as personal and im-
personal.

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), pp. 212-213.

After This

After the prison-petals of earth-life fade,
And the soul-scent slips
In the mighty cosmic wind of Spirit:
No more would I love a flower-cage life,
If I must return—
Unless to mingle the dew-drop tears of other prison'd souls with mine,
And show them the way that I at last my freedom won.
O! I would not mind dwelling
In roses and daffodils—for a time—
If that is of my own free will;
But forever to stay behind the bars of beauty
Of violet-sun-gold-rays, I care not;
No more will I be compelled to live
Even in a golden, heavenly cage.
From flower to flower will I fly!
I will wear the blackness of the night,
Shimmering with the busy stars,—
I will be the twinkle of their lights,
And I will be the waking of the dawn—
And burst forth with the warming rays of friendship!
I will be the shepherd of stray souls,
Or the humblest lamb in all His fold;
I will be the most famous man,
Or the least-known one of a cycle!
I will be the tiniest Cosmic spark,
Or roll as the mighty vapors of Life—
Dashing my Power-fed soul
Against the rocks of worldly strife!
I will be the clouds, donning rainbow-garlands;
I will puff bubbles of planets with my Breath—
And float them on the waves of space!
I will be the babble of the brook,
And the voice of the nightingale!
As emotion-waves, I will surge in the sea of souls!
Holding to the log of laughter,
I will float to the Shores of Bliss!
I will sing through the voices of all;
I will preach through all temples and prayers;

I will love with the love of God!
I will think with the thoughts of all;
The hearts of all will be my heart;
The souls of all will be my soul,
And the smiles of all—my smile!

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), pp. 214-215.

Shadows

Beds of flowers, or vales of tears;
Dewdrops on buds of roses,—
Or miser-souls, as dry as desert-sands;
The little, running joys of childhood,
Or the stampede of wild passions;
The ebbing and rising of laughter,
Or the haunting melancholy of sorrow;
The will-o'-the-wisp of our desire,
Leading only from mire to mire;
The octopus-grip of self-complacency,
And time-beaten habits;
The first, joyous cry of the new-born babe,—
And the last groan of death;
The bursting joy of health
Or the ravages of cruel disease:
These, all of these, are but shadows—
Seen by us on the Cosmic mental-screen.
Shadows, and nothing but shadows!
Yet shadows have, O, so many shades!
For there are dark shadows,
And there are light shadows
So even shadows may entertain!

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), p. 216.

Wherever We Go

Whether in Himalayan caves or crowded subway;
Whether in jungle of modern Life or of Hindustan;
Wherever we go, teach us to discover Thee—
In all Thy secret nooks-East, West, North,
South, everywhere.

Publication. *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929), p. 217.

AFTERWORD

Sources, selection record, and limits

Sources and Editorial Record

Primary texts: Swami Yogananda, *Songs of the Soul* (Boston, 1923); *Songs of the Soul*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Los Angeles: Sat Sanga, 1925); *Whispers from Eternity* (Los Angeles: Yogoda and Sat-Sanga Headquarters, 1929).

Biographical and edition checks: Self-Realization Fellowship's official chronology and Mount Washington history; Wikimedia Commons file and scan records; The Online Books Page; Open Library and library catalog records.