

27

in heavenly realms of hellas dwelt
 two very different sons of zeus:
 one, handsome strong and born to dare
 —a fighter to his eyelashes—
 the other, cunning ugly lame;
 but as you'll shortly comprehend
 a marvellous artificer

now Ugly was the husband of
 (as happens every now and then
 upon a merely human plane)
 someone completely beautiful;
 and Beautiful, who (truth to sing)
 could never quite tell right from wrong,
 took brother Fearless by the eyes
 and did the deed of joy with him

then Cunning forged a web so subtle
 air is comparatively crude;
 an indestructible occult
 supersnare of resistless metal:
 and (stealing toward the blissful pair)
 skilfully wafted over them-
 selves this implacable unthing

next, our illustrious scientist
 petitions the celestial host
 to scrutinize his handiwork:
 they (summoned by that savage yell
 from shining realms of regions dark)
 laugh long at Beautiful and Brave
 —wildly who rage, vainly who strive;
 and being finally released
 flee one another like the pest

thus did immortal jealousy
 quell divine generosity,
 thus reason vanquished instinct and
 matter became the slave of mind;
 thus virtue triumphed over vice
 and beauty bowed to ugliness
 and logic thwarted life: and thus—
 but look around you, friends and foes

my tragic tale concludes herewith:
 soldier, beware of mrs smith