

# THE DIVINE COMEDY

**DANTE ALIGHIERI (1265-1321)**  
**TRANSLATED BY HENRY WADSWORTH**  
**LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)**

CANTICLE III: PARADISO

## Paradiso: Canto I

The glory of Him who moveth everything Doth penetrate the universe, and shine In one part more and in another less.

Within that heaven which most his light receives Was I, and things beheld which to repeat Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends;

Because in drawing near to its desire Our intellect ingulphs itself so far, That after it the memory cannot go.

Truly whatever of the holy realm I had the power to treasure in my mind Shall now become the subject of my song.

O good Apollo, for this last emprise Make of me such a vessel of thy power As giving the beloved laurel asks!

One summit of Parnassus hitherto Has been enough for me, but now with both I needs must enter the arena left.

Enter into my bosom, thou, and breathe As at the time when Marsyas thou didst draw Out of the scabbard of those limbs of his.

O power divine, lend'st thou thyself to me So that the shadow of the blessed realm Stamped in my brain I can make manifest,

Thou'lt see me come unto thy darling tree, And crown myself thereafter with those leaves Of which the theme and thou shall make me worthy.

So seldom, Father, do we gather them For triumph or of Caesar or of Poet, (The fault and shame of human inclinations,)

That the Peneian foliage should bring forth Joy to the joyous Delphic deity, When any one it makes to thirst for it.

A little spark is followed by great flame; Perchance with better voices after me Shall prayer be made that Cyrrha may respond!

To mortal men by passages diverse Uprises the world's lamp; but by that one Which circles four uniteth with three crosses,

With better course and with a better star Conjoined it issues, and the mundane wax Tempers and stamps more after its own fashion.

Almost that passage had made morning there And evening here, and there was wholly white That hemisphere, and black the other part,

When Beatrice towards the left-hand side I saw turned round, and

gazing at the sun; Never did eagle fasten so upon it!

And even as a second ray is wont To issue from the first and reascend,  
Like to a pilgrim who would fain return,

Thus of her action, through the eyes infused In my imagination, mine I  
made, And sunward fixed mine eyes beyond our wont.

There much is lawful which is here unlawful Unto our powers, by  
virtue of the place Made for the human species as its own.

Not long I bore it, nor so little while But I beheld it sparkle round  
about Like iron that comes molten from the fire;

And suddenly it seemed that day to day Was added, as if He who has  
the power Had with another sun the heaven adorned.

With eyes upon the everlasting wheels Stood Beatrice all intent, and I,  
on her Fixing my vision from above removed,

Such at her aspect inwardly became As Glaucus, tasting of the herb  
that made him Peer of the other gods beneath the sea.

To represent transhumanise in words Impossible were; the example,  
then, suffice Him for whom Grace the experience reserves.

If I was merely what of me thou newly Createdst, Love who governest  
the heaven, Thou knowest, who didst lift me with thy light!

When now the wheel, which thou dost make eternal Desiring thee,  
made me attentive to it By harmony thou dost modulate and measure,

Then seemed to me so much of heaven enkindled By the sun's flame,  
that neither rain nor river E'er made a lake so widely spread abroad.

The newness of the sound and the great light Kindled in me a longing  
for their cause, Never before with such acuteness felt;

Whence she, who saw me as I saw myself, To quiet in me my  
perturbed mind, Opened her mouth, ere I did mine to ask,

And she began: "Thou makest thyself so dull With false imagining,  
that thou seest not What thou wouldst see if thou hadst shaken it off.

Thou art not upon earth, as thou believest; But lightning, fleeing its  
appropriate site, Ne'er ran as thou, who thitherward returnest."

If of my former doubt I was divested By these brief little words more  
smiled than spoken, I in a new one was the more ensnared;

And said: "Already did I rest content From great amazement; but am

now amazed In what way I transcend these bodies light."

Whereupon she, after a pitying sigh, Her eyes directed tow'rds me with that look A mother casts on a delirious child;

And she began: "All things whate'er they be Have order among themselves, and this is form, That makes the universe resemble God.

Here do the higher creatures see the footprints Of the Eternal Power, which is the end Whereto is made the law already mentioned.

In the order that I speak of are inclined All natures, by their destinies diverse, More or less near unto their origin;

Hence they move onward unto ports diverse O'er the great sea of being; and each one With instinct given it which bears it on.

This bears away the fire towards the moon; This is in mortal hearts the motive power This binds together and unites the earth.

Nor only the created things that are Without intelligence this bow shoots forth, But those that have both intellect and love.

The Providence that regulates all this Makes with its light the heaven forever quiet, Wherein that turns which has the greatest haste.

And thither now, as to a site decreed, Bears us away the virtue of that cord Which aims its arrows at a joyous mark.

True is it, that as oftentimes the form Accords not with the intention of the art, Because in answering is matter deaf,

So likewise from this course doth deviate Sometimes the creature, who the power possesses, Though thus impelled, to swerve some other way,

(In the same wise as one may see the fire Fall from a cloud,) if the first impetus Earthward is wrested by some false delight.

Thou shouldst not wonder more, if well I judge, At thine ascent, than at a rivulet From some high mount descending to the lowland.

Marvel it would be in thee, if deprived Of hindrance, thou wert seated down below, As if on earth the living fire were quiet."

Thereat she heavenward turned again her face.

## Paradiso: Canto II

O Ye, who in some pretty little boat, Eager to listen, have been following Behind my ship, that singing sails along,

Turn back to look again upon your shores; Do not put out to sea, lest peradventure, In losing me, you might yourselves be lost.

The sea I sail has never yet been passed; Minerva breathes, and pilots me Apollo, And Muses nine point out to me the Bears.

Ye other few who have the neck uplifted Betimes to th' bread of Angels upon which One liveth here and grows not sated by it,

Well may you launch upon the deep salt-sea Your vessel, keeping still my wake before you Upon the water that grows smooth again.

Those glorious ones who unto Colchos passed Were not so wonder-struck as you shall be, When Jason they beheld a ploughman made!

The con-created and perpetual thirst For the realm deiform did bear us on, As swift almost as ye the heavens behold.

Upward gazed Beatrice, and I at her; And in such space perchance as strikes a bolt And flies, and from the notch unlocks itself,

Arrived I saw me where a wondrous thing Drew to itself my sight; and therefore she From whom no care of mine could be concealed,

Towards me turning, blithe as beautiful, Said unto me: "Fix gratefully thy mind On God, who unto the first star has brought us."

It seemed to me a cloud encompassed us, Luminous, dense, consolidate and bright As adamant on which the sun is striking.

Into itself did the eternal pearl Receive us, even as water doth receive A ray of light, remaining still unbroken.

If I was body, (and we here conceive not How one dimension tolerates another, Which needs must be if body enter body,)

More the desire should be enkindled in us That essence to behold, wherein is seen How God and our own nature were united.

There will be seen what we receive by faith, Not demonstrated, but self-evident In guise of the first truth that man believes.

I made reply: "Madonna, as devoutly As most I can do I give thanks to Him Who has removed me from the mortal world.

But tell me what the dusky spots may be Upon this body, which below  
on earth Make people tell that fabulous tale of Cain?"

Somewhat she smiled; and then, "If the opinion Of mortals be  
erroneous," she said, "Where'er the key of sense doth not unlock,

Certes, the shafts of wonder should not pierce thee Now, forasmuch as,  
following the senses, Thou seest that the reason has short wings.

But tell me what thou think'st of it thyself." And I: "What seems to us  
up here diverse, Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense."

And she: "Right truly shalt thou see immersed In error thy belief, if  
well thou hearest The argument that I shall make against it.

Lights many the eighth sphere displays to you Which in their quality  
and quantity May noted be of aspects different.

If this were caused by rare and dense alone, One only virtue would  
there be in all Or more or less diffused, or equally.

Virtues diverse must be perforce the fruits Of formal principles; and  
these, save one, Of course would by thy reasoning be destroyed.

Besides, if rarity were of this dimness The cause thou askest, either  
through and through This planet thus attenuate were of matter,

Or else, as in a body is apportioned The fat and lean, so in like manner  
this Would in its volume interchange the leaves.

Were it the former, in the sun's eclipse It would be manifest by the  
shining through Of light, as through aught tenuous interfused.

This is not so; hence we must scan the other, And if it chance the other  
I demolish, Then falsified will thy opinion be.

But if this rarity go not through and through, There needs must be a  
limit, beyond which Its contrary prevents the further passing,

And thence the foreign radiance is reflected, Even as a colour cometh  
back from glass, The which behind itself concealeth lead.

Now thou wilt say the sunbeam shows itself More dimly there than in  
the other parts, By being there reflected farther back.

From this reply experiment will free thee If e'er thou try it, which is  
wont to be The fountain to the rivers of your arts.

Three mirrors shalt thou take, and two remove Alike from thee, the  
other more remote Between the former two shall meet thine eyes.

Turned towards these, cause that behind thy back Be placed a light,  
illuming the three mirrors And coming back to thee by all reflected.

Though in its quantity be not so ample The image most remote, there  
shalt thou see How it perforce is equally resplendent.

Now, as beneath the touches of warm rays Naked the subject of the  
snow remains Both of its former colour and its cold,

Thee thus remaining in thy intellect, Will I inform with such a living  
light, That it shall tremble in its aspect to thee.

Within the heaven of the divine repose Revolves a body, in whose  
virtue lies The being of whatever it contains.

The following heaven, that has so many eyes, Divides this being by  
essences diverse, Distinguished from it, and by it contained.

The other spheres, by various differences, All the distinctions which  
they have within them Dispose unto their ends and their effects.

Thus do these organs of the world proceed, As thou perceivest now,  
from grade to grade; Since from above they take, and act beneath.

Observe me well, how through this place I come Unto the truth thou  
wishest, that hereafter Thou mayst alone know how to keep the ford

The power and motion of the holy spheres, As from the artisan the  
hammer's craft, Forth from the blessed motors must proceed.

The heaven, which lights so manifold make fair, From the Intelligence  
profound, which turns it, The image takes, and makes of it a seal.

And even as the soul within your dust Through members different and  
accommodated To faculties diverse expands itself,

So likewise this Intelligence diffuses Its virtue multiplied among the  
stars. Itself revolving on its unity.

Virtue diverse doth a diverse alloyage Make with the precious body  
that it quickens, In which, as life in you, it is combined.

From the glad nature whence it is derived, The mingled virtue through  
the body shines, Even as gladness through the living pupil.

From this proceeds whate'er from light to light Appeareth different, not  
from dense and rare: This is the formal principle that produces,

According to its goodness, dark and bright."

## Paradiso: Canto III

That Sun, which erst with love my bosom warmed, Of beauteous truth had unto me discovered, By proving and reprovng, the sweet aspect.

And, that I might confess myself convinced And confident, so far as was befitting, I lifted more erect my head to speak.

But there appeared a vision, which withdrew me So close to it, in order to be seen, That my confession I remembered not.

Such as through polished and transparent glass, Or waters crystalline and undisturbed, But not so deep as that their bed be lost,

Come back again the outlines of our faces So feeble, that a pearl on forehead white Comes not less speedily unto our eyes;

Such saw I many faces prompt to speak, So that I ran in error opposite To that which kindled love 'twixt man and fountain.

As soon as I became aware of them, Esteeming them as mirrored semblances, To see of whom they were, mine eyes I turned,

And nothing saw, and once more turned them forward Direct into the light of my sweet Guide, Who smiling kindled in her holy eyes.

"Marvel thou not," she said to me, "because I smile at this thy puerile conceit, Since on the truth it trusts not yet its foot,

But turns thee, as 'tis wont, on emptiness. True substances are these which thou beholdest, Here relegate for breaking of some vow.

Therefore speak with them, listen and believe; For the true light, which giveth peace to them, Permits them not to turn from it their feet."

And I unto the shade that seemed most wishful To speak directed me, and I began, As one whom too great eagerness bewilders:

"O well-created spirit, who in the rays Of life eternal dost the sweetness taste Which being untasted ne'er is comprehended,

Grateful 'twill be to me, if thou content me Both with thy name and with your destiny." Whereat she promptly and with laughing eyes:

"Our charity doth never shut the doors Against a just desire, except as one Who wills that all her court be like herself.

I was a virgin sister in the world; And if thy mind doth contemplate me well, The being more fair will not conceal me from thee,



But thou shalt recognise I am Piccarda, Who, stationed here among these other blessed, Myself am blessed in the slowest sphere.

All our affections, that alone inflamed Are in the pleasure of the Holy Ghost, Rejoice at being of his order formed;

And this allotment, which appears so low, Therefore is given us, because our vows Have been neglected and in some part void."

Whence I to her: "In your miraculous aspects There shines I know not what of the divine, Which doth transform you from our first conceptions.

Therefore I was not swift in my remembrance; But what thou tellest me now aids me so, That the refiguring is easier to me.

But tell me, ye who in this place are happy, Are you desirous of a higher place, To see more or to make yourselves more friends?"

First with those other shades she smiled a little; Thereafter answered me so full of gladness, She seemed to burn in the first fire of love:

"Brother, our will is quieted by virtue Of charity, that makes us wish alone For what we have, nor gives us thirst for more.

If to be more exalted we aspired, Discordant would our aspirations be Unto the will of Him who here secludes us;

Which thou shalt see finds no place in these circles, If being in charity is needful here, And if thou lookest well into its nature;

Nay, 'tis essential to this blest existence To keep itself within the will divine, Whereby our very wishes are made one;

So that, as we are station above station Throughout this realm, to all the realm 'tis pleasing, As to the King, who makes his will our will.

And his will is our peace; this is the sea To which is moving onward whatsoever It doth create, and all that nature makes."

Then it was clear to me how everywhere In heaven is Paradise, although the grace Of good supreme there rain not in one measure.

But as it comes to pass, if one food sates, And for another still remains the longing, We ask for this, and that decline with thanks,

E'en thus did I; with gesture and with word, To learn from her what was the web wherein She did not ply the shuttle to the end.

"A perfect life and merit high in-heaven A lady o'er us," said she, "by whose rule Down in your world they vest and veil themselves,

That until death they may both watch and sleep Beside that Spouse  
who every vow accepts Which charity conformeth to his pleasure.

To follow her, in girlhood from the world I fled, and in her habit shut  
myself, And pledged me to the pathway of her sect.

Then men accustomed unto evil more Than unto good, from the sweet  
cloister tore me; God knows what afterward my life became.

This other splendour, which to thee reveals Itself on my right side, and  
is enkindled With all the illumination of our sphere,

What of myself I say applies to her; A nun was she, and likewise from  
her head Was ta'en the shadow of the sacred wimple.

But when she too was to the world returned Against her wishes and  
against good usage, Of the heart's veil she never was divested.

Of great Costanza this is the effulgence, Who from the second wind of  
Suabia Brought forth the third and latest puissance."

Thus unto me she spake, and then began "Ave Maria" singing, and in  
singing Vanished, as through deep water something heavy.

My sight, that followed her as long a time As it was possible, when it  
had lost her Turned round unto the mark of more desire,

And wholly unto Beatrice reverted; But she such lightnings flashed  
into mine eyes, That at the first my sight endured it not;

And this in questioning more backward made me.

## Paradiso: Canto IV

Between two viands, equally removed And tempting, a free man  
would die of hunger Ere either he could bring unto his teeth.

So would a lamb between the ravenings Of two fierce wolves stand  
fearing both alike; And so would stand a dog between two does.

Hence, if I held my peace, myself I blame not, Impelled in equal  
measure by my doubts, Since it must be so, nor do I commend.

I held my peace; but my desire was painted Upon my face, and  
questioning with that More fervent far than by articulate speech.

Beatrice did as Daniel had done Relieving Nebuchadnezzar from the  
wrath Which rendered him unjustly merciless,

And said: "Well see I how attracteth thee One and the other wish, so  
that thy care Binds itself so that forth it does not breathe.

Thou arguest, if good will be permanent, The violence of others, for  
what reason Doth it decrease the measure of my merit?

Again for doubting furnish thee occasion Souls seeming to return unto  
the stars, According to the sentiment of Plato.

These are the questions which upon thy wish Are thrusting equally;  
and therefore first Will I treat that which hath the most of gall.

He of the Seraphim most absorbed in God, Moses, and Samuel, and  
whichever John Thou mayst select, I say, and even Mary,

Have not in any other heaven their seats, Than have those spirits that  
just appeared to thee, Nor of existence more or fewer years;

But all make beautiful the primal circle, And have sweet life in  
different degrees, By feeling more or less the eternal breath.

They showed themselves here, not because allotted This sphere has  
been to them, but to give sign Of the celestial which is least exalted.

To speak thus is adapted to your mind, Since only through the sense it  
apprehendeth What then it worthy makes of intellect.

On this account the Scripture condescends Unto your faculties, and  
feet and hands To God attributes, and means something else;

And Holy Church under an aspect human Gabriel and Michael  
represent to you, And him who made Tobias whole again.

That which Timaeus argues of the soul Doth not resemble that which here is seen, Because it seems that as he speaks he thinks.

He says the soul unto its star returns, Believing it to have been severed thence Whenever nature gave it as a form.

Perhaps his doctrine is of other guise Than the words sound, and possibly may be With meaning that is not to be derided.

If he doth mean that to these wheels return The honour of their influence and the blame, Perhaps his bow doth hit upon some truth.

This principle ill understood once warped The whole world nearly, till it went astray Invoking Jove and Mercury and Mars.

The other doubt which doth disquiet thee Less venom has, for its malevolence Could never lead thee elsewhere from me.

That as unjust our justice should appear In eyes of mortals, is an argument Of faith, and not of sin heretical.

But still, that your perception may be able To thoroughly penetrate this verity, As thou desirest, I will satisfy thee.

If it be violence when he who suffers Co-operates not with him who uses force, These souls were not on that account excused;

For will is never quenched unless it will, But operates as nature doth in fire If violence a thousand times distort it.

Hence, if it yieldeth more or less, it seconds The force; and these have done so, having power Of turning back unto the holy place.

If their will had been perfect, like to that Which Lawrence fast upon his gridiron held, And Mutius made severe to his own hand,

It would have urged them back along the road Whence they were dragged, as soon as they were free; But such a solid will is all too rare.

And by these words, if thou hast gathered them As thou shouldst do, the argument is refuted That would have still annoyed thee many times.

But now another passage runs across Before thine eyes, and such that by thyself Thou couldst not thread it ere thou wouldst be weary.

I have for certain put into thy mind That soul beatified could never lie, For it is near the primal Truth,

And then thou from Piccarda might'st have heard Costanza kept affection for the veil, So that she seemeth here to contradict me.

Many times, brother, has it come to pass, That, to escape from peril,  
with reluctance That has been done it was not right to do,

E'en as Alcmaeon (who, being by his father Thereto entreated, his own  
mother slew) Not to lose pity pitiless became.

At this point I desire thee to remember That force with will  
commingles, and they cause That the offences cannot be excused.

Will absolute consenteth not to evil; But in so far consenteth as it fears,  
If it refrain, to fall into more harm.

Hence when Piccarda uses this expression, She meaneth the will  
absolute, and I The other, so that both of us speak truth."

Such was the flowing of the holy river That issued from the fount  
whence springs all truth; This put to rest my wishes one and all.

"O love of the first lover, O divine," Said I forthwith, "whose speech  
inundates me And warms me so, it more and more revives me,

My own affection is not so profound As to suffice in rendering grace  
for grace; Let Him, who sees and can, thereto respond.

Well I perceive that never sated is Our intellect unless the Truth illumine  
it, Beyond which nothing true expands itself.

It rests therein, as wild beast in his lair, When it attains it; and it can  
attain it; If not, then each desire would frustrate be.

Therefore springs up, in fashion of a shoot, Doubt at the foot of truth;  
and this is nature, Which to the top from height to height impels us.

This doth invite me, this assurance give me With reverence, Lady, to  
inquire of you Another truth, which is obscure to me.

I wish to know if man can satisfy you For broken vows with other  
good deeds, so That in your balance they will not be light."

Beatrice gazed upon me with her eyes Full of the sparks of love, and  
so divine, That, overcome my power, I turned my back

And almost lost myself with eyes downcast.

## Paradiso: Canto V

"If in the heat of love I flame upon thee Beyond the measure that on earth is seen, So that the valour of thine eyes I vanquish,

Marvel thou not thereat; for this proceeds From perfect sight, which as it apprehends To the good apprehended moves its feet.

Well I perceive how is already shining Into thine intellect the eternal light, That only seen enkindles always love;

And if some other thing your love seduce, 'Tis nothing but a vestige of the same, Ill understood, which there is shining through.

Thou fain wouldst know if with another service For broken vow can such return be made As to secure the soul from further claim."

This Canto thus did Beatrice begin; And, as a man who breaks not off his speech, Continued thus her holy argument:

"The greatest gift that in his largess God Creating made, and unto his own goodness Nearest conformed, and that which he doth prize

Most highly, is the freedom of the will, Wherewith the creatures of intelligence Both all and only were and are endowed.

Now wilt thou see, if thence thou reasonest, The high worth of a vow, if it he made So that when thou consentest God consents:

For, closing between God and man the compact, A sacrifice is of this treasure made, Such as I say, and made by its own act.

What can be rendered then as compensation? Think'st thou to make good use of what thou'st offered, With gains ill gotten thou wouldst do good deed.

Now art thou certain of the greater point; But because Holy Church in this dispenses, Which seems against the truth which I have shown thee,

Behoves thee still to sit awhile at table, Because the solid food which thou hast taken Requireth further aid for thy digestion.

Open thy mind to that which I reveal, And fix it there within; for 'tis not knowledge, The having heard without retaining it.

In the essence of this sacrifice two things Convene together; and the one is that Of which 'tis made, the other is the agreement.

This last for evermore is cancelled not Unless complied with, and

concerning this With such precision has above been spoken.

Therefore it was enjoined upon the Hebrews To offer still, though sometimes what was offered Might be commuted, as thou ought'st to know.

The other, which is known to thee as matter, May well indeed be such that one errs not If it for other matter be exchanged.

But let none shift the burden on his shoulder At his arbitrament, without the turning Both of the white and of the yellow key;

And every permutation deem as foolish, If in the substitute the thing relinquished, As the four is in six, be not contained.

Therefore whatever thing has so great weight In value that it drags down every balance, Cannot be satisfied with other spending.

Let mortals never take a vow in jest; Be faithful and not blind in doing that, As Jephthah was in his first offering,

Whom more beseemed to say, 'I have done wrong, Than to do worse by keeping; and as foolish Thou the great leader of the Greeks wilt find,

Whence wept Iphigenia her fair face, And made for her both wise and simple weep, Who heard such kind of worship spoken of.'

Christians, be ye more serious in your movements; Be ye not like a feather at each wind, And think not every water washes you.

Ye have the Old and the New Testament, And the Pastor of the Church who guideth you Let this suffice you unto your salvation.

If evil appetite cry aught else to you, Be ye as men, and not as silly sheep, So that the Jew among you may not mock you.

Be ye not as the lamb that doth abandon Its mother's milk, and frolicsome and simple Combats at its own pleasure with itself."

Thus Beatrice to me even as I write it; Then all desireful turned herself again To that part where the world is most alive.

Her silence and her change of countenance Silence imposed upon my eager mind, That had already in advance new questions;

And as an arrow that upon the mark Strikes ere the bowstring quiet hath become, So did we speed into the second realm.

My Lady there so joyful I beheld, As into the brightness of that heaven she entered, More luminous thereat the planet grew;

And if the star itself was changed and smiled, What became I, who by my nature am Exceeding mutable in every guise!

As, in a fish-pond which is pure and tranquil, The fishes draw to that which from without Comes in such fashion that their food they deem it;

So I beheld more than a thousand splendours Drawing towards us, and in each was heard: "Lo, this is she who shall increase our love."

And as each one was coming unto us, Full of beatitude the shade was seen, By the effulgence clear that issued from it.

Think, Reader, if what here is just beginning No farther should proceed, how thou wouldst have An agonizing need of knowing more;

And of thyself thou'lt see how I from these Was in desire of hearing their conditions, As they unto mine eyes were manifest.

"O thou well-born, unto whom Grace concedes To see the thrones of the eternal triumph, Or ever yet the warfare be abandoned

With light that through the whole of heaven is spread Kindled are we, and hence if thou desirest To know of us, at thine own pleasure sate thee."

Thus by some one among those holy spirits Was spoken, and by Beatrice: "Speak, speak Securely, and believe them even as Gods."

"Well I perceive how thou dost nest thyself In thine own light, and drawest it from thine eyes, Because they coruscate when thou dost smile,

But know not who thou art, nor why thou hast, Spirit august, thy station in the sphere That veils itself to men in alien rays."

This said I in direction of the light Which first had spoken to me; whence it became By far more lucent than it was before.

Even as the sun, that doth conceal himself By too much light, when heat has worn away The tempering influence of the vapours dense,

By greater rapture thus concealed itself In its own radiance the figure saintly, And thus close, close enfolded answered me

In fashion as the following Canto sings.



## Paradiso: Canto VI

"After that Constantine the eagle turned Against the course of heaven,  
which it had followed Behind the ancient who Lavinia took,

Two hundred years and more the bird of God In the extreme of Europe  
held itself, Near to the mountains whence it issued first;

And under shadow of the sacred plumes It governed there the world  
from hand to hand, And, changing thus, upon mine own alighted.

Caesar I was, and am Justinian, Who, by the will of primal Love I feel,  
Took from the laws the useless and redundant;

And ere unto the work I was attent, One nature to exist in Christ, not  
more, Believed, and with such faith was I contented.

But blessed Agapetus, he who was The supreme pastor, to the faith  
sincere Pointed me out the way by words of his.

Him I believed, and what was his assertion I now see clearly, even as  
thou seest Each contradiction to be false and true.

As soon as with the Church I moved my feet, God in his grace it  
pleased with this high task To inspire me, and I gave me wholly to it,

And to my Belisarius I commended The arms, to which was heaven's  
right hand so joined It was a signal that I should repose.

Now here to the first question terminates My answer; but the character  
thereof Constrains me to continue with a sequel,

In order that thou see with how great reason Men move against the  
standard sacrosanct, Both who appropriate and who oppose it.

Behold how great a power has made it worthy Of reverence, beginning  
from the hour When Pallas died to give it sovereignty.

Thou knowest it made in Alba its abode Three hundred years and  
upward, till at last The three to three fought for it yet again.

Thou knowest what it achieved from Sabine wrong Down to Lucretia's  
sorrow, in seven kings O'ercoming round about the neighboring nations;

Thou knowest what it achieved, borne by the Romans Illustrious  
against Brennus, against Pyrrhus, Against the other princes and  
confederates.

Torquatus thence and Quinctius, who from locks Unkempt was named,

Decii and Fabii, Received the fame I willingly embalm;

It struck to earth the pride of the Arabians, Who, following Hannibal,  
had passed across The Alpine ridges, Po, from which thou glidest;

Beneath it triumphed while they yet were young Pompey and Scipio,  
and to the hill Beneath which thou wast born it bitter seemed;

Then, near unto the time when heaven had willed To bring the whole  
world to its mood serene, Did Caesar by the will of Rome assume it.

What it achieved from Var unto the Rhine, Isere beheld and Saone,  
beheld the Seine, And every valley whence the Rhone is filled;

What it achieved when it had left Ravenna, And leaped the Rubicon,  
was such a flight That neither tongue nor pen could follow it.

Round towards Spain it wheeled its legions; then Towards Durazzo,  
and Pharsalia smote That to the calid Nile was felt the pain.

Antandros and the Simois, whence it started, It saw again, and there  
where Hector lies, And ill for Ptolemy then roused itself.

From thence it came like lightning upon Juba; Then wheeled itself  
again into your West, Where the Pompeian clarion it heard.

From what it wrought with the next standard-bearer Brutus and  
Cassius howl in Hell together, And Modena and Perugia dolent were;

Still doth the mournful Cleopatra weep Because thereof, who, fleeing  
from before it, Took from the adder sudden and black death.

With him it ran even to the Red Sea shore; With him it placed the  
world in so great peace, That unto Janus was his temple closed.

But what the standard that has made me speak Achieved before, and  
after should achieve Throughout the mortal realm that lies beneath it,

Becometh in appearance mean and dim, If in the hand of the third  
Caesar seen With eye unclouded and affection pure,

Because the living Justice that inspires me Granted it, in the hand of  
him I speak of, The glory of doing vengeance for its wrath.

Now here attend to what I answer thee; Later it ran with Titus to do  
vengeance Upon the vengeance of the ancient sin.

And when the tooth of Lombardy had bitten The Holy Church, then  
underneath its wings Did Charlemagne victorious succor her.

Now hast thou power to judge of such as those Whom I accused above,

and of their crimes, Which are the cause of all your miseries.

To the public standard one the yellow lilies Opposes, the other claims it for a party, So that 'tis hard to see which sins the most.

Let, let the Ghibellines ply their handicraft Beneath some other standard; for this ever Ill follows he who it and justice parts.

And let not this new Charles e'er strike it down, He and his Guelfs, but let him fear the talons That from a nobler lion stripped the fell.

Already oftentimes the sons have wept The father's crime; and let him not believe That God will change His scutcheon for the lilies.

This little planet doth adorn itself With the good spirits that have active been, That fame and honour might come after them;

And whensoever the desires mount thither, Thus deviating, must perforce the rays Of the true love less vividly mount upward.

But in commensuration of our wages With our desert is portion of our joy, Because we see them neither less nor greater.

Herein doth living Justice sweeten so Affection in us, that for evermore It cannot warp to any iniquity.

Voices diverse make up sweet melodies; So in this life of ours the seats diverse Render sweet harmony among these spheres;

And in the compass of this present pearl Shineth the sheen of Romeo, of whom The grand and beauteous work was ill rewarded.

But the Provincals who against him wrought, They have not laughed, and therefore ill goes he Who makes his hurt of the good deeds of others.

Four daughters, and each one of them a queen, Had Raymond Berenger, and this for him Did Romeo, a poor man and a pilgrim;

And then malicious words incited him To summon to a reckoning this just man, Who rendered to him seven and five for ten.

Then he departed poor and stricken in years, And if the world could know the heart he had, In begging bit by bit his livelihood,

Though much it laud him, it would laud him more."

## Paradiso: Canto VII

"Osanna sanctus Deus Sabaoth, Superillustrans claritate tua Felices ignes horum malahoth!"

In this wise, to his melody returning, This substance, upon which a double light Doubles itself, was seen by me to sing,

And to their dance this and the others moved, And in the manner of swift-hurrying sparks Veiled themselves from me with a sudden distance.

Doubting was I, and saying, "Tell her, tell her," Within me, "tell her," saying, "tell my Lady," Who slakes my thirst with her sweet effluences;

And yet that reverence which doth lord it over The whole of me only by B and ICE, Bowed me again like unto one who drowns.

Short while did Beatrice endure me thus; And she began, lighting me with a smile Such as would make one happy in the fire:

"According to infallible advisement, After what manner a just vengeance justly Could be avenged has put thee upon thinking,

But I will speedily thy mind unloose; And do thou listen, for these words of mine Of a great doctrine will a present make thee.

By not enduring on the power that wills Curb for his good, that man who ne'er was born, Damning himself damned all his progeny;

Whereby the human species down below Lay sick for many centuries in great error, Till to descend it pleased the Word of God

To where the nature, which from its own Maker Estranged itself, he joined to him in person By the sole act of his eternal love.

Now unto what is said direct thy sight; This nature when united to its Maker, Such as created, was sincere and good;

But by itself alone was banished forth From Paradise, because it turned aside Out of the way of truth and of its life.

Therefore the penalty the cross held out, If measured by the nature thus assumed, None ever yet with so great justice stung,

And none was ever of so great injustice, Considering who the Person was that suffered, Within whom such a nature was contracted.

From one act therefore issued things diverse; To God and to the Jews one death was pleasing; Earth trembled at it and the Heaven was opened.

It should no longer now seem difficult To thee, when it is said that a just vengeance By a just court was afterward avenged.

But now do I behold thy mind entangled From thought to thought within a knot, from which With great desire it waits to free itself.

Thou sayest, 'Well discern I what I hear; But it is hidden from me why God willed For our redemption only this one mode.'

Buried remaineth, brother, this decree Unto the eyes of every one whose nature Is in the flame of love not yet adult.

Verily, inasmuch as at this mark One gazes long and little is discerned, Wherefore this mode was worthiest will I say.

Goodness Divine, which from itself doth spurn All envy, burning in itself so sparkles That the eternal beauties it unfolds.

Whate'er from this immediately distils Has afterwards no end, for ne'er removed Is its impression when it sets its seal.

Whate'er from this immediately rains down Is wholly free, because it is not subject Unto the influences of novel things.

The more conformed thereto, the more it pleases; For the blest ardour that irradiates all things In that most like itself is most vivacious.

With all of these things has advantaged been The human creature; and if one be wanting, From his nobility he needs must fall.

'Tis sin alone which doth disfranchise him, And render him unlike the Good Supreme, So that he little with its light is blanched,

And to his dignity no more returns, Unless he fill up where transgression empties With righteous pains for criminal delights.

Your nature when it sinned so utterly In its own seed, out of these dignities Even as out of Paradise was driven,

Nor could itself recover, if thou notest With nicest subtilty, by any way, Except by passing one of these two fords:

Either that God through clemency alone Had pardon granted, or that man himself Had satisfaction for his folly made.

Fix now thine eye deep into the abyss Of the eternal counsel, to my speech As far as may be fastened steadfastly!

Man in his limitations had not power To satisfy, not having power to sink In his humility obeying then,

Far as he disobeying thought to rise; And for this reason man has been  
from power Of satisfying by himself excluded.

Therefore it God behoved in his own ways Man to restore unto his  
perfect life, I say in one, or else in both of them.

But since the action of the doer is So much more grateful, as it more  
presents The goodness of the heart from which it issues,

Goodness Divine, that doth imprint the world, Has been contented to  
proceed by each And all its ways to lift you up again;

Nor 'twixt the first day and the final night Such high and such  
magnificent proceeding By one or by the other was or shall be;

For God more bounteous was himself to give To make man able to  
uplift himself, Than if he only of himself had pardoned;

And all the other modes were insufficient For justice, were it not the  
Son of God Himself had humbled to become incarnate.

Now, to fill fully each desire of thine, Return I to elucidate one place,  
In order that thou there mayst see as I do.

Thou sayst: 'I see the air, I see the fire, The water, and the earth, and all  
their mixtures Come to corruption, and short while endure;

And these things notwithstanding were created;' Therefore if that  
which I have said were true, They should have been secure against  
corruption.

The Angels, brother, and the land sincere In which thou art, created  
may be called Just as they are in their entire existence;

But all the elements which thou hast named, And all those things  
which out of them are made, By a created virtue are informed.

Created was the matter which they have; Created was the informing  
influence Within these stars that round about them go.

The soul of every brute and of the plants By its potential temperament  
attracts The ray and motion of the holy lights;

But your own life immediately inspires Supreme Beneficence, and  
enamours it So with herself, it evermore desires her.

And thou from this mayst argue furthermore Your resurrection, if thou  
think again How human flesh was fashioned at that time

When the first parents both of them were made."



## Paradiso: Canto VIII

The world used in its peril to believe That the fair Cypria delirious  
love Rayed out, in the third epicycle turning;

Wherefore not only unto her paid honour Of sacrifices and of votive  
cry The ancient nations in the ancient error,

But both Dione honoured they and Cupid, That as her mother, this one  
as her son, And said that he had sat in Dido's lap;

And they from her, whence I beginning take, Took the denomination  
of the star That woos the sun, now following, now in front.

I was not ware of our ascending to it; But of our being in it gave full  
faith My Lady whom I saw more beauteous grow.

And as within a flame a spark is seen, And as within a voice a voice  
discerned, When one is steadfast, and one comes and goes,

Within that light beheld I other lamps Move in a circle, speeding more  
and less, Methinks in measure of their inward vision.

From a cold cloud descended never winds, Or visible or not, so rapidly  
They would not laggard and impeded seem

To any one who had those lights divine Seen come towards us, leaving  
the gyration Begun at first in the high Seraphim.

And behind those that most in front appeared Sounded "Osanna!" so  
that never since To hear again was I without desire.

Then unto us more nearly one approached, And it alone began: "We all  
are ready Unto thy pleasure, that thou joy in us.

We turn around with the celestial Princes, One gyre and one gyration  
and one thirist, To whom thou in the world of old didst say,

'Ye who, intelligent, the third heaven are moving;' And are so full of  
love, to pleasure thee A little quiet will not be less sweet."

After these eyes of mine themselves had offered Unto my Lady  
reverently, and she Content and certain of herself had made them,

Back to the light they turned, which so great promise Made of itself,  
and "Say, who art thou?" was My voice, imprinted with a great affection.

O how and how much I beheld it grow With the new joy that  
superadded was Unto its joys, as soon as I had spoken!



Thus changed, it said to me: "The world possessed me Short time below; and, if it had been more, Much evil will be which would not have been.

My gladness keepeth me concealed from thee, Which rayeth round about me, and doth hide me Like as a creature swathed in its own silk.

Much didst thou love me, and thou hadst good reason; For had I been below, I should have shown thee Somewhat beyond the foliage of my love.

That left-hand margin, which doth bathe itself In Rhone, when it is mingled with the Sorgue, Me for its lord awaited in due time,

And that horn of Ausonia, which is town'd With Bari, with Gaeta and Catona, Whence Tronto and Verde in the sea disgorge.

Already flashed upon my brow the crown Of that dominion which the Danube waters After the German borders it abandons;

And beautiful Trinacria, that is murky 'Twixt Pachino and Peloro, (on the gulf Which greatest scath from Eurus doth receive,)

Not through Typhoeus, but through nascent sulphur, Would have awaited her own monarchs still, Through me from Charles descended and from Rudolph,

If evil lordship, that exasperates ever The subject populations, had not moved Palermo to the outcry of 'Death! death!'

And if my brother could but this foresee, The greedy poverty of Catalonia Straight would he flee, that it might not molest him;

For verily 'tis needful to provide, Through him or other, so that on his bark Already freighted no more freight be placed.

His nature, which from liberal covetous Descended, such a soldiery would need As should not care for hoarding in a chest."

"Because I do believe the lofty joy Thy speech infuses into me, my Lord, Where every good thing doth begin and end

Thou seest as I see it, the more grateful Is it to me; and this too hold I dear, That gazing upon God thou dost discern it.

Glad hast thou made me; so make clear to me, Since speaking thou hast stirred me up to doubt, How from sweet seed can bitter issue forth."

This I to him; and he to me: "If I Can show to thee a truth, to what

thou askest Thy face thou'lt hold as thou dost hold thy back.

The Good which all the realm thou art ascending Turns and contents,  
maketh its providence To be a power within these bodies vast;

And not alone the natures are foreseen Within the mind that in itself is  
perfect, But they together with their preservation.

For whatsoever thing this bow shoots forth Falls foreordained unto an  
end foreseen, Even as a shaft directed to its mark.

If that were not, the heaven which thou dost walk Would in such  
manner its effects produce, That they no longer would be arts, but ruins.

This cannot be, if the Intelligences That keep these stars in motion are  
not maimed, And maimed the First that has not made them perfect.

Wilt thou this truth have clearer made to thee?" And I: "Not so; for 'tis  
impossible That nature tire, I see, in what is needful."

Whence he again: "Now say, would it be worse For men on earth were  
they not citizens?" "Yes," I replied; "and here I ask no reason."

"And can they be so, if below they live not Diversely unto offices  
diverse? No, if your master writeth well for you."

So came he with deductions to this point; Then he concluded:  
"Therefore it behoves The roots of your effects to be diverse.

Hence one is Solon born, another Xerxes, Another Melchisedec, and  
another he Who, flying through the air, his son did lose.

Revolving Nature, which a signet is To mortal wax, doth practise well  
her art, But not one inn distinguish from another;

Thence happens it that Esau differeth In seed from Jacob; and Quirinus  
comes From sire so vile that he is given to Mars.

A generated nature its own way Would always make like its  
progenitors, If Providence divine were not triumphant.

Now that which was behind thee is before thee; But that thou know  
that I with thee am pleased, With a corollary will I mantle thee.

Evermore nature, if it fortune find Discordant to it, like each other  
seed Out of its region, maketh evil thrift;

And if the world below would fix its mind On the foundation which is  
laid by nature, Pursuing that, 'twould have the people good.

But you unto religion wrench aside Him who was born to gird him

with the sword, And make a king of him who is for sermons;  
Therefore your footsteps wander from the road."

## Paradiso: Canto IX

Beautiful Clemence, after that thy Charles Had me enlightened, he narrated to me The treacheries his seed should undergo;

But said: "Be still and let the years roll round;" So I can only say, that lamentation Legitimate shall follow on your wrongs.

And of that holy light the life already Had to the Sun which fills it turned again, As to that good which for each thing sufficeth.

Ah, souls deceived, and creatures impious, Who from such good do turn away your hearts, Directing upon vanity your foreheads!

And now, behold, another of those splendours Approached me, and its will to pleasure me It signified by brightening outwardly.

The eyes of Beatrice, that fastened were Upon me, as before, of dear assent To my desire assurance gave to me.

"Ah, bring swift compensation to my wish, Thou blessed spirit," I said, "and give me proof That what I think in thee I can reflect!"

Whereat the light, that still was new to me, Out of its depths, whence it before was singing, As one delighted to do good, continued:

"Within that region of the land depraved Of Italy, that lies between Rialto And fountain-heads of Brenta and of Piava,

Rises a hill, and mounts not very high, Wherefrom descended formerly a torch That made upon that region great assault.

Out of one root were born both I and it; Cunizza was I called, and here I shine Because the splendour of this star o'ercame me.

But gladly to myself the cause I pardon Of my allotment, and it does not grieve me; Which would perhaps seem strong unto your vulgar.

Of this so luculent and precious jewel, Which of our heaven is nearest unto me, Great fame remained; and ere it die away

This hundredth year shall yet quintupled be. See if man ought to make him excellent, So that another life the first may leave!

And thus thinks not the present multitude Shut in by Adige and Tagliamento, Nor yet for being scourged is penitent.

But soon 'twill be that Padua in the marsh Will change the water that Vicenza bathes, Because the folk are stubborn against duty;

And where the Sile and Cagnano join One lordeth it, and goes with lofty head, For catching whom e'en now the net is making.

Feltro moreover of her impious pastor Shall weep the crime, which shall so monstrous be That for the like none ever entered Malta.

Ample exceedingly would be the vat That of the Ferrarese could hold the blood, And weary who should weigh it ounce by ounce,

Of which this courteous priest shall make a gift To show himself a partisan; and such gifts Will to the living of the land conform.

Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them, From which shines out on us God Judicant, So that this utterance seems good to us."

Here it was silent, and it had the semblance Of being turned elsewhere, by the wheel On which it entered as it was before.

The other joy, already known to me, Became a thing transplendent in my sight, As a fine ruby smitten by the sun.

Through joy effulgence is acquired above, As here a smile; but down below, the shade Outwardly darkens, as the mind is sad.

"God seeth all things, and in Him, blest spirit, Thy sight is," said I, "so that never will Of his can possibly from thee be hidden;

Thy voice, then, that for ever makes the heavens Glad, with the singing of those holy fires Which of their six wings make themselves a cowl,

Wherefore does it not satisfy my longings? Indeed, I would not wait thy questioning If I in thee were as thou art in me."

"The greatest of the valleys where the water Expands itself," forthwith its words began, "That sea excepted which the earth engarlands,

Between discordant shores against the sun Extends so far, that it meridian makes Where it was wont before to make the horizon.

I was a dweller on that valley's shore 'Twixt Ebro and Magra that with journey short Doth from the Tuscan part the Genoese.

With the same sunset and same sunrise nearly Sit Buggia and the city whence I was, That with its blood once made the harbour hot.

Folco that people called me unto whom My name was known; and now with me this heaven Imprints itself, as I did once with it;

For more the daughter of Belus never burned, Offending both Sichaeus

and Creusa, Than I, so long as it became my locks,

Nor yet that Rodophean, who deluded was by Demophoon, nor yet Alcides, When Iole he in his heart had locked.

Yet here is no repenting, but we smile, Not at the fault, which comes not back to mind, But at the power which ordered and foresaw.

Here we behold the art that doth adorn With such affection, and the good discover Whereby the world above turns that below.

But that thou wholly satisfied mayst bear Thy wishes hence which in this sphere are born, Still farther to proceed behoveth me.

Thou fain wouldst know who is within this light That here beside me thus is scintillating, Even as a sunbeam in the limpid water.

Then know thou, that within there is at rest Rahab, and being to our order joined, With her in its supremest grade 'tis sealed.

Into this heaven, where ends the shadowy cone Cast by your world, before all other souls First of Christ's triumph was she taken up.

Full meet it was to leave her in some heaven, Even as a palm of the high victory Which he acquired with one palm and the other,

Because she favoured the first glorious deed Of Joshua upon the Holy Land, That little stirs the memory of the Pope.

Thy city, which an offshoot is of him Who first upon his Maker turned his back, And whose ambition is so sorely wept,

Brings forth and scatters the accursed flower Which both the sheep and lambs hath led astray Since it has turned the shepherd to a wolf.

For this the Evangel and the mighty Doctors Are derelict, and only the Decretals So studied that it shows upon their margins.

On this are Pope and Cardinals intent; Their meditations reach not Nazareth, There where his pinions Gabriel unfolded;

But Vatican and the other parts elect Of Rome, which have a cemetery been Unto the soldiery that followed Peter

Shall soon be free from this adultery."

## Paradiso: Canto X

Looking into his Son with all the Love Which each of them eternally  
breathes forth, The Primal and unutterable Power

Whate'er before the mind or eye revolves With so much order made,  
there can be none Who this beholds without enjoying Him.

Lift up then, Reader, to the lofty wheels With me thy vision straight  
unto that part Where the one motion on the other strikes,

And there begin to contemplate with joy That Master's art, who in  
himself so loves it That never doth his eye depart therefrom.

Behold how from that point goes branching off The oblique circle,  
which conveys the planets, To satisfy the world that calls upon them;

And if their pathway were not thus inflected, Much virtue in the  
heavens would be in vain, And almost every power below here dead.

If from the straight line distant more or less Were the departure, much  
would wanting be Above and underneath of mundane order.

Remain now, Reader, still upon thy bench, In thought pursuing that  
which is foretasted, If thou wouldst jocund be instead of weary.

I've set before thee; henceforth feed thyself, For to itself diverteth all  
my care That theme whereof I have been made the scribe.

The greatest of the ministers of nature, Who with the power of heaven  
the world imprints And measures with his light the time for us,

With that part which above is called to mind Conjoined, along the  
spirals was revolving, Where each time earlier he presents himself;

And I was with him; but of the ascending I was not conscious, saving  
as a man Of a first thought is conscious ere it come;

And Beatrice, she who is seen to pass From good to better, and so  
suddenly That not by time her action is expressed,

How lucent in herself must she have been! And what was in the sun,  
wherein I entered, Apparent not by colour but by light,

I, though I call on genius, art, and practice, Cannot so tell that it could  
be imagined; Believe one can, and let him long to see it.

And if our fantasies too lowly are For altitude so great, it is no marvel,  
Since o'er the sun was never eye could go.

Such in this place was the fourth family Of the high Father, who forever sates it, Showing how he breathes forth and how begets.

And Beatrice began: "Give thanks, give thanks Unto the Sun of Angels, who to this Sensible one has raised thee by his grace!"

Never was heart of mortal so disposed To worship, nor to give itself to God With all its gratitude was it so ready,

As at those words did I myself become; And all my love was so absorbed in Him, That in oblivion Beatrice was eclipsed.

Nor this displeased her; but she smiled at it So that the splendour of her laughing eyes My single mind on many things divided.

Lights many saw I, vivid and triumphant, Make us a centre and themselves a circle, More sweet in voice than luminous in aspect.

Thus girt about the daughter of Latona We sometimes see, when pregnant is the air, So that it holds the thread which makes her zone.

Within the court of Heaven, whence I return, Are many jewels found, so fair and precious They cannot be transported from the realm;

And of them was the singing of those lights. Who takes not wings that he may fly up thither, The tidings thence may from the dumb await!

As soon as singing thus those burning suns Had round about us whirled themselves three times, Like unto stars neighbouring the steadfast poles,

Ladies they seemed, not from the dance released, But who stop short, in silence listening Till they have gathered the new melody.

And within one I heard beginning: "When The radiance of grace, by which is kindled True love, and which thereafter grows by loving,

Within thee multiplied is so resplendent That it conducts thee upward by that stair, Where without reascending none descends,

Who should deny the wine out of his vial Unto thy thirst, in liberty were not Except as water which descends not seaward.

Fain wouldst thou know with what plants is enflowered This garland that encircles with delight The Lady fair who makes thee strong for heaven.

Of the lambs was I of the holy flock Which Dominic conducteth by a road Where well one fattens if he strayeth not.



He who is nearest to me on the right My brother and master was; and  
he Albertus Is of Cologne, I Thomas of Aquinum.

If thou of all the others wouldst be certain, Follow behind my speaking  
with thy sight Upward along the blessed garland turning.

That next effulgence issues from the smile Of Gratian, who assisted  
both the courts In such wise that it pleased in Paradise.

The other which near by adorns our choir That Peter was who, e'en as  
the poor widow, Offered his treasure unto Holy Church.

The fifth light, that among us is the fairest, Breathes forth from such a  
love, that all the world Below is greedy to learn tidings of it.

Within it is the lofty mind, where knowledge So deep was put, that, if  
the true be true, To see so much there never rose a second.

Thou seest next the lustre of that taper, Which in the flesh below  
looked most within The angelic nature and its ministry.

Within that other little light is smiling The advocate of the Christian  
centuries, Out of whose rhetoric Augustine was furnished.

Now if thou trainest thy mind's eye along From light to light pursuant  
of my praise, With thirst already of the eighth thou waitest.

By seeing every good therein exults The sainted soul, which the  
fallacious world Makes manifest to him who listeneth well;

The body whence 'twas hunted forth is lying Down in Cieldauro, and  
from martyrdom And banishment it came unto this peace.

See farther onward flame the burning breath Of Isidore, of Beda, and  
of Richard Who was in contemplation more than man.

This, whence to me returneth thy regard, The light is of a spirit unto  
whom In his grave meditations death seemed slow.

It is the light eternal of Sigier, Who, reading lectures in the Street of  
Straw, Did syllogize invidious verities."

Then, as a horologe that calleth us What time the Bride of God is  
rising up With matins to her Spouse that he may love her,

Wherein one part the other draws and urges, Ting! ting! resounding  
with so sweet a note, That swells with love the spirit well disposed,

Thus I beheld the glorious wheel move round, And render voice to  
voice, in modulation And sweetness that can not be comprehended,

Excepting there where joy is made eternal.

## Paradiso: Canto XI

O Thou insensate care of mortal men, How inconclusive are the syllogisms That make thee beat thy wings in downward flight!

One after laws and one to aphorisms Was going, and one following the priesthood, And one to reign by force or sophistry,

And one in theft, and one in state affairs, One in the pleasures of the flesh involved Wearied himself, one gave himself to ease;

When I, from all these things emancipate, With Beatrice above there in the Heavens With such exceeding glory was received!

When each one had returned unto that point Within the circle where it was before, It stood as in a candlestick a candle;

And from within the effulgence which at first Had spoken unto me, I heard begin Smiling while it more luminous became:

"Even as I am kindled in its ray, So, looking into the Eternal Light, The occasion of thy thoughts I apprehend.

Thou doubtst, and wouldst have me to resift In language so extended and so open My speech, that to thy sense it may be plain,

Where just before I said, 'where well one fattens,' And where I said, 'there never rose a second;' And here 'tis needful we distinguish well.

The Providence, which governeth the world With counsel, wherein all created vision Is vanquished ere it reach unto the bottom,

(So that towards her own Beloved might go The bride of Him who, uttering a loud cry, Espoused her with his consecrated blood,

Self-confident and unto Him more faithful,) Two Princes did ordain in her behoof, Which on this side and that might be her guide.

The one was all seraphical in ardour; The other by his wisdom upon earth A splendour was of light cherubical.

One will I speak of, for of both is spoken In praising one, whichever may be taken, Because unto one end their labours were.

Between Tupino and the stream that falls Down from the hill elect of blessed Ubald, A fertile slope of lofty mountain hangs,

From which Perugia feels the cold and heat Through Porta Sole, and behind it weep Gualdo and Nocera their grievous yoke.

From out that slope, there where it breaketh most Its steepness, rose  
upon the world a sun As this one does sometimes from out the Ganges;

Therefore let him who speaketh of that place, Say not Asceti, for he  
would say little, But Orient, if he properly would speak.

He was not yet far distant from his rising Before he had begun to make  
the earth Some comfort from his mighty virtue feel.

For he in youth his father's wrath incurred For certain Dame, to whom,  
as unto death, The gate of pleasure no one doth unlock;

And was before his spiritual court 'Et coram patre' unto her united;  
Then day by day more fervently he loved her.

She, reft of her first husband, scorned, obscure, One thousand and one  
hundred years and more, Waited without a suitor till he came.

Naught it availed to hear, that with Amyclas Found her unmoved at  
sounding of his voice He who struck terror into all the world;

Naught it availed being constant and undaunted, So that, when Mary  
still remained below, She mounted up with Christ upon the cross.

But that too darkly I may not proceed, Francis and Poverty for these  
two lovers Take thou henceforward in my speech diffuse.

Their concord and their joyous semblances, The love, the wonder, and  
the sweet regard, They made to be the cause of holy thoughts;

So much so that the venerable Bernard First bared his feet, and after so  
great peace Ran, and, in running, thought himself too slow.

O wealth unknown! O veritable good! Giles bares his feet, and bares  
his feet Sylvester Behind the bridegroom, so doth please the bride!

Then goes his way that father and that master, He and his Lady and  
that family Which now was girding on the humble cord;

Nor cowardice of heart weighed down his brow At being son of Peter  
Bernardone, Nor for appearing marvellously scorned;

But regally his hard determination To Innocent he opened, and from  
him Received the primal seal upon his Order.

After the people mendicant increased Behind this man, whose  
admirable life Better in glory of the heavens were sung,

Incoronated with a second crown Was through Honorius by the Eternal  
Spirit The holy purpose of this Archimandrite.

And when he had, through thirst of martyrdom, In the proud presence  
of the Sultan preached Christ and the others who came after him,

And, finding for conversion too unripe The folk, and not to tarry there  
in vain, Returned to fruit of the Italic grass,

On the rude rock 'twixt Tiber and the Arno From Christ did he receive  
the final seal, Which during two whole years his members bore.

When He, who chose him unto so much good, Was pleased to draw  
him up to the reward That he had merited by being lowly,

Unto his friars, as to the rightful heirs, His most dear Lady did he  
recommend, And bade that they should love her faithfully;

And from her bosom the illustrious soul Wished to depart, returning to  
its realm, And for its body wished no other bier.

Think now what man was he, who was a fit Companion over the high  
seas to keep The bark of Peter to its proper bearings.

And this man was our Patriarch; hence whoever Doth follow him as he  
commands can see That he is laden with good merchandise.

But for new pasturage his flock has grown So greedy, that it is  
impossible They be not scattered over fields diverse;

And in proportion as his sheep remote And vagabond go farther off  
from him, More void of milk return they to the fold.

Verily some there are that fear a hurt, And keep close to the shepherd;  
but so few, That little cloth doth furnish forth their hoods.

Now if my utterance be not indistinct, If thine own hearing hath  
attentive been, If thou recall to mind what I have said,

In part contented shall thy wishes be; For thou shalt see the plant that's  
chipped away, And the rebuke that lieth in the words,

'Where well one fattens, if he strayeth not.'

## Paradiso: Canto XII

Soon as the blessed flame had taken up The final word to give it  
utterance, Began the holy millstone to revolve,

And in its gyre had not turned wholly round, Before another in a ring  
enclosed it, And motion joined to motion, song to song;

Song that as greatly doth transcend our Muses, Our Sirens, in those  
dulcet clarions, As primal splendour that which is reflected.

And as are spanned athwart a tender cloud Two rainbows parallel and  
like in colour, When Juno to her handmaid gives command,

(The one without born of the one within, Like to the speaking of that  
vagrant one Whom love consumed as doth the sun the vapours,)

And make the people here, through covenant God set with Noah,  
presageful of the world That shall no more be covered with a flood,

In such wise of those sempiternal roses The garlands twain  
encompassed us about, And thus the outer to the inner answered.

After the dance, and other grand rejoicings, Both of the singing, and  
the flaming forth Effulgence with effulgence blithe and tender,

Together, at once, with one accord had stopped, (Even as the eyes, that,  
as volition moves them, Must needs together shut and lift themselves,)

Out of the heart of one of the new lights There came a voice, that  
needle to the star Made me appear in turning thitherward.

And it began: "The love that makes me fair Draws me to speak about  
the other leader, By whom so well is spoken here of mine.

'Tis right, where one is, to bring in the other, That, as they were united  
in their warfare, Together likewise may their glory shine.

The soldiery of Christ, which it had cost So dear to arm again, behind  
the standard Moved slow and doubtful and in numbers few,

When the Emperor who reigneth evermore Provided for the host that  
was in peril, Through grace alone and not that it was worthy;

And, as was said, he to his Bride brought succour With champions  
twain, at whose deed, at whose word The stragglers were together  
drawn.

Within that region where the sweet west wind Rises to open the new

leaves, wherewith Europe is seen to clothe herself afresh,

Not far off from the beating of the waves, Behind which in his long career the sun Sometimes conceals himself from every man,

Is situate the fortunate Calahorra, Under protection of the mighty shield In which the Lion subject is and sovereign.

Therein was born the amorous paramour Of Christian Faith, the athlete consecrate, Kind to his own and cruel to his foes;

And when it was created was his mind Replete with such a living energy, That in his mother her it made prophetic.

As soon as the espousals were complete Between him and the Faith at holy font, Where they with mutual safety dowered each other,

The woman, who for him had given assent, Saw in a dream the admirable fruit That issue would from him and from his heirs;

And that he might be construed as he was, A spirit from this place went forth to name him With His possessive whose he wholly was.

Dominic was he called; and him I speak of Even as of the husbandman whom Christ Elected to his garden to assist him.

Envoy and servant sooth he seemed of Christ, For the first love made manifest in him Was the first counsel that was given by Christ.

Silent and wakeful many a time was he Discovered by his nurse upon the ground, As if he would have said, 'For this I came.'

O thou his father, Felix verily! O thou his mother, verily Joanna, If this, interpreted, means as is said!

Not for the world which people toil for now In following Ostiense and Taddeo, But through his longing after the true manna,

He in short time became so great a teacher, That he began to go about the vineyard, Which fadeth soon, if faithless be the dresser;

And of the See, (that once was more benignant Unto the righteous poor, not through itself, But him who sits there and degenerates,)

Not to dispense or two or three for six, Not any fortune of first vacancy, 'Non decimas quae sunt pauperum Dei,'

He asked for, but against the errant world Permission to do battle for the seed, Of which these four and twenty plants surround thee.

Then with the doctrine and the will together, With office apostolical he

moved, Like torrent which some lofty vein out-presses;

And in among the shoots heretical His impetus with greater fury smote,  
Wherever the resistance was the greatest.

Of him were made thereafter divers runnels, Whereby the garden  
catholic is watered, So that more living its plantations stand.

If such the one wheel of the Biga was, In which the Holy Church itself  
defended And in the field its civic battle won,

Truly full manifest should be to thee The excellence of the other, unto  
whom Thomas so courteous was before my coming.

But still the orbit, which the highest part Of its circumference made, is  
derelict, So that the mould is where was once the crust.

His family, that had straight forward moved With feet upon his  
footprints, are turned round So that they set the point upon the heel.

And soon aware they will be of the harvest Of this bad husbandry,  
when shall the tares Complain the granary is taken from them.

Yet say I, he who searcheth leaf by leaf Our volume through, would  
still some page discover Where he could read, 'I am as I am wont.'

'Twill not be from Casal nor Acquasparta, From whence come such  
unto the written word That one avoids it, and the other narrows.

Bonaventura of Bagnoregio's life Am I, who always in great offices  
Postponed considerations sinister.

Here are Illuminato and Agostino, Who of the first barefooted beggars  
were That with the cord the friends of God became. Hugh of Saint Victor  
is among them here, And Peter Mangiador, and Peter of Spain, Who down  
below in volumes twelve is shining;

Nathan the seer, and metropolitan Chrysostom, and Anselmus, and  
Donatus Who deigned to lay his hand to the first art;

Here is Rabanus, and beside me here Shines the Calabrian Abbot  
Joachim, He with the spirit of prophecy endowed.

To celebrate so great a paladin Have moved me the impassioned  
courtesy And the discreet discourses of Friar Thomas,

And with me they have moved this company."



## Paradiso: Canto XIII

Let him imagine, who would well conceive What now I saw, and let  
him while I speak Retain the image as a steadfast rock,

The fifteen stars, that in their divers regions The sky enliven with a  
light so great That it transcends all clusters of the air;

Let him the Wain imagine unto which Our vault of heaven sufficeth  
night and day, So that in turning of its pole it fails not;

Let him the mouth imagine of the horn That in the point beginneth of  
the axis Round about which the primal wheel revolves,--

To have fashioned of themselves two signs in heaven, Like unto that  
which Minos' daughter made, The moment when she felt the frost of  
death;

And one to have its rays within the other, And both to whirl  
themselves in such a manner That one should forward go, the other  
backward;

And he will have some shadowing forth of that True constellation and  
the double dance That circled round the point at which I was;

Because it is as much beyond our wont, As swifter than the motion of  
the Chiana Moveth the heaven that all the rest outspeeds.

There sang they neither Bacchus, nor Apollo, But in the divine nature  
Persons three, And in one person the divine and human.

The singing and the dance fulfilled their measure, And unto us those  
holy lights gave need, Growing in happiness from care to care.

Then broke the silence of those saints concordant The light in which  
the admirable life Of God's own mendicant was told to me,

And said: "Now that one straw is trodden out Now that its seed is  
garnered up already, Sweet love invites me to thresh out the other.

Into that bosom, thou believest, whence Was drawn the rib to form the  
beauteous cheek Whose taste to all the world is costing dear,

And into that which, by the lance transfixed, Before and since, such  
satisfaction made That it weighs down the balance of all sin,

Whate'er of light it has to human nature Been lawful to possess was all  
infused By the same power that both of them created;

And hence at what I said above dost wonder, When I narrated that no second had The good which in the fifth light is enclosed.

Now ope thine eyes to what I answer thee, And thou shalt see thy creed and my discourse Fit in the truth as centre in a circle.

That which can die, and that which dieth not, Are nothing but the splendour of the idea Which by his love our Lord brings into being;

Because that living Light, which from its fount Effulgent flows, so that it disunites not From Him nor from the Love in them intrined,

Through its own goodness reunites its rays In nine subsistences, as in a mirror, Itself eternally remaining One.

Thence it descends to the last potencies, Downward from act to act becoming such That only brief contingencies it makes;

And these contingencies I hold to be Things generated, which the heaven produces By its own motion, with seed and without.

Neither their wax, nor that which tempers it, Remains immutable, and hence beneath The ideal signet more and less shines through;

Therefore it happens, that the selfsame tree After its kind bears worse and better fruit, And ye are born with characters diverse.

If in perfection tempered were the wax, And were the heaven in its supremest virtue, The brilliance of the seal would all appear;

But nature gives it evermore deficient, In the like manner working as the artist, Who has the skill of art and hand that trembles.

If then the fervent Love, the Vision clear, Of primal Virtue do dispose and seal, Perfection absolute is there acquired.

Thus was of old the earth created worthy Of all and every animal perfection; And thus the Virgin was impregnate made;

So that thine own opinion I commend, That human nature never yet has been, Nor will be, what it was in those two persons.

Now if no farther forth I should proceed, 'Then in what way was he without a peer?' Would be the first beginning of thy words.

But, that may well appear what now appears not, Think who he was, and what occasion moved him To make request, when it was told him, 'Ask.'

I've not so spoken that thou canst not see Clearly he was a king who

asked for wisdom, That he might be sufficiently a king;

'Twas not to know the number in which are The motors here above, or  
if 'necesse' With a contingent e'er 'necesse' make,

'Non si est dare primum motum esse,' Or if in semicircle can be made  
Triangle so that it have no right angle.

Whence, if thou notest this and what I said, A regal prudence is that  
peerless seeing In which the shaft of my intention strikes.

And if on 'rose' thou turnest thy clear eyes, Thou'lt see that it has  
reference alone To kings who're many, and the good are rare.

With this distinction take thou what I said, And thus it can consist with  
thy belief Of the first father and of our Delight.

And lead shall this be always to thy feet, To make thee, like a weary  
man, move slowly Both to the Yes and No thou seest not;

For very low among the fools is he Who affirms without distinction, or  
denies, As well in one as in the other case;

Because it happens that full often bends Current opinion in the false  
direction, And then the feelings bind the intellect.

Far more than uselessly he leaves the shore, (Since he returneth not the  
same he went,) Who fishes for the truth, and has no skill;

And in the world proofs manifest thereof Parmenides, Melissus,  
Brissus are, And many who went on and knew not whither;

Thus did Sabellius, Arius, and those fools Who have been even as  
swords unto the Scriptures In rendering distorted their straight faces.

Nor yet shall people be too confident In judging, even as he is who  
doth count The corn in field or ever it be ripe.

For I have seen all winter long the thorn First show itself intractable  
and fierce, And after bear the rose upon its top;

And I have seen a ship direct and swift Run o'er the sea throughout its  
course entire, To perish at the harbour's mouth at last.

Let not Dame Bertha nor Ser Martin think, Seeing one steal, another  
offering make, To see them in the arbitrament divine;

For one may rise, and fall the other may."

## Paradiso: Canto XIV

From centre unto rim, from rim to centre, In a round vase the water  
moves itself, As from without 'tis struck or from within.

Into my mind upon a sudden dropped What I am saying, at the  
moment when Silent became the glorious life of Thomas,

Because of the resemblance that was born Of his discourse and that of  
Beatrice, Whom, after him, it pleased thus to begin:

"This man has need (and does not tell you so, Nor with the voice, nor  
even in his thought) Of going to the root of one truth more.

Declare unto him if the light wherewith Blossoms your substance shall  
remain with you Eternally the same that it is now;

And if it do remain, say in what manner, After ye are again made  
visible, It can be that it injure not your sight."

As by a greater gladness urged and drawn They who are dancing in a  
ring sometimes Uplift their voices and their motions quicken;

So, at that orison devout and prompt, The holy circles a new joy  
displayed In their revolving and their wondrous song.

Whoso lamenteth him that here we die That we may live above, has  
never there Seen the refreshment of the eternal rain.

The One and Two and Three who ever liveth, And reigneth ever in  
Three and Two and One, Not circumscribed and all things circumscribing,

Three several times was chanted by each one Among those spirits,  
with such melody That for all merit it were just reward;

And, in the lustre most divine of all The lesser ring, I heard a modest  
voice, Such as perhaps the Angel's was to Mary,

Answer: "As long as the festivity Of Paradise shall be, so long our  
love Shall radiate round about us such a vesture.

Its brightness is proportioned to the ardour, The ardour to the vision;  
and the vision Equals what grace it has above its worth.

When, glorious and sanctified, our flesh Is reassumed, then shall our  
persons be More pleasing by their being all complete;

For will increase whate'er bestows on us Of light gratuitous the Good  
Supreme, Light which enables us to look on Him;

Therefore the vision must perforce increase, Increase the ardour which from that is kindled, Increase the radiance which from this proceeds.

But even as a coal that sends forth flame, And by its vivid whiteness overpowers it So that its own appearance it maintains,

Thus the effulgence that surrounds us now Shall be o'erpowered in aspect by the flesh, Which still to-day the earth doth cover up;

Nor can so great a splendour weary us, For strong will be the organs of the body To everything which hath the power to please us."

So sudden and alert appeared to me Both one and the other choir to say Amen, That well they showed desire for their dead bodies;

Nor sole for them perhaps, but for the mothers, The fathers, and the rest who had been dear Or ever they became eternal flames.

And lo! all round about of equal brightness Arose a lustre over what was there, Like an horizon that is clearing up.

And as at rise of early eve begin Along the welkin new appearances, So that the sight seems real and unreal,

It seemed to me that new subsistences Began there to be seen, and make a circle Outside the other two circumferences.

O very sparkling of the Holy Spirit, How sudden and incandescent it became Unto mine eyes, that vanquished bore it not!

But Beatrice so beautiful and smiling Appeared to me, that with the other sights That followed not my memory I must leave her.

Then to uplift themselves mine eyes resumed The power, and I beheld myself translated To higher salvation with my Lady only.

Well was I ware that I was more uplifted By the enkindled smiling of the star, That seemed to me more ruddy than its wont.

With all my heart, and in that dialect Which is the same in all, such holocaust To God I made as the new grace beseemed;

And not yet from my bosom was exhausted The ardour of sacrifice, before I knew This offering was accepted and auspicious;

For with so great a lustre and so red Splendours appeared to me in twofold rays, I said: "O Helios who dost so adorn them!"

Even as distinct with less and greater lights Glimmers between the two poles of the world The Galaxy that maketh wise men doubt,

Thus constellated in the depths of Mars, Those rays described the venerable sign That quadrants joining in a circle make.

Here doth my memory overcome my genius; For on that cross as levin gleamed forth Christ, So that I cannot find ensample worthy;

But he who takes his cross and follows Christ Again will pardon me what I omit, Seeing in that aurora lighten Christ.

From horn to horn, and 'twixt the top and base, Lights were in motion, brightly scintillating As they together met and passed each other;

Thus level and aslant and swift and slow We here behold, renewing still the sight, The particles of bodies long and short,

Across the sunbeam move, wherewith is listed Sometimes the shade, which for their own defence People with cunning and with art contrive.

And as a lute and harp, accordant strung With many strings, a dulcet tinkling make To him by whom the notes are not distinguished,

So from the lights that there to me appeared Upgathered through the cross a melody, Which rapt me, not distinguishing the hymn.

Well was I ware it was of lofty laud, Because there came to me, "Arise and conquer!" As unto him who hears and comprehends not.

So much enamoured I became therewith, That until then there was not anything That e'er had fettered me with such sweet bonds.

Perhaps my word appears somewhat too bold, Postponing the delight of those fair eyes, Into which gazing my desire has rest;

But who bethinks him that the living seals Of every beauty grow in power ascending, And that I there had not turned round to those,

Can me excuse, if I myself accuse To excuse myself, and see that I speak truly: For here the holy joy is not disclosed,

Because ascending it becomes more pure.

## Paradiso: Canto XV

A will benign, in which reveals itself Ever the love that righteously  
inspires, As in the iniquitous, cupidity,

Silence imposed upon that dulcet lyre, And quieted the consecrated  
chords, That Heaven's right hand doth tighten and relax.

How unto just entreaties shall be deaf Those substances, which, to give  
me desire Of praying them, with one accord grew silent?

'Tis well that without end he should lament, Who for the love of thing  
that doth not last Eternally despoils him of that love!

As through the pure and tranquil evening air There shoots from time to  
time a sudden fire, Moving the eyes that steadfast were before,

And seems to be a star that changeth place, Except that in the part  
where it is kindled Nothing is missed, and this endureth little; So from the  
horn that to the right extends Unto that cross's foot there ran a star Out of  
the constellation shining there;

Nor was the gem dissevered from its ribbon, But down the radiant  
fillet ran along, So that fire seemed it behind alabaster.

Thus piteous did Anchises' shade reach forward, If any faith our  
greatest Muse deserve, When in Elysium he his son perceived.

"O sanguis meus, O superinfusa Gratia Dei, sicut tibi, cui Bis unquam  
Coeli janua reclusa?"

Thus that effulgence; whence I gave it heed; Then round unto my Lady  
turned my sight, And on this side and that was stupefied;

For in her eyes was burning such a smile That with mine own  
methought I touched the bottom Both of my grace and of my Paradise!

Then, pleasant to the hearing and the sight, The spirit joined to its  
beginning things I understood not, so profound it spake;

Nor did it hide itself from me by choice, But by necessity; for its  
conception Above the mark of mortals set itself.

And when the bow of burning sympathy Was so far slackened, that its  
speech descended Towards the mark of our intelligence,

The first thing that was understood by me Was "Benedight be Thou, O  
Trine and One, Who hast unto my seed so courteous been!"

And it continued: "Hunger long and grateful, Drawn from the reading  
of the mighty volume Wherein is never changed the white nor dark,

Thou hast appeased, my son, within this light In which I speak to thee,  
by grace of her Who to this lofty flight with plumage clothed thee.

Thou thinkest that to me thy thought doth pass From Him who is the  
first, as from the unit, If that be known, ray out the five and six;

And therefore who I am thou askest not, And why I seem more joyous  
unto thee Than any other of this gladsome crowd.

Thou think'st the truth; because the small and great Of this existence  
look into the mirror Wherein, before thou think'st, thy thought thou  
showest.

But that the sacred love, in which I watch With sight perpetual, and  
which makes me thirst With sweet desire, may better be fulfilled,

Now let thy voice secure and frank and glad Proclaim the wishes, the  
desire proclaim, To which my answer is decreed already."

To Beatrice I turned me, and she heard Before I spake, and smiled to  
me a sign, That made the wings of my desire increase;

Then in this wise began I: "Love and knowledge, When on you  
dawned the first Equality, Of the same weight for each of you became;

For in the Sun, which lighted you and burned With heat and radiance,  
they so equal are, That all similitudes are insufficient.

But among mortals will and argument, For reason that to you is  
manifest, Diversely feathered in their pinions are.

Whence I, who mortal am, feel in myself This inequality; so give not  
thanks, Save in my heart, for this paternal welcome.

Truly do I entreat thee, living topaz! Set in this precious jewel as a  
gem, That thou wilt satisfy me with thy name."

"O leaf of mine, in whom I pleasure took E'en while awaiting, I was  
thine own root!" Such a beginning he in answer made me.

Then said to me: "That one from whom is named Thy race, and who a  
hundred years and more Has circled round the mount on the first cornice,

A son of mine and thy great-grandsire was; Well it behoves thee that  
the long fatigue Thou shouldst for him make shorter with thy works.

Florence, within the ancient boundary From which she taketh still her



tierce and nones, Abode in quiet, temperate and chaste.

No golden chain she had, nor coronal, Nor ladies shod with sandal  
shoon, nor girdle That caught the eye more than the person did.

Not yet the daughter at her birth struck fear Into the father, for the time  
and dower Did not o'errun this side or that the measure.

No houses had she void of families, Not yet had thither come  
Sardanapalus To show what in a chamber can be done;

Not yet surpassed had Montemalo been By your Uccellatojo, which  
surpassed Shall in its downfall be as in its rise.

Bellincion Berti saw I go begirt With leather and with bone, and from  
the mirror His dame depart without a painted face;

And him of Nerli saw, and him of Vecchio, Contented with their  
simple suits of buff And with the spindle and the flax their dames.

O fortunate women! and each one was certain Of her own burial-place,  
and none as yet For sake of France was in her bed deserted.

One o'er the cradle kept her studious watch, And in her lullaby the  
language used That first delights the fathers and the mothers;

Another, drawing tresses from her distaff, Told o'er among her family  
the tales Of Trojans and of Fesole and Rome.

As great a marvel then would have been held A Lapo Salterello, a  
Cianghella, As Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.

To such a quiet, such a beautiful Life of the citizen, to such a safe  
Community, and to so sweet an inn,

Did Mary give me, with loud cries invoked, And in your ancient  
Baptistery at once Christian and Cacciaguida I became.

Moronto was my brother, and Eliseo; From Val di Pado came to me  
my wife, And from that place thy surname was derived.

I followed afterward the Emperor Conrad, And he begirt me of his  
chivalry, So much I pleased him with my noble deeds.

I followed in his train against that law's Iniquity, whose people doth  
usurp Your just possession, through your Pastor's fault.

There by that execrable race was I Released from bonds of the  
fallacious world, The love of which defileth many souls,

And came from martyrdom unto this peace."



## Paradiso: Canto XVI

O thou our poor nobility of blood, If thou dost make the people glory  
in thee Down here where our affection languishes,

A marvellous thing it ne'er will be to me; For there where appetite is  
not perverted, I say in Heaven, of thee I made a boast!

Truly thou art a cloak that quickly shortens, So that unless we piece  
thee day by day Time goeth round about thee with his shears!

With 'You,' which Rome was first to tolerate, (Wherein her family less  
perseveres,) Yet once again my words beginning made;

Whence Beatrice, who stood somewhat apart, Smiling, appeared like  
unto her who coughed At the first failing writ of Guenever.

And I began: "You are my ancestor, You give to me all hardihood to  
speak, You lift me so that I am more than I.

So many rivulets with gladness fill My mind, that of itself it makes a  
joy Because it can endure this and not burst.

Then tell me, my beloved root ancestral, Who were your ancestors,  
and what the years That in your boyhood chronicled themselves?

Tell me about the sheepfold of Saint John, How large it was, and who  
the people were Within it worthy of the highest seats."

As at the blowing of the winds a coal Quickens to flame, so I beheld  
that light Become resplendent at my blandishments.

And as unto mine eyes it grew more fair, With voice more sweet and  
tender, but not in This modern dialect, it said to me:

"From uttering of the 'Ave,' till the birth In which my mother, who is  
now a saint, Of me was lightened who had been her burden,

Unto its Lion had this fire returned Five hundred fifty times and thirty  
more, To reinflame itself beneath his paw.

My ancestors and I our birthplace had Where first is found the last  
ward of the city By him who runneth in your annual game.

Suffice it of my elders to hear this; But who they were, and whence  
they thither came, Silence is more considerate than speech.

All those who at that time were there between Mars and the Baptist, fit  
for bearing arms, Were a fifth part of those who now are living;

But the community, that now is mixed With Campi and Certaldo and Figghine, Pure in the lowest artisan was seen.

O how much better 'twere to have as neighbours The folk of whom I speak, and at Galluzzo And at Trespiano have your boundary,

Than have them in the town, and bear the stench Of Aguglione's churl, and him of Signa Who has sharp eyes for trickery already.

Had not the folk, which most of all the world Degenerates, been a step-dame unto Caesar, But as a mother to her son benignant,

Some who turn Florentines, and trade and discount, Would have gone back again to Simifonte There where their grandsires went about as beggars.

At Montemurlo still would be the Counts, The Cerchi in the parish of Acone, Perhaps in Valdigrive the Buondelmonti.

Ever the intermingling of the people Has been the source of malady in cities, As in the body food it surfeits on;

And a blind bull more headlong plunges down Than a blind lamb; and very often cuts Better and more a single sword than five.

If Luni thou regard, and Urbisaglia, How they have passed away, and how are passing Chiusi and Sinigaglia after them,

To hear how races waste themselves away, Will seem to thee no novel thing nor hard, Seeing that even cities have an end.

All things of yours have their mortality, Even as yourselves; but it is hidden in some That a long while endure, and lives are short;

And as the turning of the lunar heaven Covers and bares the shores without a pause, In the like manner fortune does with Florence.

Therefore should not appear a marvellous thing What I shall say of the great Florentines Of whom the fame is hidden in the Past.

I saw the Ughi, saw the Catellini, Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, and Alberichi, Even in their fall illustrious citizens;

And saw, as mighty as they ancient were, With him of La Sannella him of Arca, And Soldanier, Ardinghi, and Bostichi.

Near to the gate that is at present laden With a new felony of so much weight That soon it shall be jetsam from the bark,

The Ravignani were, from whom descended The County Guido, and

whoe'er the name Of the great Bellincione since hath taken.

He of La Pressa knew the art of ruling Already, and already Galigajo  
Had hilt and pommel gilded in his house.

Mighty already was the Column Vair, Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifant, and  
Barucci, And Galli, and they who for the bushel blush.

The stock from which were the Calfucci born Was great already, and  
already chosen To curule chairs the Sizii and Arrigucci.

O how beheld I those who are undone By their own pride! and how the  
Balls of Gold Florence enflowered in all their mighty deeds!

So likewise did the ancestors of those Who evermore, when vacant is  
your church, Fatten by staying in consistory.

The insolent race, that like a dragon follows Whoever flees, and unto  
him that shows His teeth or purse is gentle as a lamb,

Already rising was, but from low people; So that it pleased not Ubertin  
Donato That his wife's father should make him their kin.

Already had Caponsacco to the Market From Fesole descended, and  
already Giuda and Infangato were good burghers.

I'll tell a thing incredible, but true; One entered the small circuit by a  
gate Which from the Della Pera took its name!

Each one that bears the beautiful escutcheon Of the great baron whose  
renown and name The festival of Thomas keepeth fresh,

Knighthood and privilege from him received; Though with the  
populace unites himself To-day the man who binds it with a border.

Already were Gualterotti and Importuni; And still more quiet would  
the Borgo be If with new neighbours it remained unfed.

The house from which is born your lamentation, Through just disdain  
that death among you brought And put an end unto your joyous life,

Was honoured in itself and its companions. O Buondelmonte, how in  
evil hour Thou fled'st the bridal at another's promptings!

Many would be rejoicing who are sad, If God had thee surrendered to  
the Ema The first time that thou camest to the city.

But it behoved the mutilated stone Which guards the bridge, that  
Florence should provide A victim in her latest hour of peace.

With all these families, and others with them, Florence beheld I in so

great repose, That no occasion had she whence to weep;

With all these families beheld so just And glorious her people, that the  
lily Never upon the spear was placed reversed,

Nor by division was vermilion made."

## Paradiso: Canto XVII

As came to Clymene, to be made certain Of that which he had heard  
against himself, He who makes fathers chary still to children,

Even such was I, and such was I perceived By Beatrice and by the  
holy light That first on my account had changed its place.

Therefore my Lady said to me: "Send forth The flame of thy desire, so  
that it issue Imprinted well with the internal stamp;

Not that our knowledge may be greater made By speech of thine, but  
to accustom thee To tell thy thirst, that we may give thee drink."

"O my beloved tree, (that so dost lift thee, That even as minds  
terrestrial perceive No triangle containeth two obtuse, So thou beholdest  
the contingent things Ere in themselves they are, fixing thine eyes Upon  
the point in which all times are present,)

While I was with Virgilius conjoined Upon the mountain that the souls  
doth heal, And when descending into the dead world,

Were spoken to me of my future life Some grievous words; although I  
feel myself In sooth foursquare against the blows of chance.

On this account my wish would be content To hear what fortune is  
approaching me, Because foreseen an arrow comes more slowly."

Thus did I say unto that selfsame light That unto me had spoken before;  
and even As Beatrice willed was my own will confessed.

Not in vague phrase, in which the foolish folk Ensnared themselves of  
old, ere yet was slain The Lamb of God who taketh sins away,

But with clear words and unambiguous Language responded that  
paternal love, Hid and revealed by its own proper smile:

"Contingency, that outside of the volume Of your materiality extends  
not, Is all depicted in the eternal aspect.

Necessity however thence it takes not, Except as from the eye, in  
which 'tis mirrored, A ship that with the current down descends.

From thence, e'en as there cometh to the ear Sweet harmony from an  
organ, comes in sight To me the time that is preparing for thee.

As forth from Athens went Hippolytus, By reason of his step-dame  
false and cruel, So thou from Florence must perforce depart.

Already this is willed, and this is sought for; And soon it shall be done  
by him who thinks it, Where every day the Christ is bought and sold.

The blame shall follow the offended party In outcry as is usual; but the  
vengeance Shall witness to the truth that doth dispense it.

Thou shalt abandon everything beloved Most tenderly, and this the  
arrow is Which first the bow of banishment shoots forth.

Thou shalt have proof how savourest of salt The bread of others, and  
how hard a road The going down and up another's stairs.

And that which most shall weigh upon thy shoulders Will be the bad  
and foolish company With which into this valley thou shalt fall;

For all ingrate, all mad and impious Will they become against thee; but  
soon after They, and not thou, shall have the forehead scarlet.

Of their bestiality their own proceedings Shall furnish proof; so 'twill  
be well for thee A party to have made thee by thyself.

Thine earliest refuge and thine earliest inn Shall be the mighty  
Lombard's courtesy, Who on the Ladder bears the holy bird,

Who such benign regard shall have for thee That 'twixt you twain, in  
doing and in asking, That shall be first which is with others last.

With him shalt thou see one who at his birth Has by this star of  
strength been so impressed, That notable shall his achievements be.

Not yet the people are aware of him Through his young age, since only  
nine years yet Around about him have these wheels revolved.

But ere the Gascon cheat the noble Henry, Some sparkles of his virtue  
shall appear In caring not for silver nor for toil.

So recognized shall his magnificence Become hereafter, that his  
enemies Will not have power to keep mute tongues about it.

On him rely, and on his benefits; By him shall many people be  
transformed, Changing condition rich and mendicant;

And written in thy mind thou hence shalt bear Of him, but shalt not  
say it"--and things said he Incredible to those who shall be present.

Then added: "Son, these are the commentaries On what was said to  
thee; behold the snares That are concealed behind few revolutions;

Yet would I not thy neighbours thou shouldst envy, Because thy life  
into the future reaches Beyond the punishment of their perfidies."



When by its silence showed that sainted soul That it had finished  
putting in the woof Into that web which I had given it warped,

Began I, even as he who yearneth after, Being in doubt, some counsel  
from a person Who seeth, and uprightly wills, and loves:

"Well see I, father mine, how spurreth on The time towards me such a  
blow to deal me As heaviest is to him who most gives way.

Therefore with foresight it is well I arm me, That, if the dearest place  
be taken from me, I may not lose the others by my songs.

Down through the world of infinite bitterness, And o'er the mountain,  
from whose beauteous summit The eyes of my own Lady lifted me,

And afterward through heaven from light to light, I have learned that  
which, if I tell again, Will be a savour of strong herbs to many.

And if I am a timid friend to truth, I fear lest I may lose my life with  
those Who will hereafter call this time the olden."

The light in which was smiling my own treasure Which there I had  
discovered, flashed at first As in the sunshine doth a golden mirror;

Then made reply: "A conscience overcast Or with its own or with  
another's shame, Will taste forsooth the tartness of thy word;

But ne'ertheless, all falsehood laid aside, Make manifest thy vision  
utterly, And let them scratch wherever is the itch;

For if thine utterance shall offensive be At the first taste, a vital  
nutriment 'Twill leave thereafter, when it is digested.

This cry of thine shall do as doth the wind, Which smiteth most the  
most exalted summits, And that is no slight argument of honour.

Therefore are shown to thee within these wheels, Upon the mount and  
in the dolorous valley, Only the souls that unto fame are known;

Because the spirit of the hearer rests not, Nor doth confirm its faith by  
an example Which has the root of it unknown and hidden,

Or other reason that is not apparent."

## Paradiso: Canto XVIII

Now was alone rejoicing in its word That soul beatified, and I was  
tasting My own, the bitter tempering with the sweet,

And the Lady who to God was leading me Said: "Change thy thought;  
consider that I am Near unto Him who every wrong disburdens."

Unto the loving accents of my comfort I turned me round, and then  
what love I saw Within those holy eyes I here relinquish;

Not only that my language I distrust, But that my mind cannot return  
so far Above itself, unless another guide it.

Thus much upon that point can I repeat, That, her again beholding, my  
affection From every other longing was released.

While the eternal pleasure, which direct Rayed upon Beatrice, from  
her fair face Contented me with its reflected aspect,

Conquering me with the radiance of a smile, She said to me, "Turn  
thee about and listen; Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise."

Even as sometimes here do we behold The affection in the look, if it  
be such That all the soul is wrapt away by it,

So, by the flaming of the effulgence holy To which I turned, I  
recognized therein The wish of speaking to me somewhat farther.

And it began: "In this fifth resting-place Upon the tree that liveth by its  
summit, And aye bears fruit, and never loses leaf,

Are blessed spirits that below, ere yet They came to Heaven, were of  
such great renown That every Muse therewith would affluent be.

Therefore look thou upon the cross's horns; He whom I now shall  
name will there enact What doth within a cloud its own swift fire."

I saw athwart the Cross a splendour drawn By naming Joshua, (even as  
he did it,) Nor noted I the word before the deed;

And at the name of the great Maccabee I saw another move itself  
revolving, And gladness was the whip unto that top.

Likewise for Charlemagne and for Orlando, Two of them my regard  
attentive followed As followeth the eye its falcon flying.

William thereafterward, and Renouard, And the Duke Godfrey, did  
attract my sight Along upon that Cross, and Robert Guiscard.

Then, moved and mingled with the other lights, The soul that had addressed me showed how great An artist 'twas among the heavenly singers.

To my right side I turned myself around, My duty to behold in Beatrice Either by words or gesture signified;

And so translucent I beheld her eyes, So full of pleasure, that her countenance Surpassed its other and its latest wont.

And as, by feeling greater delectation, A man in doing good from day to day Becomes aware his virtue is increasing,

So I became aware that my gyration With heaven together had increased its arc, That miracle beholding more adorned.

And such as is the change, in little lapse Of time, in a pale woman, when her face Is from the load of bashfulness unladen,

Such was it in mine eyes, when I had turned, Caused by the whiteness of the temperate star, The sixth, which to itself had gathered me.

Within that Jovial torch did I behold The sparkling of the love which was therein Delineate our language to mine eyes.

And even as birds uprisen from the shore, As in congratulation o'er their food, Make squadrons of themselves, now round, now long,

So from within those lights the holy creatures Sang flying to and fro, and in their figures Made of themselves now D, now I, now L.

First singing they to their own music moved; Then one becoming of these characters, A little while they rested and were silent.

O divine Pegasea, thou who genius Dost glorious make, and render it long-lived, And this through thee the cities and the kingdoms,

Illume me with thyself, that I may bring Their figures out as I have them conceived! Apparent be thy power in these brief verses!

Themselves then they displayed in five times seven Vowels and consonants; and I observed The parts as they seemed spoken unto me.

'Diligite justitiam,' these were First verb and noun of all that was depicted; 'Qui judicatis terram' were the last.

Thereafter in the M of the fifth word Remained they so arranged, that Jupiter Seemed to be silver there with gold inlaid.

And other lights I saw descend where was The summit of the M, and

pause there singing The good, I think, that draws them to itself.

Then, as in striking upon burning logs Upward there fly innumerable sparks, Whence fools are wont to look for auguries,

More than a thousand lights seemed thence to rise, And to ascend, some more, and others less, Even as the Sun that lights them had allotted;

And, each one being quiet in its place, The head and neck beheld I of an eagle Delineated by that inlaid fire.

He who there paints has none to be his guide; But Himself guides; and is from Him remembered That virtue which is form unto the nest.

The other beatitude, that contented seemed At first to bloom a lily on the M, By a slight motion followed out the imprint.

O gentle star! what and how many gems Did demonstrate to me, that all our justice Effect is of that heaven which thou ingemmest!

Wherefore I pray the Mind, in which begin Thy motion and thy virtue, to regard Whence comes the smoke that vitiates thy rays;

So that a second time it now be wroth With buying and with selling in the temple Whose walls were built with signs and martyrdoms!

O soldiery of heaven, whom I contemplate, Implore for those who are upon the earth All gone astray after the bad example!

Once 'twas the custom to make war with swords; But now 'tis made by taking here and there The bread the pitying Father shuts from none.

Yet thou, who writest but to cancel, think That Peter and that Paul, who for this vineyard Which thou art spoiling died, are still alive!

Well canst thou say: "So steadfast my desire Is unto him who willed to live alone, And for a dance was led to martyrdom,

That I know not the Fisherman nor Paul."

## Paradiso: Canto XIX

Appeared before me with its wings outspread The beautiful image  
that in sweet fruition Made jubilant the interwoven souls;

Appeared a little ruby each, wherein Ray of the sun was burning so  
enkindled That each into mine eyes refracted it.

And what it now behoves me to retrace Nor voice has e'er reported,  
nor ink written, Nor was by fantasy e'er comprehended;

For speak I saw, and likewise heard, the beak, And utter with its voice  
both 'I' and 'My,' When in conception it was 'We' and 'Our.'

And it began: "Being just and merciful Am I exalted here unto that  
glory Which cannot be exceeded by desire;

And upon earth I left my memory Such, that the evil-minded people  
there Commend it, but continue not the story."

So doth a single heat from many embers Make itself felt, even as from  
many loves Issued a single sound from out that image.

Whence I thereafter: "O perpetual flowers Of the eternal joy, that only  
one Make me perceive your odours manifold,

Exhaling, break within me the great fast Which a long season has in  
hunger held me, Not finding for it any food on earth.

Well do I know, that if in heaven its mirror Justice Divine another  
realm doth make, Yours apprehends it not through any veil.

You know how I attentively address me To listen; and you know what  
is the doubt That is in me so very old a fast."

Even as a falcon, issuing from his hood, Doth move his head, and with  
his wings applaud him, Showing desire, and making himself fine,

Saw I become that standard, which of lauds Was interwoven of the  
grace divine, With such songs as he knows who there rejoices.

Then it began: "He who a compass turned On the world's outer verge,  
and who within it Devised so much occult and manifest,

Could not the impress of his power so make On all the universe, as  
that his Word Should not remain in infinite excess.

And this makes certain that the first proud being, Who was the  
paragon of every creature, By not awaiting light fell immature.

And hence appears it, that each minor nature Is scant receptacle unto that good Which has no end, and by itself is measured.

In consequence our vision, which perforce Must be some ray of that intelligence With which all things whatever are replete,

Cannot in its own nature be so potent, That it shall not its origin discern Far beyond that which is apparent to it.

Therefore into the justice sempiternal The power of vision that your world receives, As eye into the ocean, penetrates;

Which, though it see the bottom near the shore, Upon the deep perceives it not, and yet 'Tis there, but it is hidden by the depth.

There is no light but comes from the serene That never is o'ercast, nay, it is darkness Or shadow of the flesh, or else its poison.

Amply to thee is opened now the cavern Which has concealed from thee the living justice Of which thou mad'st such frequent questioning.

For saidst thou: 'Born a man is on the shore Of Indus, and is none who there can speak Of Christ, nor who can read, nor who can write;

And all his inclinations and his actions Are good, so far as human reason sees, Without a sin in life or in discourse:

He dieth unbaptised and without faith; Where is this justice that condemneth him? Where is his fault, if he do not believe?'

Now who art thou, that on the bench wouldst sit In judgment at a thousand miles away, With the short vision of a single span?

Truly to him who with me subtilizes, If so the Scripture were not over you, For doubting there were marvellous occasion.

O animals terrene, O stolid minds, The primal will, that in itself is good, Ne'er from itself, the Good Supreme, has moved.

So much is just as is accordant with it; No good created draws it to itself, But it, by raying forth, occasions that."

Even as above her nest goes circling round The stork when she has fed her little ones, And he who has been fed looks up at her,

So lifted I my brows, and even such Became the blessed image, which its wings Was moving, by so many counsels urged.

Circling around it sang, and said: "As are My notes to thee, who dost not comprehend them, Such is the eternal judgment to you mortals."

Those lucent splendours of the Holy Spirit Grew quiet then, but still within the standard That made the Romans reverend to the world.

It recommenced: "Unto this kingdom never Ascended one who had not faith in Christ, Before or since he to the tree was nailed.

But look thou, many crying are, 'Christ, Christ!' Who at the judgment shall be far less near To him than some shall be who knew not Christ.

Such Christians shall the Ethiop condemn, When the two companies shall be divided, The one for ever rich, the other poor.

What to your kings may not the Persians say, When they that volume opened shall behold In which are written down all their dispraises?

There shall be seen, among the deeds of Albert, That which ere long shall set the pen in motion, For which the realm of Prague shall be deserted.

There shall be seen the woe that on the Seine He brings by falsifying of the coin, Who by the blow of a wild boar shall die.

There shall be seen the pride that causes thirst, Which makes the Scot and Englishman so mad That they within their boundaries cannot rest;

Be seen the luxury and effeminate life Of him of Spain, and the Bohemian, Who valour never knew and never wished;

Be seen the Cripple of Jerusalem, His goodness represented by an I, While the reverse an M shall represent;

Be seen the avarice and poltroonery Of him who guards the Island of the Fire, Wherein Anchises finished his long life;

And to declare how pitiful he is Shall be his record in contracted letters Which shall make note of much in little space.

And shall appear to each one the foul deeds Of uncle and of brother who a nation So famous have dishonoured, and two crowns.

And he of Portugal and he of Norway Shall there be known, and he of Rascia too, Who saw in evil hour the coin of Venice.

O happy Hungary, if she let herself Be wronged no farther! and Navarre the happy, If with the hills that gird her she be armed!

And each one may believe that now, as hanel Thereof, do Nicosia and Famagosta Lament and rage because of their own beast,

Who from the others' flank departeth not."





## Paradiso: Canto XX

When he who all the world illuminates Out of our hemisphere so far  
descends That on all sides the daylight is consumed,

The heaven, that erst by him alone was kindled, Doth suddenly reveal  
itself again By many lights, wherein is one resplendent.

And came into my mind this act of heaven, When the ensign of the  
world and of its leaders Had silent in the blessed beak become;

Because those living luminaries all, By far more luminous, did songs  
begin Lapsing and falling from my memory.

O gentle Love, that with a smile dost cloak thee, How ardent in those  
sparks didst thou appear, That had the breath alone of holy thoughts!

After the precious and pellucid crystals, With which begemmed the  
sixth light I beheld, Silence imposed on the angelic bells,

I seemed to hear the murmuring of a river That clear descendeth down  
from rock to rock, Showing the affluence of its mountain-top.

And as the sound upon the cithern's neck Taketh its form, and as upon  
the vent Of rustic pipe the wind that enters it,

Even thus, relieved from the delay of waiting, That murmuring of the  
eagle mounted up Along its neck, as if it had been hollow.

There it became a voice, and issued thence From out its beak, in such a  
form of words As the heart waited for wherein I wrote them.

"The part in me which sees and bears the sun In mortal eagles," it  
began to me, "Now fixedly must needs be looked upon;

For of the fires of which I make my figure, Those whence the eye doth  
sparkle in my head Of all their orders the supremest are.

He who is shining in the midst as pupil Was once the singer of the  
Holy Spirit, Who bore the ark from city unto city;

Now knoweth he the merit of his song, In so far as effect of his own  
counsel, By the reward which is commensurate.

Of five, that make a circle for my brow, He that approacheth nearest to  
my beak Did the poor widow for her son console;

Now knoweth he how dearly it doth cost Not following Christ, by the  
experience Of this sweet life and of its opposite.

He who comes next in the circumference Of which I speak, upon its highest arc, Did death postpone by penitence sincere;

Now knoweth he that the eternal judgment Suffers no change, albeit worthy prayer Maketh below to-morrow of to-day.

The next who follows, with the laws and me, Under the good intent that bore bad fruit Became a Greek by ceding to the pastor;

Now knoweth he how all the ill deduced From his good action is not harmful to him, Although the world thereby may be destroyed.

And he, whom in the downward arc thou seest, Guglielmo was, whom the same land deplores That weepeth Charles and Frederick yet alive;

Now knoweth he how heaven enamoured is With a just king; and in the outward show Of his effulgence he reveals it still.

Who would believe, down in the errant world, That e'er the Trojan Ripheus in this round Could be the fifth one of the holy lights?

Now knoweth he enough of what the world Has not the power to see of grace divine, Although his sight may not discern the bottom."

Like as a lark that in the air expatiates, First singing and then silent with content Of the last sweetness that doth satisfy her,

Such seemed to me the image of the imprint Of the eternal pleasure, by whose will Doth everything become the thing it is.

And notwithstanding to my doubt I was As glass is to the colour that invests it, To wait the time in silence it endured not,

But forth from out my mouth, "What things are these?" Extorted with the force of its own weight; Whereat I saw great joy of coruscation.

Thereafterward with eye still more enkindled The blessed standard made to me reply, To keep me not in wonderment suspended:

"I see that thou believest in these things Because I say them, but thou seest not how; So that, although believed in, they are hidden.

Thou doest as he doth who a thing by name Well apprehendeth, but its quiddity Cannot perceive, unless another show it.

'Regnum coelorum' suffereth violence From fervent love, and from that living hope That overcometh the Divine volition;

Not in the guise that man o'ercometh man, But conquers it because it will be conquered, And conquered conquers by benignity.

The first life of the eyebrow and the fifth Cause thee astonishment,  
because with them Thou seest the region of the angels painted.

They passed not from their bodies, as thou thinkest, Gentiles, but  
Christians in the steadfast faith Of feet that were to suffer and had  
suffered.

For one from Hell, where no one e'er turns back Unto good will,  
returned unto his bones, And that of living hope was the reward,--

Of living hope, that placed its efficacy In prayers to God made to  
resuscitate him, So that 'twere possible to move his will.

The glorious soul concerning which I speak, Returning to the flesh,  
where brief its stay, Believed in Him who had the power to aid it;

And, in believing, kindled to such fire Of genuine love, that at the  
second death Worthy it was to come unto this joy.

The other one, through grace, that from so deep A fountain wells that  
never hath the eye Of any creature reached its primal wave,

Set all his love below on righteousness; Wherefore from grace to grace  
did God unclothe His eye to our redemption yet to be,

Whence he believed therein, and suffered not From that day forth the  
stench of paganism, And he reprov'd therefor the folk perverse.

Those Maidens three, whom at the right-hand wheel Thou didst behold,  
were unto him for baptism More than a thousand years before baptizing.

O thou predestination, how remote Thy root is from the aspect of all  
those Who the First Cause do not behold entire!

And you, O mortals! hold yourselves restrained In judging; for  
ourselves, who look on God, We do not know as yet all the elect;

And sweet to us is such a deprivation, Because our good in this good is  
made perfect, That whatsoever God wills, we also will."

After this manner by that shape divine, To make clear in me my short-  
sightedness, Was given to me a pleasant medicine;

And as good singer a good lutanist Accompanies with vibrations of the  
chords, Whereby more pleasantness the song acquires,

So, while it spake, do I remember me That I beheld both of those  
blessed lights, Even as the winking of the eyes concords,

Moving unto the words their little flames.



## Paradiso: Canto XXI

Already on my Lady's face mine eyes Again were fastened, and with these my mind, And from all other purpose was withdrawn;

And she smiled not; but "If I were to smile," She unto me began, "thou wouldst become Like Semele, when she was turned to ashes.

Because my beauty, that along the stairs Of the eternal palace more enkindles, As thou hast seen, the farther we ascend,

If it were tempered not, is so resplendent That all thy mortal power in its effulgence Would seem a leaflet that the thunder crushes.

We are uplifted to the seventh splendour, That underneath the burning Lion's breast Now radiates downward mingled with his power.

Fix in direction of thine eyes the mind, And make of them a mirror for the figure That in this mirror shall appear to thee."

He who could know what was the pasturage My sight had in that blessed countenance, When I transferred me to another care,

Would recognize how grateful was to me Obedience unto my celestial escort, By counterpoising one side with the other. Within the crystal which, around the world Revolving, bears the name of its dear leader, Under whom every wickedness lay dead,

Coloured like gold, on which the sunshine gleams, A stairway I beheld to such a height Uplifted, that mine eye pursued it not.

Likewise beheld I down the steps descending So many splendours, that I thought each light That in the heaven appears was there diffused.

And as accordant with their natural custom The rooks together at the break of day Bestir themselves to warm their feathers cold;

Then some of them fly off without return, Others come back to where they started from, And others, wheeling round, still keep at home;

Such fashion it appeared to me was there Within the sparkling that together came, As soon as on a certain step it struck,

And that which nearest unto us remained Became so clear, that in my thought I said, "Well I perceive the love thou showest me;

But she, from whom I wait the how and when Of speech and silence, standeth still; whence I Against desire do well if I ask not."

She thereupon, who saw my silentness In the sight of Him who seeth everything, Said unto me, "Let loose thy warm desire."

And I began: "No merit of my own Renders me worthy of response from thee; But for her sake who granteth me the asking,

Thou blessed life that dost remain concealed In thy beatitude, make known to me The cause which draweth thee so near my side;

And tell me why is silent in this wheel The dulcet symphony of Paradise, That through the rest below sounds so devoutly."

"Thou hast thy hearing mortal as thy sight," It answer made to me; "they sing not here, For the same cause that Beatrice has not smiled.

Thus far adown the holy stairway's steps Have I descended but to give thee welcome With words, and with the light that mantles me;

Nor did more love cause me to be more ready, For love as much and more up there is burning, As doth the flaming manifest to thee.

But the high charity, that makes us servants Prompt to the counsel which controls the world, Allotteth here, even as thou dost observe."

"I see full well," said I, "O sacred lamp! How love unfettered in this court sufficeth To follow the eternal Providence;

But this is what seems hard for me to see, Wherefore predestinate wast thou alone Unto this office from among thy consorts."

No sooner had I come to the last word, Than of its middle made the light a centre, Whirling itself about like a swift millstone.

When answer made the love that was therein: "On me directed is a light divine, Piercing through this in which I am embosomed,

Of which the virtue with my sight conjoined Lifts me above myself so far, I see The supreme essence from which this is drawn.

Hence comes the joyfulness with which I flame, For to my sight, as far as it is clear, The clearness of the flame I equal make.

But that soul in the heaven which is most pure, That seraph which his eye on God most fixes, Could this demand of thine not satisfy;

Because so deeply sinks in the abyss Of the eternal statute what thou askest, From all created sight it is cut off.

And to the mortal world, when thou returnest, This carry back, that it may not presume Longer tow'rd such a goal to move its feet.

The mind, that shineth here, on earth doth smoke; From this observe  
how can it do below That which it cannot though the heaven assume it?"

Such limit did its words prescribe to me, The question I relinquished,  
and restricted Myself to ask it humbly who it was.

"Between two shores of Italy rise cliffs, And not far distant from thy  
native place, So high, the thunders far below them sound,

And form a ridge that Catria is called, 'Neath which is consecrate a  
hermitage Wont to be dedicate to worship only."

Thus unto me the third speech recommenced, And then, continuing, it  
said: "Therein Unto God's service I became so steadfast,

That feeding only on the juice of olives Lightly I passed away the  
heats and frosts, Contented in my thoughts contemplative.

That cloister used to render to these heavens Abundantly, and now is  
empty grown, So that perforce it soon must be revealed.

I in that place was Peter Damiano; And Peter the Sinner was I in the  
house Of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore.

Little of mortal life remained to me, When I was called and dragged  
forth to the hat Which shifteth evermore from bad to worse.

Came Cephas, and the mighty Vessel came Of the Holy Spirit, meagre  
and barefooted, Taking the food of any hostelry.

Now some one to support them on each side The modern shepherds  
need, and some to lead them, So heavy are they, and to hold their trains.

They cover up their palfreys with their cloaks, So that two beasts go  
underneath one skin; O Patience, that dost tolerate so much!"

At this voice saw I many little flames From step to step descending  
and revolving, And every revolution made them fairer.

Round about this one came they and stood still, And a cry uttered of so  
loud a sound, It here could find no parallel, nor I

Distinguished it, the thunder so o'ercame me.

## Paradiso: Canto XXII

Oppressed with stupor, I unto my guide Turned like a little child who  
always runs For refuge there where he confideth most;

And she, even as a mother who straightway Gives comfort to her pale  
and breathless boy With voice whose wont it is to reassure him,

Said to me: "Knowest thou not thou art in heaven, And knowest thou  
not that heaven is holy all And what is done here cometh from good zeal?"

After what wise the singing would have changed thee And I by smiling,  
thou canst now imagine, Since that the cry has startled thee so much,

In which if thou hadst understood its prayers Already would be known  
to thee the vengeance Which thou shalt look upon before thou diest.

The sword above here smiteth not in haste Nor tardily, howe'er it seem  
to him Who fearing or desiring waits for it.

But turn thee round towards the others now, For very illustrious spirits  
shalt thou see, If thou thy sight directest as I say."

As it seemed good to her mine eyes I turned, And saw a hundred  
spherules that together With mutual rays each other more embellished.

I stood as one who in himself represses The point of his desire, and  
ventures not To question, he so feareth the too much.

And now the largest and most luculent Among those pearls came  
forward, that it might Make my desire concerning it content.

Within it then I heard: "If thou couldst see Even as myself the charity  
that burns Among us, thy conceits would be expressed;

But, that by waiting thou mayst not come late To the high end, I will  
make answer even Unto the thought of which thou art so chary.

That mountain on whose slope Cassino stands Was frequented of old  
upon its summit By a deluded folk and ill-disposed;

And I am he who first up thither bore The name of Him who brought  
upon the earth The truth that so much sublimateth us.

And such abundant grace upon me shone That all the neighbouring  
towns I drew away From the impious worship that seduced the world.

These other fires, each one of them, were men Contemplative,  
enkindled by that heat Which maketh holy flowers and fruits spring up.



Here is Macarius, here is Romualdus, Here are my brethren, who  
within the cloisters Their footsteps stayed and kept a steadfast heart."

And I to him: "The affection which thou showest Speaking with me,  
and the good countenance Which I behold and note in all your ardours,

In me have so my confidence dilated As the sun doth the rose, when it  
becomes As far unfolded as it hath the power.

Therefore I pray, and thou assure me, father, If I may so much grace  
receive, that I May thee behold with countenance unveiled."

He thereupon: "Brother, thy high desire In the remotest sphere shall be  
fulfilled, Where are fulfilled all others and my own.

There perfect is, and ripened, and complete, Every desire; within that  
one alone Is every part where it has always been;

For it is not in space, nor turns on poles, And unto it our stairway  
reaches up, Whence thus from out thy sight it steals away.

Up to that height the Patriarch Jacob saw it Extending its supernal part,  
what time So thronged with angels it appeared to him.

But to ascend it now no one uplifts His feet from off the earth, and  
now my Rule Below remaineth for mere waste of paper.

The walls that used of old to be an Abbey Are changed to dens of  
robbers, and the cowls Are sacks filled full of miserable flour.

But heavy usury is not taken up So much against God's pleasure as  
that fruit Which maketh so insane the heart of monks;

For whatsoever hath the Church in keeping Is for the folk that ask it in  
God's name, Not for one's kindred or for something worse.

The flesh of mortals is so very soft, That good beginnings down below  
suffice not From springing of the oak to bearing acorns.

Peter began with neither gold nor silver, And I with orison and  
abstinence, And Francis with humility his convent.

And if thou lookest at each one's beginning, And then regardest  
whither he has run, Thou shalt behold the white changed into brown.

In verity the Jordan backward turned, And the sea's fleeing, when God  
willed were more A wonder to behold, than succour here."

Thus unto me he said; and then withdrew To his own band, and the  
band closed together; Then like a whirlwind all was upward rapt.

The gentle Lady urged me on behind them Up o'er that stairway by a single sign, So did her virtue overcome my nature;

Nor here below, where one goes up and down By natural law, was motion e'er so swift That it could be compared unto my wing.

Reader, as I may unto that devout Triumph return, on whose account I often For my transgressions weep and beat my breast,--

Thou hadst not thrust thy finger in the fire And drawn it out again, before I saw The sign that follows Taurus, and was in it.

O glorious stars, O light impregnated With mighty virtue, from which I acknowledge All of my genius, whatsoe'er it be,

With you was born, and hid himself with you, He who is father of all mortal life, When first I tasted of the Tuscan air;

And then when grace was freely given to me To enter the high wheel which turns you round, Your region was allotted unto me.

To you devoutly at this hour my soul Is sighing, that it virtue may acquire For the stern pass that draws it to itself.

"Thou art so near unto the last salvation," Thus Beatrice began, "thou oughtest now To have thine eyes unclouded and acute;

And therefore, ere thou enter farther in, Look down once more, and see how vast a world Thou hast already put beneath thy feet;

So that thy heart, as jocund as it may, Present itself to the triumphant throng That comes rejoicing through this rounded ether."

I with my sight returned through one and all The sevenfold spheres, and I beheld this globe Such that I smiled at its ignoble semblance;

And that opinion I approve as best Which doth account it least; and he who thinks Of something else may truly be called just.

I saw the daughter of Latona shining Without that shadow, which to me was cause That once I had believed her rare and dense.

The aspect of thy son, Hyperion, Here I sustained, and saw how move themselves Around and near him Maia and Dione.

Thence there appeared the temperateness of Jove 'Twixt son and father, and to me was clear The change that of their whereabouts they make;

And all the seven made manifest to me How great they are, and eke how swift they are, And how they are in distant habitations.

The threshing-floor that maketh us so proud, To me revolving with the  
eternal Twins, Was all apparent made from hill to harbour!  
Then to the beauteous eyes mine eyes I turned.

## Paradiso: Canto XXIII

Even as a bird, 'mid the beloved leaves, Quiet upon the nest of her sweet brood Throughout the night, that hideth all things from us,

Who, that she may behold their longed-for looks And find the food wherewith to nourish them, In which, to her, grave labours grateful are,

Anticipates the time on open spray And with an ardent longing waits the sun, Gazing intent as soon as breaks the dawn:

Even thus my Lady standing was, erect And vigilant, turned round towards the zone Underneath which the sun displays less haste;

So that beholding her distraught and wistful, Such I became as he is who desiring For something yearns, and hoping is appeased.

But brief the space from one When to the other; Of my awaiting, say I, and the seeing The welkin grow resplendent more and more.

And Beatrice exclaimed: "Behold the hosts Of Christ's triumphal march, and all the fruit Harvested by the rolling of these spheres!"

It seemed to me her face was all aflame; And eyes she had so full of ecstasy That I must needs pass on without describing.

As when in nights serene of the full moon Smiles Trivia among the nymphs eternal Who paint the firmament through all its gulfs,

Saw I, above the myriads of lamps, A Sun that one and all of them enkindled, E'en as our own doth the supernal sights,

And through the living light transparent shone The lucent substance so intensely clear Into my sight, that I sustained it not.

O Beatrice, thou gentle guide and dear! To me she said: "What overmasters thee A virtue is from which naught shields itself.

There are the wisdom and the omnipotence That oped the thoroughfares 'twixt heaven and earth, For which there erst had been so long a yearning."

As fire from out a cloud unlocks itself, Dilating so it finds not room therein, And down, against its nature, falls to earth,

So did my mind, among those aliments Becoming larger, issue from itself, And that which it became cannot remember.

"Open thine eyes, and look at what I am: Thou hast beheld such things,

that strong enough Hast thou become to tolerate my smile."

I was as one who still retains the feeling  
Of a forgotten vision, and  
endeavours In vain to bring it back into his mind,

When I this invitation heard, deserving  
Of so much gratitude, it never  
fades Out of the book that chronicles the past.

If at this moment sounded all the tongues  
That Polyhymnia and her  
sisters made Most lubrical with their delicious milk,

To aid me, to a thousandth of the truth  
It would not reach, singing the  
holy smile And how the holy aspect it illumed.

And therefore, representing Paradise,  
The sacred poem must perforce  
leap over, Even as a man who finds his way cut off;

But whoso thinketh of the ponderous theme,  
And of the mortal  
shoulder laden with it, Should blame it not, if under this it tremble.

It is no passage for a little boat  
This which goes cleaving the audacious  
prow, Nor for a pilot who would spare himself.

"Why doth my face so much enamour thee,  
That to the garden fair  
thou turnest not, Which under the rays of Christ is blossoming?"

There is the Rose in which the Word Divine  
Became incarnate; there  
the lilies are By whose perfume the good way was discovered."

Thus Beatrice; and I, who to her counsels  
Was wholly ready, once  
again betook me Unto the battle of the feeble brows.

As in the sunshine, that unsullied streams  
Through fractured cloud, ere  
now a meadow of flowers Mine eyes with shadow covered o'er have seen,

So troops of splendours manifold I saw  
Illumined from above with  
burning rays, Beholding not the source of the effulgence.

O power benignant that dost so imprint them!  
Thou didst exalt thyself  
to give more scope There to mine eyes, that were not strong enough.

The name of that fair flower I e'er invoke  
Morning and evening utterly  
enthralled My soul to gaze upon the greater fire.

And when in both mine eyes depicted were  
The glory and greatness of  
the living star Which there excelleth, as it here excelled,

Athwart the heavens a little torch descended  
Formed in a circle like a  
coronal, And cinctured it, and whirled itself about it.

Whatever melody most sweetly soundeth  
On earth, and to itself most

draws the soul, Would seem a cloud that, rent asunder, thunders,

Compared unto the sounding of that lyre Wherewith was crowned the sapphire beautiful, Which gives the clearest heaven its sapphire hue.

"I am Angelic Love, that circle round The joy sublime which breathes from out the womb That was the hostelry of our Desire;

And I shall circle, Lady of Heaven, while Thou followest thy Son, and mak'st diviner The sphere supreme, because thou enterest there."

Thus did the circulated melody Seal itself up; and all the other lights Were making to resound the name of Mary.

The regal mantle of the volumes all Of that world, which most fervid is and living With breath of God and with his works and ways,

Extended over us its inner border, So very distant, that the semblance of it There where I was not yet appeared to me.

Therefore mine eyes did not possess the power Of following the incoronated flame, Which mounted upward near to its own seed.

And as a little child, that towards its mother Stretches its arms, when it the milk has taken, Through impulse kindled into outward flame,

Each of those gleams of whiteness upward reached So with its summit, that the deep affection They had for Mary was revealed to me.

Thereafter they remained there in my sight, 'Regina coeli' singing with such sweetness, That ne'er from me has the delight departed.

O, what exuberance is garnered up Within those richest coffers, which had been Good husbandmen for sowing here below!

There they enjoy and live upon the treasure Which was acquired while weeping in the exile Of Babylon, wherein the gold was left.

There triumpheth, beneath the exalted Son Of God and Mary, in his victory, Both with the ancient council and the new,

He who doth keep the keys of such a glory.

## Paradiso: Canto XXIV

"O company elect to the great supper Of the Lamb benedight, who feedeth you So that for ever full is your desire,

If by the grace of God this man foretaste Something of that which falleth from your table, Or ever death prescribe to him the time,

Direct your mind to his immense desire, And him somewhat bedew; ye drinking are For ever at the fount whence comes his thought."

Thus Beatrice; and those souls beatified Transformed themselves to spheres on steadfast poles, Flaming intensely in the guise of comets.

And as the wheels in works of horologes Revolve so that the first to the beholder Motionless seems, and the last one to fly,

So in like manner did those carols, dancing In different measure, of their affluence Give me the gauge, as they were swift or slow.

From that one which I noted of most beauty Beheld I issue forth a fire so happy That none it left there of a greater brightness;

And around Beatrice three several times It whirled itself with so divine a song, My fantasy repeats it not to me;

Therefore the pen skips, and I write it not, Since our imagination for such folds, Much more our speech, is of a tint too glaring.

"O holy sister mine, who us implorest With such devotion, by thine ardent love Thou dost unbind me from that beautiful sphere!"

Thereafter, having stopped, the blessed fire Unto my Lady did direct its breath, Which spake in fashion as I here have said.

And she: "O light eterne of the great man To whom our Lord delivered up the keys He carried down of this miraculous joy,

This one examine on points light and grave, As good beseemeth thee, about the Faith By means of which thou on the sea didst walk.

If he love well, and hope well, and believe, From thee 'tis hid not; for thou hast thy sight There where depicted everything is seen.

But since this kingdom has made citizens By means of the true Faith, to glorify it 'Tis well he have the chance to speak thereof."

As baccalaureate arms himself, and speaks not Until the master doth propose the question, To argue it, and not to terminate it,

So did I arm myself with every reason, While she was speaking, that I might be ready For such a questioner and such profession.

"Say, thou good Christian; manifest thyself; What is the Faith?" Whereat I raised my brow Unto that light wherefrom was this breathed forth.

Then turned I round to Beatrice, and she Prompt signals made to me that I should pour The water forth from my internal fountain.

"May grace, that suffers me to make confession," Began I, "to the great centurion, Cause my conceptions all to be explicit!"

And I continued: "As the truthful pen, Father, of thy dear brother wrote of it, Who put with thee Rome into the good way,

Faith is the substance of the things we hope for, And evidence of those that are not seen; And this appears to me its quiddity."

Then heard I: "Very rightly thou perceivest, If well thou understandest why he placed it With substances and then with evidences."

And I thereafterward: "The things profound, That here vouchsafe to me their apparition, Unto all eyes below are so concealed,

That they exist there only in belief, Upon the which is founded the high hope, And hence it takes the nature of a substance.

And it behoveth us from this belief To reason without having other sight, And hence it has the nature of evidence."

Then heard I: "If whatever is acquired Below by doctrine were thus understood, No sophist's subtlety would there find place."

Thus was breathed forth from that enkindled love; Then added: "Very well has been gone over Already of this coin the alloy and weight;

But tell me if thou hast it in thy purse?" And I: "Yes, both so shining and so round That in its stamp there is no peradventure."

Thereafter issued from the light profound That there resplendent was: "This precious jewel, Upon the which is every virtue founded,

Whence hadst thou it?" And I: "The large outpouring Of Holy Spirit, which has been diffused Upon the ancient parchments and the new,

A syllogism is, which proved it to me With such acuteness, that, compared therewith, All demonstration seems to me obtuse."

And then I heard: "The ancient and the new Postulates, that to thee are



so conclusive, Why dost thou take them for the word divine?"

And I: "The proofs, which show the truth to me, Are the works subsequent, whereunto Nature Ne'er heated iron yet, nor anvil beat."

'Twas answered me: "Say, who assureth thee That those works ever were? the thing itself That must be proved, nought else to thee affirms it."

"Were the world to Christianity converted," I said, "withouten miracles, this one Is such, the rest are not its hundredth part;

Because that poor and fasting thou didst enter Into the field to sow there the good plant, Which was a vine and has become a thorn!"

This being finished, the high, holy Court Resounded through the spheres, "One God we praise!" In melody that there above is chanted.

And then that Baron, who from branch to branch, Examining, had thus conducted me, Till the extremest leaves we were approaching,

Again began: "The Grace that dallying Plays with thine intellect thy mouth has opened, Up to this point, as it should opened be,

So that I do approve what forth emerged; But now thou must express what thou believest, And whence to thy belief it was presented."

"O holy father, spirit who beholdest What thou believedst so that thou o'ercamest, Towards the sepulchre, more youthful feet,"

Began I, "thou dost wish me in this place The form to manifest of my prompt belief, And likewise thou the cause thereof demandest.

And I respond: In one God I believe, Sole and eterne, who moveth all the heavens With love and with desire, himself unmoved;

And of such faith not only have I proofs Physical and metaphysical, but gives them Likewise the truth that from this place rains down

Through Moses, through the Prophets and the Psalms, Through the Evangel, and through you, who wrote After the fiery Spirit sanctified you;

In Persons three eterne believe, and these One essence I believe, so one and trine They bear conjunction both with 'sunt' and 'est.'

With the profound condition and divine Which now I touch upon, doth stamp my mind Ofttimes the doctrine evangelical.

This the beginning is, this is the spark Which afterwards dilates to vivid flame, And, like a star in heaven, is sparkling in me."

Even as a lord who hears what pleaseth him His servant straight

embraces, gratulating For the good news as soon as he is silent;

So, giving me its benediction, singing, Three times encircled me, when  
I was silent, The apostolic light, at whose command

I spoken had, in speaking I so pleased him.

## Paradiso: Canto XXV

If e'er it happen that the Poem Sacred, To which both heaven and earth have set their hand, So that it many a year hath made me lean,

O'ercome the cruelty that bars me out From the fair sheepfold, where a lamb I slumbered, An enemy to the wolves that war upon it,

With other voice forthwith, with other fleece Poet will I return, and at my font Baptismal will I take the laurel crown;

Because into the Faith that maketh known All souls to God there entered I, and then Peter for her sake thus my brow encircled.

Thereafterward towards us moved a light Out of that band whence issued the first-fruits Which of his vicars Christ behind him left,

And then my Lady, full of ecstasy, Said unto me: "Look, look! behold the Baron For whom below Galicia is frequented."

In the same way as, when a dove alights Near his companion, both of them pour forth, Circling about and murmuring, their affection,

So one beheld I by the other grand Prince glorified to be with welcome greeted, Lauding the food that there above is eaten.

But when their gratulations were complete, Silently 'coram me' each one stood still, So incandescent it o'ercame my sight.

Smiling thereafterwards, said Beatrice: "Illustrious life, by whom the benefactions Of our Basilica have been described,

Make Hope resound within this altitude; Thou knowest as oft thou dost personify it As Jesus to the three gave greater clearness."--

"Lift up thy head, and make thyself assured; For what comes hither from the mortal world Must needs be ripened in our radiance."

This comfort came to me from the second fire; Wherefore mine eyes I lifted to the hills, Which bent them down before with too great weight.

"Since, through his grace, our Emperor wills that thou Shouldst find thee face to face, before thy death, In the most secret chamber, with his Counts,

So that, the truth beholden of this court, Hope, which below there rightfully enamours, Thereby thou strengthen in thyself and others,

Say what it is, and how is flowering with it Thy mind, and say from

whence it came to thee." Thus did the second light again continue.

And the Compassionate, who piloted The plumage of my wings in such high flight, Did in reply anticipate me thus:

"No child whatever the Church Militant Of greater hope possesses, as is written In that Sun which irradiates all our band;

Therefore it is conceded him from Egypt To come into Jerusalem to see, Or ever yet his warfare be completed.

The two remaining points, that not for knowledge Have been demanded, but that he report How much this virtue unto thee is pleasing,

To him I leave; for hard he will not find them, Nor of self-praise; and let him answer them; And may the grace of God in this assist him!"

As a disciple, who his teacher follows, Ready and willing, where he is expert, That his proficiency may be displayed,

"Hope," said I, "is the certain expectation Of future glory, which is the effect Of grace divine and merit precedent.

From many stars this light comes unto me; But he instilled it first into my heart Who was chief singer unto the chief captain.

'Sperent in te,' in the high Theody He sayeth, 'those who know thy name;' and who Knoweth it not, if he my faith possess?

Thou didst instil me, then, with his instilling In the Epistle, so that I am full, And upon others rain again your rain."

While I was speaking, in the living bosom Of that combustion quivered an effulgence, Sudden and frequent, in the guise of lightning;

Then breathed: "The love wherewith I am inflamed Towards the virtue still which followed me Unto the palm and issue of the field,

Wills that I breathe to thee that thou delight In her; and grateful to me is thy telling Whatever things Hope promises to thee."

And I: "The ancient Scriptures and the new The mark establish, and this shows it me, Of all the souls whom God hath made his friends.

Isaiah saith, that each one garmented In his own land shall be with twofold garments, And his own land is this delightful life.

Thy brother, too, far more explicitly, There where he treateth of the robes of white, This revelation manifests to us."

And first, and near the ending of these words, "Sperent in te" from

over us was heard, To which responsive answered all the carols.

Thereafterward a light among them brightened, So that, if Cancer one such crystal had, Winter would have a month of one sole day.

And as uprises, goes, and enters the dance A winsome maiden, only to do honour To the new bride, and not from any failing,

Even thus did I behold the brightened splendour Approach the two, who in a wheel revolved As was beseeming to their ardent love.

Into the song and music there it entered; And fixed on them my Lady kept her look, Even as a bride silent and motionless.

"This is the one who lay upon the breast Of him our Pelican; and this is he To the great office from the cross elected."

My Lady thus; but therefore none the more Did move her sight from its attentive gaze Before or afterward these words of hers.

Even as a man who gazes, and endeavours To see the eclipsing of the sun a little, And who, by seeing, sightless doth become,

So I became before that latest fire, While it was said, "Why dost thou daze thyself To see a thing which here hath no existence?"

Earth in the earth my body is, and shall be With all the others there, until our number With the eternal proposition tallies.

With the two garments in the blessed cloister Are the two lights alone that have ascended: And this shalt thou take back into your world."

And at this utterance the flaming circle Grew quiet, with the dulcet intermingling Of sound that by the trinal breath was made,

As to escape from danger or fatigue The oars that erst were in the water beaten Are all suspended at a whistle's sound.

Ah, how much in my mind was I disturbed, When I turned round to look on Beatrice, That her I could not see, although I was

Close at her side and in the Happy World!

## Paradiso: Canto XXVI

While I was doubting for my vision quenched, Out of the flame  
refulgent that had quenched it Issued a breathing, that attentive made me,

Saying: "While thou recoverest the sense Of seeing which in me thou  
hast consumed, 'Tis well that speaking thou shouldst compensate it.

Begin then, and declare to what thy soul Is aimed, and count it for a  
certainty, Sight is in thee bewildered and not dead;

Because the Lady, who through this divine Region conducteth thee,  
has in her look The power the hand of Ananias had."

I said: "As pleaseth her, or soon or late Let the cure come to eyes that  
portals were When she with fire I ever burn with entered.

The Good, that gives contentment to this Court, The Alpha and Omega  
is of all The writing that love reads me low or loud."

The selfsame voice, that taken had from me The terror of the sudden  
dazzlement, To speak still farther put it in my thought;

And said: "In verity with finer sieve Behoveth thee to sift; thee it  
behoveth To say who aimed thy bow at such a target."

And I: "By philosophic arguments, And by authority that hence  
descends, Such love must needs imprint itself in me;

For Good, so far as good, when comprehended Doth straight enkindle  
love, and so much greater As more of goodness in itself it holds;

Then to that Essence (whose is such advantage That every good which  
out of it is found Is nothing but a ray of its own light)

More than elsewhere must the mind be moved Of every one, in  
loving, who discerns The truth in which this evidence is founded.

Such truth he to my intellect reveals Who demonstrates to me the  
primal love Of all the sempiternal substances.

The voice reveals it of the truthful Author, Who says to Moses,  
speaking of Himself, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.'

Thou too revealest it to me, beginning The loud Evangel, that  
proclaims the secret Of heaven to earth above all other edict."

And I heard say: "By human intellect And by authority concordant  
with it, Of all thy loves reserve for God the highest.

But say again if other cords thou feelest, Draw thee towards Him, that thou mayst proclaim With how many teeth this love is biting thee."

The holy purpose of the Eagle of Christ Not latent was, nay, rather I perceived Whither he fain would my profession lead.

Therefore I recommenced: "All of those bites Which have the power to turn the heart to God Unto my charity have been concurrent.

The being of the world, and my own being, The death which He endured that I may live, And that which all the faithful hope, as I do,

With the forementioned vivid consciousness Have drawn me from the sea of love perverse, And of the right have placed me on the shore.

The leaves, wherewith embowered is all the garden Of the Eternal Gardener, do I love As much as he has granted them of good."

As soon as I had ceased, a song most sweet Throughout the heaven resounded, and my Lady Said with the others, "Holy, holy, holy!"

And as at some keen light one wakes from sleep By reason of the visual spirit that runs Unto the splendour passed from coat to coat,

And he who wakes abhorreth what he sees, So all unconscious is his sudden waking, Until the judgment cometh to his aid,

So from before mine eyes did Beatrice Chase every mote with radiance of her own, That cast its light a thousand miles and more.

Whence better after than before I saw, And in a kind of wonderment I asked About a fourth light that I saw with us.

And said my Lady: "There within those rays Gazes upon its Maker the first soul That ever the first virtue did create."

Even as the bough that downward bends its top At transit of the wind, and then is lifted By its own virtue, which inclines it upward,

Likewise did I, the while that she was speaking, Being amazed, and then I was made bold By a desire to speak wherewith I burned.

And I began: "O apple, that mature Alone hast been produced, O ancient father, To whom each wife is daughter and daughter-in-law,

Devoutly as I can I supplicate thee That thou wouldst speak to me; thou seest my wish; And I, to hear thee quickly, speak it not."

Sometimes an animal, when covered, struggles So that his impulse needs must be apparent, By reason of the wrappage following it;

And in like manner the primeval soul Made clear to me athwart its covering  
How jubilant it was to give me pleasure.

Then breathed: "Without thy uttering it to me, Thine inclination better  
I discern Than thou whatever thing is surest to thee;

For I behold it in the truthful mirror, That of Himself all things  
parhelion makes, And none makes Him parhelion of itself.

Thou fain wouldst hear how long ago God placed me Within the lofty  
garden, where this Lady Unto so long a stairway thee disposed.

And how long to mine eyes it was a pleasure, And of the great disdain  
the proper cause, And the language that I used and that I made.

Now, son of mine, the tasting of the tree Not in itself was cause of so  
great exile, But solely the o'erstepping of the bounds.

There, whence thy Lady moved Virgilius, Four thousand and three  
hundred and two circuits Made by the sun, this Council I desired;

And him I saw return to all the lights Of his highway nine hundred  
times and thirty, Whilst I upon the earth was tarrying.

The language that I spake was quite extinct Before that in the work  
interminable The people under Nimrod were employed;

For nevermore result of reasoning (Because of human pleasure that  
doth change, Obedient to the heavens) was durable.

A natural action is it that man speaks; But whether thus or thus, doth  
nature leave To your own art, as seemeth best to you.

Ere I descended to the infernal anguish, 'El' was on earth the name of  
the Chief Good, From whom comes all the joy that wraps me round

'Eli' he then was called, and that is proper, Because the use of men is  
like a leaf On bough, which goeth and another cometh.

Upon the mount that highest o'er the wave Rises was I, in life or pure  
or sinful, From the first hour to that which is the second,

As the sun changes quadrant, to the sixth."



## Paradiso: Canto XXVII

"Glory be to the Father, to the Son, And Holy Ghost!" all Paradise began, So that the melody inebriate made me.

What I beheld seemed unto me a smile Of the universe; for my inebriation Found entrance through the hearing and the sight.

O joy! O gladness inexpressible! O perfect life of love and peacefulness! O riches without hankering secure!

Before mine eyes were standing the four torches Enkindled, and the one that first had come Began to make itself more luminous;

And even such in semblance it became As Jupiter would become, if he and Mars Were birds, and they should interchange their feathers.

That Providence, which here distributeth Season and service, in the blessed choir Had silence upon every side imposed.

When I heard say: "If I my colour change, Marvel not at it; for while I am speaking Thou shalt behold all these their colour change.

He who usurps upon the earth my place, My place, my place, which vacant has become Before the presence of the Son of God,

Has of my cemetery made a sewer Of blood and stench, whereby the Perverse One, Who fell from here, below there is appeased!"

With the same colour which, through sun adverse, Painteth the clouds at evening or at morn, Beheld I then the whole of heaven suffused.

And as a modest woman, who abides Sure of herself, and at another's failing, From listening only, timorous becomes,

Even thus did Beatrice change countenance; And I believe in heaven was such eclipse, When suffered the supreme Omnipotence;

Thereafterward proceeded forth his words With voice so much transmuted from itself, The very countenance was not more changed.

"The spouse of Christ has never nurtured been On blood of mine, of Linus and of Cletus, To be made use of in acquest of gold;

But in acquest of this delightful life Sixtus and Pius, Urban and Calixtus, After much lamentation, shed their blood.

Our purpose was not, that on the right hand Of our successors should in part be seated The Christian folk, in part upon the other;

Nor that the keys which were to me confided Should e'er become the  
escutcheon on a banner, That should wage war on those who are baptized;

Nor I be made the figure of a seal To privileges venal and mendacious,  
Whereat I often redden and flash with fire.

In garb of shepherds the rapacious wolves Are seen from here above  
o'er all the pastures! O wrath of God, why dost thou slumber still?

To drink our blood the Caorsines and Gascons Are making ready. O  
thou good beginning, Unto how vile an end must thou needs fall!

But the high Providence, that with Scipio At Rome the glory of the  
world defended, Will speedily bring aid, as I conceive;

And thou, my son, who by thy mortal weight Shalt down return again,  
open thy mouth; What I conceal not, do not thou conceal."

As with its frozen vapours downward falls In flakes our atmosphere,  
what time the horn Of the celestial Goat doth touch the sun,

Upward in such array saw I the ether Become, and flaked with the  
triumphant vapours, Which there together with us had remained.

My sight was following up their semblances, And followed till the  
medium, by excess, The passing farther onward took from it;

Whereat the Lady, who beheld me freed From gazing upward, said to  
me: "Cast down Thy sight, and see how far thou art turned round."

Since the first time that I had downward looked, I saw that I had  
moved through the whole arc Which the first climate makes from midst to  
end;

So that I saw the mad track of Ulysses Past Gades, and this side, well  
nigh the shore Whereon became Europa a sweet burden.

And of this threshing-floor the site to me Were more unveiled, but the  
sun was proceeding Under my feet, a sign and more removed.

My mind enamoured, which is dallying At all times with my Lady, to  
bring back To her mine eyes was more than ever ardent.

And if or Art or Nature has made bait To catch the eyes and so possess  
the mind, In human flesh or in its portraiture,

All joined together would appear as nought To the divine delight  
which shone upon me When to her smiling face I turned me round.

The virtue that her look endowed me with From the fair nest of Leda

tore me forth, And up into the swiftest heaven impelled me.

Its parts exceeding full of life and lofty Are all so uniform, I cannot say Which Beatrice selected for my place.

But she, who was aware of my desire, Began, the while she smiled so joyously That God seemed in her countenance to rejoice:

"The nature of that motion, which keeps quiet The centre and all the rest about it moves, From hence begins as from its starting point.

And in this heaven there is no other Where Than in the Mind Divine, wherein is kindled The love that turns it, and the power it rains.

Within a circle light and love embrace it, Even as this doth the others, and that precinct He who encircles it alone controls.

Its motion is not by another meted, But all the others measured are by this, As ten is by the half and by the fifth.

And in what manner time in such a pot May have its roots, and in the rest its leaves, Now unto thee can manifest be made.

O Covetousness, that mortals dost ingulf Beneath thee so, that no one hath the power Of drawing back his eyes from out thy waves!

Full fairly blossoms in mankind the will; But the uninterrupted rain converts Into abortive wildings the true plums.

Fidelity and innocence are found Only in children; afterwards they both Take flight or e'er the cheeks with down are covered.

One, while he prattles still, observes the fasts, Who, when his tongue is loosed, forthwith devours Whatever food under whatever moon;

Another, while he prattles, loves and listens Unto his mother, who when speech is perfect Forthwith desires to see her in her grave.

Even thus is swarthy made the skin so white In its first aspect of the daughter fair Of him who brings the morn, and leaves the night.

Thou, that it may not be a marvel to thee, Think that on earth there is no one who governs; Whence goes astray the human family.

Ere January be unwintered wholly By the centesimal on earth neglected, Shall these supernal circles roar so loud

The tempest that has been so long awaited Shall whirl the poops about where are the prows; So that the fleet shall run its course direct,

And the true fruit shall follow on the flower."



## Paradiso: Canto XXVIII

After the truth against the present life Of miserable mortals was  
unfolded By her who doth imparadise my mind,

As in a looking-glass a taper's flame He sees who from behind is  
lighted by it, Before he has it in his sight or thought,

And turns him round to see if so the glass Tell him the truth, and sees  
that it accords Therewith as doth a music with its metre,

In similar wise my memory recollecteth That I did, looking into those  
fair eyes, Of which Love made the springes to ensnare me.

And as I turned me round, and mine were touched By that which is  
apparent in that volume, Whenever on its gyre we gaze intent,

A point beheld I, that was raying out Light so acute, the sight which it  
enkindles Must close perforce before such great acuteness.

And whatsoever star seems smallest here Would seem to be a moon, if  
placed beside it. As one star with another star is placed.

Perhaps at such a distance as appears A halo cincturing the light that  
paints it, When densest is the vapour that sustains it,

Thus distant round the point a circle of fire So swiftly whirled, that it  
would have surpassed Whatever motion soonest girds the world;

And this was by another circumcinct, That by a third, the third then by  
a fourth, By a fifth the fourth, and then by a sixth the fifth;

The seventh followed thereupon in width So ample now, that Juno's  
messenger Entire would be too narrow to contain it.

Even so the eighth and ninth; and every one More slowly moved,  
according as it was In number distant farther from the first.

And that one had its flame most crystalline From which less distant  
was the stainless spark, I think because more with its truth imbued.

My Lady, who in my anxiety Beheld me much perplexed, said: "From  
that point Dependent is the heaven and nature all.

Behold that circle most conjoined to it, And know thou, that its motion  
is so swift Through burning love whereby it is spurred on."

And I to her: "If the world were arranged In the order which I see in  
yonder wheels, What's set before me would have satisfied me;

But in the world of sense we can perceive That evermore the circles  
are diviner As they are from the centre more remote

Wherefore if my desire is to be ended In this miraculous and angelic  
temple, That has for confines only love and light,

To hear behoves me still how the example And the exemplar go not in  
one fashion, Since for myself in vain I contemplate it."

"If thine own fingers unto such a knot Be insufficient, it is no great  
wonder, So hard hath it become for want of trying."

My Lady thus; then said she: "Do thou take What I shall tell thee, if  
thou wouldst be sated, And exercise on that thy subtlety.

The circles corporal are wide and narrow According to the more or  
less of virtue Which is distributed through all their parts.

The greater goodness works the greater weal, The greater weal the  
greater body holds, If perfect equally are all its parts.

Therefore this one which sweeps along with it The universe sublime,  
doth correspond Unto the circle which most loves and knows.

On which account, if thou unto the virtue Apply thy measure, not to  
the appearance Of substances that unto thee seem round,

Thou wilt behold a marvellous agreement, Of more to greater, and of  
less to smaller, In every heaven, with its Intelligence."

Even as remaineth splendid and serene The hemisphere of air, when  
Boreas Is blowing from that cheek where he is mildest,

Because is purified and resolved the rack That erst disturbed it, till the  
welkin laughs With all the beauties of its pageantry;

Thus did I likewise, after that my Lady Had me provided with her  
clear response, And like a star in heaven the truth was seen.

And soon as to a stop her words had come, Not otherwise does iron  
scintillate When molten, than those circles scintillated.

Their coruscation all the sparks repeated, And they so many were, their  
number makes More millions than the doubling of the chess.

I heard them sing hosanna choir by choir To the fixed point which  
holds them at the 'Ubi,' And ever will, where they have ever been.

And she, who saw the dubious meditations Within my mind, "The  
primal circles," said, "Have shown thee Seraphim and Cherubim.

Thus rapidly they follow their own bonds, To be as like the point as most they can, And can as far as they are high in vision.

Those other Loves, that round about them go, Thrones of the countenance divine are called, Because they terminate the primal Triad.

And thou shouldst know that they all have delight As much as their own vision penetrates The Truth, in which all intellect finds rest.

From this it may be seen how blessedness Is founded in the faculty which sees, And not in that which loves, and follows next;

And of this seeing merit is the measure, Which is brought forth by grace, and by good will; Thus on from grade to grade doth it proceed.

The second Triad, which is germinating In such wise in this sempiternal spring, That no nocturnal Aries despoils,

Perpetually hosanna warbles forth With threefold melody, that sounds in three Orders of joy, with which it is intrined.

The three Divine are in this hierarchy, First the Dominions, and the Virtues next; And the third order is that of the Powers.

Then in the dances twain penultimate The Principalities and Archangels wheel; The last is wholly of angelic sports.

These orders upward all of them are gazing, And downward so prevail, that unto God They all attracted are and all attract.

And Dionysius with so great desire To contemplate these Orders set himself, He named them and distinguished them as I do.

But Gregory afterwards dissented from him; Wherefore, as soon as he unclosed his eyes Within this heaven, he at himself did smile.

And if so much of secret truth a mortal Proffered on earth, I would not have thee marvel, For he who saw it here revealed it to him,

With much more of the truth about these circles."

## Paradiso: Canto XXIX

At what time both the children of Latona, Surmounted by the Ram  
and by the Scales, Together make a zone of the horizon,

As long as from the time the zenith holds them In equipoise, till from  
that girdle both Changing their hemisphere disturb the balance,

So long, her face depicted with a smile, Did Beatrice keep silence  
while she gazed Fixedly at the point which had o'ercome me.

Then she began: "I say, and I ask not What thou dost wish to hear, for I  
have seen it Where centres every When and every 'Ubi.'

Not to acquire some good unto himself, Which is impossible, but that  
his splendour In its resplendency may say, 'Subsisto,'

In his eternity outside of time, Outside all other limits, as it pleased  
him, Into new Loves the Eternal Love unfolded.

Nor as if torpid did he lie before; For neither after nor before  
proceeded The going forth of God upon these waters.

Matter and Form unmingled and conjoined Came into being that had  
no defect, E'en as three arrows from a three-stringed bow.

And as in glass, in amber, or in crystal A sunbeam flashes so, that from  
its coming To its full being is no interval,

So from its Lord did the triform effect Ray forth into its being all  
together, Without discrimination of beginning.

Order was con-created and constructed In substances, and summit of  
the world Were those wherein the pure act was produced.

Pure potentiality held the lowest part; Midway bound potentiality with  
act Such bond that it shall never be unbound.

Jerome has written unto you of angels Created a long lapse of  
centuries Or ever yet the other world was made;

But written is this truth in many places By writers of the Holy Ghost,  
and thou Shalt see it, if thou lookest well thereat.

And even reason seeth it somewhat, For it would not concede that for  
so long Could be the motors without their perfection.

Now dost thou know both where and when these Loves Created were,  
and how; so that extinct In thy desire already are three fires.



Nor could one reach, in counting, unto twenty So swiftly, as a portion of these angels Disturbed the subject of your elements.

The rest remained, and they began this art Which thou discernest, with so great delight That never from their circling do they cease.

The occasion of the fall was the accursed Presumption of that One, whom thou hast seen By all the burden of the world constrained.

Those whom thou here beholdest modest were To recognise themselves as of that goodness Which made them apt for so much understanding;

On which account their vision was exalted By the enlightening grace and their own merit, So that they have a full and steadfast will.

I would not have thee doubt, but certain be, 'Tis meritorious to receive this grace, According as the affection opens to it.

Now round about in this consistory Much mayst thou contemplate, if these my words Be gathered up, without all further aid.

But since upon the earth, throughout your schools, They teach that such is the angelic nature That it doth hear, and recollect, and will,

More will I say, that thou mayst see unmixed The truth that is confounded there below, Equivocating in such like prelections.

These substances, since in God's countenance They jocund were, turned not away their sight From that wherefrom not anything is hidden;

Hence they have not their vision intercepted By object new, and hence they do not need To recollect, through interrupted thought.

So that below, not sleeping, people dream, Believing they speak truth, and not believing; And in the last is greater sin and shame.

Below you do not journey by one path Philosophising; so transporteth you Love of appearance and the thought thereof.

And even this above here is endured With less disdain, than when is set aside The Holy Writ, or when it is distorted.

They think not there how much of blood it costs To sow it in the world, and how he pleases Who in humility keeps close to it.

Each striveth for appearance, and doth make His own inventions; and these treated are By preachers, and the Evangel holds its peace.

One sayeth that the moon did backward turn, In the Passion of Christ,

and interpose herself So that the sunlight reached not down below;

And lies; for of its own accord the light Hid itself; whence to Spaniards and to Indians, As to the Jews, did such eclipse respond.

Florence has not so many Lapi and Bindi As fables such as these, that every year Are shouted from the pulpit back and forth,

In such wise that the lambs, who do not know, Come back from pasture fed upon the wind, And not to see the harm doth not excuse them.

Christ did not to his first disciples say, 'Go forth, and to the world preach idle tales,' But unto them a true foundation gave;

And this so loudly sounded from their lips, That, in the warfare to enkindle Faith, They made of the Evangel shields and lances.

Now men go forth with jests and drolleries To preach, and if but well the people laugh, The hood puffs out, and nothing more is asked.

But in the cowl there nestles such a bird, That, if the common people were to see it, They would perceive what pardons they confide in,

For which so great on earth has grown the folly, That, without proof of any testimony, To each indulgence they would flock together.

By this Saint Anthony his pig doth fatten, And many others, who are worse than pigs, Paying in money without mark of coinage.

But since we have digressed abundantly, Turn back thine eyes forthwith to the right path, So that the way be shortened with the time.

This nature doth so multiply itself In numbers, that there never yet was speech Nor mortal fancy that can go so far.

And if thou notest that which is revealed By Daniel, thou wilt see that in his thousands Number determinate is kept concealed.

The primal light, that all irradiates it, By modes as many is received therein, As are the splendours wherewith it is mated.

Hence, inasmuch as on the act conceptive The affection followeth, of love the sweetness Therein diversely fervid is or tepid.

The height behold now and the amplitude Of the eternal power, since it hath made Itself so many mirrors, where 'tis broken,

One in itself remaining as before."

## Paradiso: Canto XXX

Perchance six thousand miles remote from us Is glowing the sixth  
hour, and now this world Inclines its shadow almost to a level,

When the mid-heaven begins to make itself So deep to us, that here  
and there a star Ceases to shine so far down as this depth,

And as advances bright exceedingly The handmaid of the sun, the  
heaven is closed Light after light to the most beautiful;

Not otherwise the Triumph, which for ever Plays round about the point  
that vanquished me, Seeming enclosed by what itself encloses,

Little by little from my vision faded; Whereat to turn mine eyes on  
Beatrice My seeing nothing and my love constrained me.

If what has hitherto been said of her Were all concluded in a single  
praise, Scant would it be to serve the present turn.

Not only does the beauty I beheld Transcend ourselves, but truly I  
believe Its Maker only may enjoy it all.

Vanquished do I confess me by this passage More than by problem of  
his theme was ever O'ercome the comic or the tragic poet;

For as the sun the sight that trembles most, Even so the memory of that  
sweet smile My mind depriveth of its very self.

From the first day that I beheld her face In this life, to the moment of  
this look, The sequence of my song has ne'er been severed;

But now perforce this sequence must desist From following her beauty  
with my verse, As every artist at his uttermost.

Such as I leave her to a greater fame Than any of my trumpet, which is  
bringing Its arduous matter to a final close,

With voice and gesture of a perfect leader She recommenced: "We  
from the greatest body Have issued to the heaven that is pure light;

Light intellectual replete with love, Love of true good replete with  
ecstasy, Ecstasy that transcendeth every sweetness.

Here shalt thou see the one host and the other Of Paradise, and one in  
the same aspects Which at the final judgment thou shalt see."

Even as a sudden lightning that disperses The visual spirits, so that it  
deprives The eye of impress from the strongest objects,

Thus round about me flashed a living light, And left me swathed  
around with such a veil Of its effulgence, that I nothing saw.

"Ever the Love which quieteth this heaven Welcomes into itself with  
such salute, To make the candle ready for its flame."

No sooner had within me these brief words An entrance found, than I  
perceived myself To be uplifted over my own power,

And I with vision new rekindled me, Such that no light whatever is so  
pure But that mine eyes were fortified against it.

And light I saw in fashion of a river Fulvid with its effulgence, 'twixt  
two banks Depicted with an admirable Spring.

Out of this river issued living sparks, And on all sides sank down into  
the flowers, Like unto rubies that are set in gold;

And then, as if inebriate with the odours, They plunged again into the  
wondrous torrent, And as one entered issued forth another.

"The high desire, that now inflames and moves thee To have  
intelligence of what thou seest, Pleaseth me all the more, the more it  
swells.

But of this water it behoves thee drink Before so great a thirst in thee  
be slaked." Thus said to me the sunshine of mine eyes;

And added: "The river and the topazes Going in and out, and the  
laughing of the herbage, Are of their truth foreshadowing prefaces;

Not that these things are difficult in themselves, But the deficiency is  
on thy side, For yet thou hast not vision so exalted."

There is no babe that leaps so suddenly With face towards the milk, if  
he awake Much later than his usual custom is,

As I did, that I might make better mirrors Still of mine eyes, down  
stooping to the wave Which flows that we therein be better made.

And even as the penthouse of mine eyelids Drank of it, it forthwith  
appeared to me Out of its length to be transformed to round.

Then as a folk who have been under masks Seem other than before, if  
they divest The semblance not their own they disappeared in,

Thus into greater pomp were changed for me The flowerets and the  
sparks, so that I saw Both of the Courts of Heaven made manifest.

O splendour of God! by means of which I saw The lofty triumph of the

realm veracious, Give me the power to say how it I saw!

There is a light above, which visible Makes the Creator unto every creature, Who only in beholding Him has peace,

And it expands itself in circular form To such extent, that its circumference Would be too large a girdle for the sun.

The semblance of it is all made of rays Reflected from the top of Primal Motion, Which takes therefrom vitality and power.

And as a hill in water at its base Mirrors itself, as if to see its beauty When affluent most in verdure and in flowers,

So, ranged aloft all round about the light, Mirrored I saw in more ranks than a thousand All who above there have from us returned.

And if the lowest row collect within it So great a light, how vast the amplitude Is of this Rose in its extremest leaves!

My vision in the vastness and the height Lost not itself, but comprehended all The quantity and quality of that gladness.

There near and far nor add nor take away; For there where God immediately doth govern, The natural law in naught is relevant.

Into the yellow of the Rose Eternal That spreads, and multiplies, and breathes an odour Of praise unto the ever-vernal Sun,

As one who silent is and fain would speak, Me Beatrice drew on, and said: "Behold Of the white stoles how vast the convent is!

Behold how vast the circuit of our city! Behold our seats so filled to overflowing, That here henceforward are few people wanting!

On that great throne whereon thine eyes are fixed For the crown's sake already placed upon it, Before thou suppest at this wedding feast

Shall sit the soul (that is to be Augustus On earth) of noble Henry, who shall come To redress Italy ere she be ready.

Blind covetousness, that casts its spell upon you, Has made you like unto the little child, Who dies of hunger and drives off the nurse.

And in the sacred forum then shall be A Prefect such, that openly or covert On the same road he will not walk with him.

But long of God he will not be endured In holy office; he shall be thrust down Where Simon Magus is for his deserts,

And make him of Alagna lower go!"



## Paradiso: Canto XXXI

In fashion then as of a snow-white rose Displayed itself to me the  
saintly host, Whom Christ in his own blood had made his bride,

But the other host, that flying sees and sings The glory of Him who  
doth enamour it, And the goodness that created it so noble,

Even as a swarm of bees, that sinks in flowers One moment, and the  
next returns again To where its labour is to sweetness turned,

Sank into the great flower, that is adorned With leaves so many, and  
thence reascended To where its love abideth evermore.

Their faces had they all of living flame, And wings of gold, and all the  
rest so white No snow unto that limit doth attain.

From bench to bench, into the flower descending, They carried  
something of the peace and ardour Which by the fanning of their flanks  
they won.

Nor did the interposing 'twixt the flower And what was o'er it of such  
plenitude Of flying shapes impede the sight and splendour;

Because the light divine so penetrates The universe, according to its  
merit, That naught can be an obstacle against it.

This realm secure and full of gladsomeness, Crowded with ancient  
people and with modern, Unto one mark had all its look and love.

O Trinal Light, that in a single star Sparkling upon their sight so  
satisfies them, Look down upon our tempest here below!

If the barbarians, coming from some region That every day by Helice  
is covered, Revolving with her son whom she delights in,

Beholding Rome and all her noble works, Were wonder-struck, what  
time the Lateran Above all mortal things was eminent,--

I who to the divine had from the human, From time unto eternity, had  
come, From Florence to a people just and sane,

With what amazement must I have been filled! Truly between this and  
the joy, it was My pleasure not to hear, and to be mute.

And as a pilgrim who delighteth him In gazing round the temple of his  
vow, And hopes some day to retell how it was,

So through the living light my way pursuing Directed I mine eyes o'er

all the ranks, Now up, now down, and now all round about.

Faces I saw of charity persuasive, Embellished by His light and their own smile, And attitudes adorned with every grace.

The general form of Paradise already My glance had comprehended as a whole, In no part hitherto remaining fixed,

And round I turned me with rekindled wish My Lady to interrogate of things Concerning which my mind was in suspense.

One thing I meant, another answered me; I thought I should see Beatrice, and saw An Old Man habited like the glorious people.

O'erflowing was he in his eyes and cheeks With joy benign, in attitude of pity As to a tender father is becoming.

And "She, where is she?" instantly I said; Whence he: "To put an end to thy desire, Me Beatrice hath sent from mine own place.

And if thou lookest up to the third round Of the first rank, again shalt thou behold her Upon the throne her merits have assigned her."

Without reply I lifted up mine eyes, And saw her, as she made herself a crown Reflecting from herself the eternal rays.

Not from that region which the highest thunders Is any mortal eye so far removed, In whatsoever sea it deepest sinks,

As there from Beatrice my sight; but this Was nothing unto me; because her image Descended not to me by medium blurred.

"O Lady, thou in whom my hope is strong, And who for my salvation didst endure In Hell to leave the imprint of thy feet,

Of whatsoever things I have beheld, As coming from thy power and from thy goodness I recognise the virtue and the grace.

Thou from a slave hast brought me unto freedom, By all those ways, by all the expedients, Whereby thou hadst the power of doing it.

Preserve towards me thy magnificence, So that this soul of mine, which thou hast healed, Pleasing to thee be loosened from the body."

Thus I implored; and she, so far away, Smiled, as it seemed, and looked once more at me; Then unto the eternal fountain turned.

And said the Old Man holy: "That thou mayst Accomplish perfectly thy journeying, Whereunto prayer and holy love have sent me,

Fly with thine eyes all round about this garden; For seeing it will



discipline thy sight Farther to mount along the ray divine.

And she, the Queen of Heaven, for whom I burn Wholly with love,  
will grant us every grace, Because that I her faithful Bernard am."

As he who peradventure from Croatia Cometh to gaze at our Veronica,  
Who through its ancient fame is never sated,

But says in thought, the while it is displayed, "My Lord, Christ Jesus,  
God of very God, Now was your semblance made like unto this?"

Even such was I while gazing at the living Charity of the man, who in  
this world By contemplation tasted of that peace.

"Thou son of grace, this jocund life," began he, "Will not be known to  
thee by keeping ever Thine eyes below here on the lowest place;

But mark the circles to the most remote, Until thou shalt behold  
enthroned the Queen To whom this realm is subject and devoted."

I lifted up mine eyes, and as at morn The oriental part of the horizon  
Surpasses that wherein the sun goes down,

Thus, as if going with mine eyes from vale To mount, I saw a part in  
the remoteness Surpass in splendour all the other front.

And even as there where we await the pole That Phaeton drove badly,  
blazes more The light, and is on either side diminished,

So likewise that pacific oriflamme Gleamed brightest in the centre,  
and each side In equal measure did the flame abate.

And at that centre, with their wings expanded, More than a thousand  
jubilant Angels saw I, Each differing in effulgence and in kind.

I saw there at their sports and at their songs A beauty smiling, which  
the gladness was Within the eyes of all the other saints;

And if I had in speaking as much wealth As in imagining, I should not  
dare To attempt the smallest part of its delight.

Bernard, as soon as he beheld mine eyes Fixed and intent upon its  
fervid fervour, His own with such affection turned to her

That it made mine more ardent to behold.

## Paradiso: Canto XXXII

Absorbed in his delight, that contemplator Assumed the willing office of a teacher, And gave beginning to these holy words:

"The wound that Mary closed up and anointed, She at her feet who is so beautiful, She is the one who opened it and pierced it.

Within that order which the third seats make Is seated Rachel, lower than the other, With Beatrice, in manner as thou seest.

Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and her who was Ancestress of the Singer, who for dole Of the misdeed said, 'Miserere mei,'

Canst thou behold from seat to seat descending Down in gradation, as with each one's name I through the Rose go down from leaf to leaf.

And downward from the seventh row, even as Above the same, succeed the Hebrew women, Dividing all the tresses of the flower;

Because, according to the view which Faith In Christ had taken, these are the partition By which the sacred stairways are divided.

Upon this side, where perfect is the flower With each one of its petals, seated are Those who believed in Christ who was to come.

Upon the other side, where intersected With vacant spaces are the semicircles, Are those who looked to Christ already come.

And as, upon this side, the glorious seat Of the Lady of Heaven, and the other seats Below it, such a great division make,

So opposite doth that of the great John, Who, ever holy, desert and martyrdom Endured, and afterwards two years in Hell.

And under him thus to divide were chosen Francis, and Benedict, and Augustine, And down to us the rest from round to round.

Behold now the high providence divine; For one and other aspect of the Faith In equal measure shall this garden fill.

And know that downward from that rank which cleaves Midway the sequence of the two divisions, Not by their proper merit are they seated;

But by another's under fixed conditions; For these are spirits one and all assoiled Before they any true election had.

Well canst thou recognise it in their faces, And also in their voices puerile, If thou regard them well and hearken to them.

Now doubtest thou, and doubting thou art silent; But I will loosen for thee the strong bond In which thy subtile fancies hold thee fast.

Within the amplitude of this domain No casual point can possibly find place, No more than sadness can, or thirst, or hunger;

For by eternal law has been established Whatever thou beholdest, so that closely The ring is fitted to the finger here.

And therefore are these people, festinate Unto true life, not 'sine causa' here More and less excellent among themselves.

The King, by means of whom this realm reposes In so great love and in so great delight That no will ventureth to ask for more,

In his own joyous aspect every mind Creating, at his pleasure dowers with grace Diversely; and let here the effect suffice.

And this is clearly and expressly noted For you in Holy Scripture, in those twins Who in their mother had their anger roused.

According to the colour of the hair, Therefore, with such a grace the light supreme Consenteth that they worthily be crowned.

Without, then, any merit of their deeds, Stationed are they in different gradations, Differing only in their first acuteness.

'Tis true that in the early centuries, With innocence, to work out their salvation Sufficient was the faith of parents only.

After the earlier ages were completed, Behoved it that the males by circumcision Unto their innocent wings should virtue add;

But after that the time of grace had come Without the baptism absolute of Christ, Such innocence below there was retained.

Look now into the face that unto Christ Hath most resemblance; for its brightness only Is able to prepare thee to see Christ."

On her did I behold so great a gladness Rain down, borne onward in the holy minds Created through that altitude to fly,

That whatsoever I had seen before Did not suspend me in such admiration, Nor show me such similitude of God.

And the same Love that first descended there, "Ave Maria, gratia plena," singing, In front of her his wings expanded wide.

Unto the canticle divine responded From every part the court beatified, So that each sight became serener for it.

"O holy father, who for me endurest To be below here, leaving the sweet place In which thou sittest by eternal lot,

Who is the Angel that with so much joy Into the eyes is looking of our Queen, Enamoured so that he seems made of fire?"

Thus I again recourse had to the teaching Of that one who delighted him in Mary As doth the star of morning in the sun.

And he to me: "Such gallantry and grace As there can be in Angel and in soul, All is in him; and thus we fain would have it;

Because he is the one who bore the palm Down unto Mary, when the Son of God To take our burden on himself decreed.

But now come onward with thine eyes, as I Speaking shall go, and note the great patricians Of this most just and merciful of empires.

Those two that sit above there most enrapture As being very near unto Augusta, Are as it were the two roots of this Rose.

He who upon the left is near her placed The father is, by whose audacious taste The human species so much bitter tastes.

Upon the right thou seest that ancient father Of Holy Church, into whose keeping Christ The keys committed of this lovely flower.

And he who all the evil days beheld, Before his death, of her the beauteous bride Who with the spear and with the nails was won,

Beside him sits, and by the other rests That leader under whom on manna lived The people ingrate, fickle, and stiff-necked.

Opposite Peter seest thou Anna seated, So well content to look upon her daughter, Her eyes she moves not while she sings Hosanna.

And opposite the eldest household father Lucia sits, she who thy Lady moved When to rush downward thou didst bend thy brows.

But since the moments of thy vision fly, Here will we make full stop, as a good tailor Who makes the gown according to his cloth,

And unto the first Love will turn our eyes, That looking upon Him thou penetrate As far as possible through his effulgence.

Truly, lest peradventure thou recede, Moving thy wings believing to advance, By prayer behoves it that grace be obtained;

Grace from that one who has the power to aid thee; And thou shalt follow me with thy affection That from my words thy heart turn not

aside."

And he began this holy orison.

## Paradiso: Canto XXXIII

"Thou Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son, Humble and high beyond  
all other creature, The limit fixed of the eternal counsel,

Thou art the one who such nobility To human nature gave, that its  
Creator Did not disdain to make himself its creature.

Within thy womb rekindled was the love, By heat of which in the  
eternal peace After such wise this flower has germinated.

Here unto us thou art a noonday torch Of charity, and below there  
among mortals Thou art the living fountain-head of hope.

Lady, thou art so great, and so prevailing, That he who wishes grace,  
nor runs to thee, His aspirations without wings would fly.

Not only thy benignity gives succour To him who asketh it, but  
oftentimes Forerunneth of its own accord the asking.

In thee compassion is, in thee is pity, In thee magnificence; in thee  
unites Whate'er of goodness is in any creature.

Now doth this man, who from the lowest depth Of the universe as far  
as here has seen One after one the spiritual lives,

Supplicate thee through grace for so much power That with his eyes he  
may uplift himself Higher towards the uttermost salvation.

And I, who never burned for my own seeing More than I do for his, all  
of my prayers Proffer to thee, and pray they come not short,

That thou wouldst scatter from him every cloud Of his mortality so  
with thy prayers, That the Chief Pleasure be to him displayed.

Still farther do I pray thee, Queen, who canst Whate'er thou wilt, that  
sound thou mayst preserve After so great a vision his affections.

Let thy protection conquer human movements; See Beatrice and all the  
blessed ones My prayers to second clasp their hands to thee!"

The eyes beloved and revered of God, Fastened upon the speaker,  
showed to us How grateful unto her are prayers devout;

Then unto the Eternal Light they turned, On which it is not credible  
could be By any creature bent an eye so clear.

And I, who to the end of all desires Was now approaching, even as I  
ought The ardour of desire within me ended.

Bernard was beckoning unto me, and smiling, That I should upward look; but I already Was of my own accord such as he wished;

Because my sight, becoming purified, Was entering more and more into the ray Of the High Light which of itself is true.

From that time forward what I saw was greater Than our discourse, that to such vision yields, And yields the memory unto such excess.

Even as he is who seeth in a dream, And after dreaming the imprinted passion Remains, and to his mind the rest returns not,

Even such am I, for almost utterly Ceases my vision, and distilleth yet Within my heart the sweetness born of it;

Even thus the snow is in the sun unsealed, Even thus upon the wind in the light leaves Were the soothsayings of the Sibyl lost.

O Light Supreme, that dost so far uplift thee From the conceits of mortals, to my mind Of what thou didst appear re-lend a little,

And make my tongue of so great puissance, That but a single sparkle of thy glory It may bequeath unto the future people;

For by returning to my memory somewhat, And by a little sounding in these verses, More of thy victory shall be conceived!

I think the keenness of the living ray Which I endured would have bewildered me, If but mine eyes had been averted from it;

And I remember that I was more bold On this account to bear, so that I joined My aspect with the Glory Infinite.

O grace abundant, by which I presumed To fix my sight upon the Light Eternal, So that the seeing I consumed therein!

I saw that in its depth far down is lying Bound up with love together in one volume, What through the universe in leaves is scattered;

Substance, and accident, and their operations, All interfused together in such wise That what I speak of is one simple light.

The universal fashion of this knot Methinks I saw, since more abundantly In saying this I feel that I rejoice.

One moment is more lethargy to me, Than five and twenty centuries to the emprise That startled Neptune with the shade of Argo!

My mind in this wise wholly in suspense, Steadfast, immovable, attentive gazed, And evermore with gazing grew enkindled.

In presence of that light one such becomes, That to withdraw  
therefrom for other prospect It is impossible he e'er consent;

Because the good, which object is of will, Is gathered all in this, and  
out of it That is defective which is perfect there.

Shorter henceforward will my language fall Of what I yet remember,  
than an infant's Who still his tongue doth moisten at the breast.

Not because more than one unmingled semblance Was in the living  
light on which I looked, For it is always what it was before;

But through the sight, that fortified itself In me by looking, one  
appearance only To me was ever changing as I changed.

Within the deep and luminous subsistence Of the High Light appeared  
to me three circles, Of threefold colour and of one dimension,

And by the second seemed the first reflected As Iris is by Iris, and the  
third Seemed fire that equally from both is breathed.

O how all speech is feeble and falls short Of my conceit, and this to  
what I saw Is such, 'tis not enough to call it little!

O Light Eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest, Sole knowest thyself, and,  
known unto thyself And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!

That circulation, which being thus conceived Appeared in thee as a  
reflected light, When somewhat contemplated by mine eyes,

Within itself, of its own very colour Seemed to me painted with our  
effigy, Wherefore my sight was all absorbed therein.

As the geometrician, who endeavours To square the circle, and  
discovers not, By taking thought, the principle he wants, Even such was I  
at that new apparition; I wished to see how the image to the circle  
Conformed itself, and how it there finds place;

But my own wings were not enough for this, Had it not been that then  
my mind there smote A flash of lightning, wherein came its wish.

Here vigour failed the lofty fantasy: But now was turning my desire  
and will, Even as a wheel that equally is moved,

The Love which moves the sun and the other stars.



## APPENDIX

SIX SONNETS ON DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY BY HENRY  
WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

### I

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door  
A laborer, pausing in the dust  
and heat, Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet  
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor  
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;  
Far off the noises of the world retreat;  
The loud vociferations of the street  
Become an undistinguishable roar.  
So, as I enter here from day to day,  
And leave my burden at this minster gate,  
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,  
The tumult of the time disconsolate  
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,  
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

### II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!  
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves  
Birds build their nests; while canopied  
with leaves Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,  
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!  
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled  
eaves Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,  
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!  
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,  
What exultations trampling on despair,  
What tenderness, what tears, what hate  
of wrong, What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,  
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,  
This mediaeval miracle of song!

### III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom  
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!  
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.  
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;  
The congregation of the dead make room  
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;  
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine,  
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.  
From the confessionals I hear arise  
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,  
And lamentations from the crypts below  
And then a voice celestial that begins  
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins  
As scarlet be," and ends with  
"as the snow."

### IV

With snow-white veil, and garments as of flame, She stands before thee, who so long ago Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe From which thy song in all its splendors came; And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name, The ice about thy heart melts as the snow On mountain heights, and in swift overflow Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame. Thou makest full confession; and a gleam As of the dawn on some dark forest cast, Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase; Lethe and Eunoe--the remembered dream And the forgotten sorrow--bring at last That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

V

I Lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze With forms of saints and holy men who died, Here martyred and hereafter glorified; And the great Rose upon its leaves displays Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays, With splendor upon splendor multiplied; And Beatrice again at Dante's side No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise. And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love And benedictions of the Holy Ghost; And the melodious bells among the spires O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

VI

O star of morning and of liberty! O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines Above the darkness of the Apennines, Forerunner of the day that is to be! The voices of the city and the sea, The voices of the mountains and the pines, Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines Are footpaths for the thought of Italy! Thy fame is blown abroad from all the heights, Through all the nations; and a sound is heard, As of a mighty wind, and men devout, Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes, In their own language hear thy wondrous word, And many are amazed and many doubt.

POSTSCRIPT

'Ich habe unter meinen Papieren ein Blatt gefunden, wo ich die Baukunst eine erstarrte Musik nenne.' (Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 1829 March 23)

I found Dante in a bar. The Poet had indeed lost the True Way to be found reduced to party chatter in a Capitol Hill basement, but I had found him at last. I must have been drinking in the Dark Tavern of Error, for I did not even realize I had begun the dolorous path followed by many since the Poet's journey of A.D. 1300. Actually no one spoke a word about Dante or his Divine Comedy, rather I heard a second-hand Goethe call architecture "frozen music." Soon I took my second step through the gate to a people lost; this time on a more respectable occasion--a lecture at the Catholic University of America. Clio, the muse of history, must have been aiding Prof. Schumacher that evening, because it sustained my full three-hour attention, even after I had just presented an all-night project. There I heard of a most astonishing Italian translation of 'la Divina Commedia' di Dante Alighieri. An Italian architect, Giuseppi Terragni, had translated the Comedy into the 'Danteum,' a projected stone and glass monument to Poet and Poem near the Basilica of Maxentius in Rome.

Do not look for the Danteum in the Eternal City. In true Dantean form, politics stood in the way of its construction in 1938. Ironically this literature-inspired building can itself most easily be found in book form. Reading this book I remembered Goethe's quote about frozen music. Did Terragni try to freeze Dante's medieval miracle of song? Certainly a cold-poem seems artistically repulsive. Unflattering comparisons to the lake of Cocytus spring to mind too. While I cannot read Italian, I can read some German. After locating the original quotation I discovered that 'frozen' is a problematic (though common) translation of Goethe's original 'erstarre.' The verb 'erstarren' more properly means 'to solidify' or 'to stiffen.' This suggests a chemical reaction in which the art does not necessarily chill in the transformation. Nor can simple thawing yield the original work. Like a chemical reaction it requires an artistic catalyst, a muse. Indeed the Danteum is not a physical translation of the Poem. Terragni thought it inappropriate to translate the Comedy literally into a non-literary work. The Danteum would not be a stage set, rather Terragni generated his design from the Comedy's structure, not its finishes.

The poem is divided into three canticles of thirty-three cantos each, plus one extra in the first, the Inferno, making a total of one hundred

cantos. Each canto is composed of three-line tercets, the first and third lines rhyme, the second line rhymes with the beginning of the next tercet, establishing a kind of overlap, reflected in the overlapping motif of the Danteum design. Dante's realms are further subdivided: the Inferno is composed of nine levels, the vestibule makes a tenth. Purgatory has seven terraces, plus two ledges in an ante-purgatory; adding these to the Earthly Paradise yields ten zones. Paradise is composed of nine heavens; Empyrean makes the tenth. In the Inferno, sinners are organized by three vices--Incontinence, Violence, and Fraud--and further subdivided by the seven deadly sins. In Purgatory, penance is ordered on the basis of three types of natural love. Paradise is organized on the basis of three types of Divine Love, and further subdivided according to the three theological and four cardinal virtues. (Thomas Schumacher, "The Danteum," Princeton Architectural Press, 1993)

By translating the structure, Terragni could then layer the literal and the spiritual meanings of the Poem without allowing either to dominate. These layers of meaning are native to the Divine Comedy as they are native to much medieval literature, although modern readers and tourists may not be so familiar with them. They are literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical. I offer you St. Thomas of Aquinas' definition of these last three as they relate to Sacred Scripture:

. . .this spiritual sense has a threefold division. . .so far as the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law, there is the allegorical sense; so far as the things done in Christ, or so far as the things which signify Christ, are types of what we ought to do, there is the moral sense. But so far as they signify what relates to eternal glory, there is the anagogical sense. (Summa Theologica I, 1, 10)

Within the Danteum the Poet's meanings lurk in solid form. An example: the Danteum design does have spaces literally associated with the Comedy--the Dark Wood of Error, Inferno, Purgatorio, and the Paradiso--but these spaces also relate among themselves spiritually. Dante often highlights a virtue by first condemning its corruption. Within Dante's system Justice is the greatest of the cardinal virtues; its corruption, Fraud, is the most contemptible of vices. Because Dante saw the papacy as the

most precious of sacred institutions, corrupt popes figure prominently among the damned in the Poet's *Inferno*. In the *Danteum* the materiality of the worldly Dark Wood directly opposes the transcendence of the *Paradiso*. In the realm of error every thought is lost and secular, while in heaven every soul's intent is directed toward God. The shadowy *Inferno* of the *Danteum* mirrors the *Purgatorio*'s illuminated ascent to heaven. Purgatory embodies hope and growth where hell chases its own dark inertia. Such is the cosmography shared by Terragni and Dante.

In this postscript I intend neither to fully examine the meaning nor the plan of the *Danteum*, but rather to evince the power that art has acted as a catalyst to other artists. The *Danteum*, a modern design inspired by a medieval poem, is but one example. Dante's poem is filled with characters epitomizing the full range of vices and virtues of human personalities. Dante's characters come from his present and literature's past; they are mythological, biblical, classical, ancient, and medieval. They, rather than Calliope and her sisters, were Dante's muses.

'*La Divina Commedia*' seems a natural candidate to complete Project Gutenberg's first *milleditio* and to begin its second thousand e-texts. Although distinctly medieval, its continuum of influence spans the Renaissance and modernity. Terragni saw his place within the *Comedy* as surely as Dante saw his own. We too fit within Dante's understanding of the human condition; we differ less from our past than we might like to believe. T. S. Eliot understood this when he wrote "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them, there is no third." So now Dante joins Shakespeare (e-text #100) in the Project Gutenberg collection. Two works that influenced Dante are also part of the collection: *The Bible* (#10) and *Virgil's Aeneid* (#227). Other major influences--St. Thomas of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, *The Metamorphoses* of Ovid, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*--are available in electronic form at other Internet sites. If one searches enough he may even find a computer rendering of the *Danteum* on the Internet. By presenting this electronic text to Project Gutenberg it is my hope that it will not rest in a computer unknown and unread; it is my hope that artists will see themselves in the *Divine Comedy* and be inspired, just as Dante ran the paths left by Virgil and St. Thomas

that led him to the stars.