

THE DIVINE COMEDY

DANTE ALIGHIERI (1265-1321)

TRANSLATED BY HENRY WADSWORTH

LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

CREDITS

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Dennis McCarthy, July 1997 imprimatur@juno.com

Purgatorio: Canto I

To run o'er better waters hoists its sail The little vessel of my genius
now, That leaves behind itself a sea so cruel;

And of that second kingdom will I sing Wherein the human spirit doth
purge itself, And to ascend to heaven becometh worthy.

But let dead Poesy here rise again, O holy Muses, since that I am
yours, And here Calliope somewhat ascend,

My song accompanying with that sound, Of which the miserable
magpies felt The blow so great, that they despaired of pardon.

Sweet colour of the oriental sapphire, That was upgathered in the
cloudless aspect Of the pure air, as far as the first circle,

Unto mine eyes did recommence delight Soon as I issued forth from
the dead air, Which had with sadness filled mine eyes and breast.

The beauteous planet, that to love incites, Was making all the orient to
laugh, Veiling the Fishes that were in her escort.

To the right hand I turned, and fixed my mind Upon the other pole, and
saw four stars Ne'er seen before save by the primal people.

Rejoicing in their flamelets seemed the heaven. O thou septentrional
and widowed site, Because thou art deprived of seeing these!

When from regarding them I had withdrawn, Turning a little to the
other pole, There where the Wain had disappeared already,

I saw beside me an old man alone, Worthy of so much reverence in his
look, That more owes not to father any son.

A long beard and with white hair intermingled He wore, in semblance
like unto the tresses, Of which a double list fell on his breast.

The rays of the four consecrated stars Did so adorn his countenance
with light, That him I saw as were the sun before him.

"Who are you? ye who, counter the blind river, Have fled away from
the eternal prison?" Moving those venerable plumes, he said:

"Who guided you? or who has been your lamp In issuing forth out of
the night profound, That ever black makes the infernal valley?

The laws of the abyss, are they thus broken? Or is there changed in
heaven some council new, That being damned ye come unto my crags?"

Then did my Leader lay his grasp upon me, And with his words, and
with his hands and signs, Reverent he made in me my knees and brow;

Then answered him: "I came not of myself; A Lady from Heaven
descended, at whose prayers I aided this one with my company.

But since it is thy will more be unfolded Of our condition, how it truly
is, Mine cannot be that this should be denied thee.

This one has never his last evening seen, But by his folly was so near
to it That very little time was there to turn.

As I have said, I unto him was sent To rescue him, and other way was
none Than this to which I have myself betaken.

I've shown him all the people of perdition, And now those spirits I
intend to show Who purge themselves beneath thy guardianship.

How I have brought him would be long to tell thee. Virtue descendeth
from on high that aids me To lead him to behold thee and to hear thee.

Now may it please thee to vouchsafe his coming; He seeketh Liberty,
which is so dear, As knoweth he who life for her refuses.

Thou know'st it; since, for her, to thee not bitter Was death in Utica,
where thou didst leave The vesture, that will shine so, the great day.

By us the eternal edicts are not broken; Since this one lives, and Minos
binds not me; But of that circle I, where are the chaste

Eyes of thy Marcia, who in looks still prays thee, O holy breast, to
hold her as thine own; For her love, then, incline thyself to us.

Permit us through thy sevenfold realm to go; I will take back this grace
from thee to her, If to be mentioned there below thou deignest."

"Marcia so pleasing was unto mine eyes While I was on the other
side," then said he, "That every grace she wished of me I granted;

Now that she dwells beyond the evil river, She can no longer move me,
by that law Which, when I issued forth from there, was made.

But if a Lady of Heaven do move and rule thee, As thou dost say, no
flattery is needful; Let it suffice thee that for her thou ask me.

Go, then, and see thou gird this one about With a smooth rush, and that
thou wash his face, So that thou cleanse away all stain therefrom,

For 'twere not fitting that the eye o'ercast By any mist should go before
the first Angel, who is of those of Paradise.

This little island round about its base
Below there, yonder, where the
billow beats it, Doth rushes bear upon its washy ooze;

No other plant that putteth forth the leaf,
Or that doth indurate, can
there have life, Because it yieldeth not unto the shocks.

Thereafter be not this way your return;
The sun, which now is rising,
will direct you To take the mount by easier ascent."

With this he vanished; and I raised me up
Without a word, and wholly
drew myself Unto my Guide, and turned mine eyes to him.

And he began: "Son, follow thou my steps;
Let us turn back, for on
this side declines The plain unto its lower boundaries."

The dawn was vanquishing the matin hour
Which fled before it, so that
from afar I recognised the trembling of the sea.

Along the solitary plain we went
As one who unto the lost road returns,
And till he finds it seems to go in vain.

As soon as we were come to where the dew
Fights with the sun, and,
being in a part Where shadow falls, little evaporates,

Both of his hands upon the grass outspread
In gentle manner did my
Master place; Whence I, who of his action was aware,

Extended unto him my tearful cheeks;
There did he make in me
uncovered wholly That hue which Hell had covered up in me.

Then came we down upon the desert shore
Which never yet saw
navigate its waters Any that afterward had known return.

There he begirt me as the other pleased;
O marvellous! for even as he
culled The humble plant, such it sprang up again

Suddenly there where he uprooted it.

Purgatorio: Canto II

Already had the sun the horizon reached Whose circle of meridian
covers o'er Jerusalem with its most lofty point,

And night that opposite to him revolves Was issuing forth from
Ganges with the Scales That fall from out her hand when she exceedeth;

So that the white and the vermilion cheeks Of beautiful Aurora, where
I was, By too great age were changing into orange.

We still were on the border of the sea, Like people who are thinking of
their road, Who go in heart and with the body stay;

And lo! as when, upon the approach of morning, Through the gross
vapours Mars grows fiery red Down in the West upon the ocean floor,

Appeared to me--may I again behold it!-- A light along the sea so
swiftly coming, Its motion by no flight of wing is equalled;

From which when I a little had withdrawn Mine eyes, that I might
question my Conductor, Again I saw it brighter grown and larger.

Then on each side of it appeared to me I knew not what of white, and
underneath it Little by little there came forth another.

My Master yet had uttered not a word While the first whiteness into
wings unfolded; But when he clearly recognised the pilot,

He cried: "Make haste, make haste to bow the knee! Behold the Angel
of God! fold thou thy hands! Henceforward shalt thou see such officers!

See how he scorneth human arguments, So that nor oar he wants, nor
other sail Than his own wings, between so distant shores.

See how he holds them pointed up to heaven, Fanning the air with the
eternal pinions, That do not moult themselves like mortal hair!"

Then as still nearer and more near us came The Bird Divine, more
radiant he appeared, So that near by the eye could not endure him,

But down I cast it; and he came to shore With a small vessel, very
swift and light, So that the water swallowed naught thereof.

Upon the stern stood the Celestial Pilot; Beatitude seemed written in
his face, And more than a hundred spirits sat within.

"In exitu Israel de Aegypto!" They chanted all together in one voice,
With whatso in that psalm is after written.

Then made he sign of holy rood upon them, Whereat all cast themselves upon the shore, And he departed swiftly as he came.

The throng which still remained there unfamiliar Seemed with the place, all round about them gazing, As one who in new matters makes essay.

On every side was darting forth the day. The sun, who had with his resplendent shafts From the mid-heaven chased forth the Capricorn,

When the new people lifted up their faces Towards us, saying to us: "If ye know, Show us the way to go unto the mountain."

And answer made Virgilius: "Ye believe Perchance that we have knowledge of this place, But we are strangers even as yourselves.

Just now we came, a little while before you, Another way, which was so rough and steep, That mounting will henceforth seem sport to us."

The souls who had, from seeing me draw breath, Become aware that I was still alive, Pallid in their astonishment became;

And as to messenger who bears the olive The people throng to listen to the news, And no one shows himself afraid of crowding,

So at the sight of me stood motionless Those fortunate spirits, all of them, as if Oblivious to go and make them fair.

One from among them saw I coming forward, As to embrace me, with such great affection, That it incited me to do the like.

O empty shadows, save in aspect only! Three times behind it did I clasp my hands, As oft returned with them to my own breast!

I think with wonder I depicted me; Whereat the shadow smiled and backward drew; And I, pursuing it, pressed farther forward.

Gently it said that I should stay my steps; Then knew I who it was, and I entreated That it would stop awhile to speak with me.

It made reply to me: "Even as I loved thee In mortal body, so I love thee free; Therefore I stop; but wherefore goest thou?"

"My own Casella! to return once more There where I am, I make this journey," said I; "But how from thee has so much time be taken?"

And he to me: "No outrage has been done me, If he who takes both when and whom he pleases Has many times denied to me this passage,

For of a righteous will his own is made. He, sooth to say, for three

months past has taken Whoever wished to enter with all peace;

Whence I, who now had turned unto that shore Where salt the waters
of the Tiber grow, Benignantly by him have been received.

Unto that outlet now his wing is pointed, Because for evermore
assemble there Those who tow'rds Acheron do not descend."

And I: "If some new law take not from thee Memory or practice of the
song of love, Which used to quiet in me all my longings,

Thee may it please to comfort therewithal Somewhat this soul of mine,
that with its body Hitherward coming is so much distressed."

"Love, that within my mind discourses with me," Forthwith began he
so melodiously, The melody within me still is sounding.

My Master, and myself, and all that people Which with him were,
appeared as satisfied As if naught else might touch the mind of any.

We all of us were moveless and attentive Unto his notes; and lo! the
grave old man, Exclaiming: "What is this, ye laggard spirits?

What negligence, what standing still is this? Run to the mountain to
strip off the slough, That lets not God be manifest to you."

Even as when, collecting grain or tares, The doves, together at their
pasture met, Quiet, nor showing their accustomed pride,

If aught appear of which they are afraid, Upon a sudden leave their
food alone, Because they are assailed by greater care;

So that fresh company did I behold The song relinquish, and go
tow'rds the hill, As one who goes, and knows not whitherward;

Nor was our own departure less in haste.

Purgatorio: Canto III

Inasmuch as the instantaneous flight Had scattered them asunder o'er the plain, Turned to the mountain whither reason spurs us,

I pressed me close unto my faithful comrade, And how without him had I kept my course? Who would have led me up along the mountain?

He seemed to me within himself remorseful; O noble conscience, and without a stain, How sharp a sting is trivial fault to thee!

After his feet had laid aside the haste Which mars the dignity of every act, My mind, that hitherto had been restrained,

Let loose its faculties as if delighted, And I my sight directed to the hill That highest tow'rds the heaven uplifts itself.

The sun, that in our rear was flaming red, Was broken in front of me into the figure Which had in me the stoppage of its rays;

Unto one side I turned me, with the fear Of being left alone, when I beheld Only in front of me the ground obscured.

"Why dost thou still mistrust?" my Comforter Began to say to me turned wholly round; "Dost thou not think me with thee, and that I guide thee?"

'Tis evening there already where is buried The body within which I cast a shadow; 'Tis from Brundusium ta'en, and Naples has it.

Now if in front of me no shadow fall, Marvel not at it more than at the heavens, Because one ray impedeth not another

To suffer torments, both of cold and heat, Bodies like this that Power provides, which wills That how it works be not unveiled to us.

Insane is he who hopeth that our reason Can traverse the illimitable way, Which the one Substance in three Persons follows!

Mortals, remain contented at the 'Quia;' For if ye had been able to see all, No need there were for Mary to give birth;

And ye have seen desiring without fruit, Those whose desire would have been quieted, Which evermore is given them for a grief.

I speak of Aristotle and of Plato, And many others;"--and here bowed his head, And more he said not, and remained disturbed.

We came meanwhile unto the mountain's foot; There so precipitate we

found the rock, That nimble legs would there have been in vain.

"Twixt Lerici and Turbia, the most desert, The most secluded pathway is a stair Easy and open, if compared with that.

"Who knoweth now upon which hand the hill Slopes down," my Master said, his footsteps staying, "So that who goeth without wings may mount?"

And while he held his eyes upon the ground Examining the nature of the path, And I was looking up around the rock,

On the left hand appeared to me a throng Of souls, that moved their feet in our direction, And did not seem to move, they came so slowly.

"Lift up thine eyes," I to the Master said; "Behold, on this side, who will give us counsel, If thou of thine own self can have it not."

Then he looked at me, and with frank expression Replied: "Let us go there, for they come slowly, And thou be steadfast in thy hope, sweet son."

Still was that people as far off from us, After a thousand steps of ours I say, As a good thrower with his hand would reach,

When they all crowded unto the hard masses Of the high bank, and motionless stood and close, As he stands still to look who goes in doubt.

"O happy dead! O spirits elect already!" Virgilius made beginning, "by that peace Which I believe is waiting for you all,

Tell us upon what side the mountain slopes, So that the going up be possible, For to lose time irks him most who most knows."

As sheep come issuing forth from out the fold By ones and twos and threes, and the others stand Timidly, holding down their eyes and nostrils,

And what the foremost does the others do, Huddling themselves against her, if she stop, Simple and quiet and the wherefore know not;

So moving to approach us thereupon I saw the leader of that fortunate flock, Modest in face and dignified in gait.

As soon as those in the advance saw broken The light upon the ground at my right side, So that from me the shadow reached the rock,

They stopped, and backward drew themselves somewhat; And all the others, who came after them, Not knowing why nor wherefore, did the same.

"Without your asking, I confess to you This is a human body which

you see, Whereby the sunshine on the ground is cleft.

Marvel ye not thereat, but be persuaded That not without a power
which comes from Heaven Doth he endeavour to surmount this wall."

The Master thus; and said those worthy people: "Return ye then, and
enter in before us," Making a signal with the back o' the hand

And one of them began: "Whoe'er thou art, Thus going turn thine eyes,
consider well If e'er thou saw me in the other world."

I turned me tow'rds him, and looked at him closely; Blond was he,
beautiful, and of noble aspect, But one of his eyebrows had a blow
divided.

When with humility I had disclaimed E'er having seen him, "Now
behold!" he said, And showed me high upon his breast a wound.

Then said he with a smile: "I am Manfredi, The grandson of the
Empress Costanza; Therefore, when thou returnest, I beseech thee

Go to my daughter beautiful, the mother Of Sicily's honour and of
Aragon's, And the truth tell her, if aught else be told.

After I had my body lacerated By these two mortal stabs, I gave
myself Weeping to Him, who willingly doth pardon.

Horrible my iniquities had been; But Infinite Goodness hath such
ample arms, That it receives whatever turns to it.

Had but Cosenza's pastor, who in chase Of me was sent by Clement at
that time, In God read understandingly this page,

The bones of my dead body still would be At the bridge-head, near
unto Benevento, Under the safeguard of the heavy cairn.

Now the rain bathes and moveth them the wind, Beyond the realm,
almost beside the Verde, Where he transported them with tapers quenched.

By malison of theirs is not so lost Eternal Love, that it cannot return,
So long as hope has anything of green.

True is it, who in contumacy dies Of Holy Church, though penitent at
last, Must wait upon the outside this bank

Thirty times told the time that he has been In his presumption, unless
such decree Shorter by means of righteous prayers become.

See now if thou hast power to make me happy, By making known unto
my good Costanza How thou hast seen me, and this ban beside,

For those on earth can much advance us here."

Purgatorio: Canto IV

Whenever by delight or else by pain, That seizes any faculty of ours,
Wholly to that the soul collects itself,

It seemeth that no other power it heeds; And this against that error is
which thinks One soul above another kindles in us.

And hence, whenever aught is heard or seen Which keeps the soul
intently bent upon it, Time passes on, and we perceive it not,

Because one faculty is that which listens, And other that which the
soul keeps entire; This is as if in bonds, and that is free.

Of this I had experience positive In hearing and in gazing at that spirit;
For fifty full degrees uprisen was

The sun, and I had not perceived it, when We came to where those
souls with one accord Cried out unto us: "Here is what you ask."

A greater opening oft-times hedges up With but a little forkful of his
thorns The villager, what time the grape imbrowns,

Than was the passage-way through which ascended Only my Leader
and myself behind him, After that company departed from us.

One climbs Sanleo and descends in Noli, And mounts the summit of
Bismantova, With feet alone; but here one needs must fly;

With the swift pinions and the plumes I say Of great desire, conducted
after him Who gave me hope, and made a light for me.

We mounted upward through the rifted rock, And on each side the
border pressed upon us, And feet and hands the ground beneath required.

When we were come upon the upper rim Of the high bank, out on the
open slope, "My Master," said I, "what way shall we take?"

And he to me: "No step of thine descend; Still up the mount behind me
win thy way, Till some sage escort shall appear to us."

The summit was so high it vanquished sight, And the hillside
precipitous far more Than line from middle quadrant to the centre.

Spent with fatigue was I, when I began: "O my sweet Father! turn thee
and behold How I remain alone, unless thou stay!"

"O son," he said, "up yonder drag thyself," Pointing me to a terrace
somewhat higher, Which on that side encircles all the hill.

These words of his so spurred me on, that I Strained every nerve,
behind him scrambling up, Until the circle was beneath my feet.

Thereon ourselves we seated both of us Turned to the East, from which
we had ascended, For all men are delighted to look back.

To the low shores mine eyes I first directed, Then to the sun uplifted
them, and wondered That on the left hand we were smitten by it.

The Poet well perceived that I was wholly Bewildered at the chariot of
the light, Where 'twixt us and the Aquilon it entered.

Whereon he said to me: "If Castor and Pollux Were in the company of
yonder mirror, That up and down conducteth with its light,

Thou wouldst behold the zodiac's jagged wheel Revolving still more
near unto the Bears, Unless it swerved aside from its old track.

How that may be wouldst thou have power to think, Collected in
thyself, imagine Zion Together with this mount on earth to stand,

So that they both one sole horizon have, And hemispheres diverse;
whereby the road Which Phaeton, alas! knew not to drive,

Thou'lt see how of necessity must pass This on one side, when that
upon the other, If thine intelligence right clearly heed."

"Truly, my Master," said I, "never yet Saw I so clearly as I now discern,
There where my wit appeared incompetent,

That the mid-circle of supernal motion, Which in some art is the
Equator called, And aye remains between the Sun and Winter,

For reason which thou sayest, departeth hence Tow'rds the Septentrion,
what time the Hebrews Beheld it tow'rds the region of the heat.

But, if it pleaseth thee, I fain would learn How far we have to go; for
the hill rises Higher than eyes of mine have power to rise."

And he to me: "This mount is such, that ever At the beginning down
below 'tis tiresome, And aye the more one climbs, the less it hurts.

Therefore, when it shall seem so pleasant to thee, That going up shall
be to thee as easy As going down the current in a boat,

Then at this pathway's ending thou wilt be; There to repose thy panting
breath expect; No more I answer; and this I know for true."

And as he finished uttering these words, A voice close by us sounded:
"Peradventure Thou wilt have need of sitting down ere that."

At sound thereof each one of us turned round, And saw upon the left hand a great rock, Which neither I nor he before had noticed.

Thither we drew; and there were persons there Who in the shadow stood behind the rock, As one through indolence is wont to stand.

And one of them, who seemed to me fatigued, Was sitting down, and both his knees embraced, Holding his face low down between them bowed.

"O my sweet Lord," I said, "do turn thine eye On him who shows himself more negligent Than even Sloth herself his sister were."

Then he turned round to us, and he gave heed, Just lifting up his eyes above his thigh, And said: "Now go thou up, for thou art valiant."

Then knew I who he was; and the distress, That still a little did my breathing quicken, My going to him hindered not; and after

I came to him he hardly raised his head, Saying: "Hast thou seen clearly how the sun O'er thy left shoulder drives his chariot?"

His sluggish attitude and his curt words A little unto laughter moved my lips; Then I began: "Belacqua, I grieve not

For thee henceforth; but tell me, wherefore seated In this place art thou? Waitest thou an escort? Or has thy usual habit seized upon thee?"

And he: "O brother, what's the use of climbing? Since to my torment would not let me go The Angel of God, who sitteth at the gate.

First heaven must needs so long revolve me round Outside thereof, as in my life it did, Since the good sighs I to the end postponed,

Unless, e'er that, some prayer may bring me aid Which rises from a heart that lives in grace; What profit others that in heaven are heard not?"

Meanwhile the Poet was before me mounting, And saying: "Come now; see the sun has touched Meridian, and from the shore the night

Covers already with her foot Morocco."

Purgatorio: Canto V

I had already from those shades departed, And followed in the footsteps of my Guide, When from behind, pointing his finger at me,

One shouted: "See, it seems as if shone not The sunshine on the left of him below, And like one living seems he to conduct him."

Mine eyes I turned at utterance of these words, And saw them watching with astonishment But me, but me, and the light which was broken!

"Why doth thy mind so occupy itself," The Master said, "that thou thy pace dost slacken? What matters it to thee what here is whispered?"

Come after me, and let the people talk; Stand like a steadfast tower, that never wags Its top for all the blowing of the winds;

For evermore the man in whom is springing Thought upon thought, removes from him the mark, Because the force of one the other weakens."

What could I say in answer but "I come"? I said it somewhat with that colour tinged Which makes a man of pardon sometimes worthy.

Meanwhile along the mountain-side across Came people in advance of us a little, Singing the Miserere verse by verse.

When they became aware I gave no place For passage of the sunshine through my body, They changed their song into a long, hoarse "Oh!"

And two of them, in form of messengers, Ran forth to meet us, and demanded of us, "Of your condition make us cognisant."

And said my Master: "Ye can go your way And carry back again to those who sent you, That this one's body is of very flesh.

If they stood still because they saw his shadow, As I suppose, enough is answered them; Him let them honour, it may profit them."

Vapours enkindled saw I ne'er so swiftly At early nightfall cleave the air serene, Nor, at the set of sun, the clouds of August,

But upward they returned in briefer time, And, on arriving, with the others wheeled Tow'rds us, like troops that run without a rein.

"This folk that presses unto us is great, And cometh to implore thee," said the Poet; "So still go onward, and in going listen."

"O soul that goest to beatitude With the same members wherewith

thou wast born," Shouting they came, "a little stay thy steps,

Look, if thou e'er hast any of us seen, So that o'er yonder thou bear
news of him; Ah, why dost thou go on? Ah, why not stay?

Long since we all were slain by violence, And sinners even to the
latest hour; Then did a light from heaven admonish us,

So that, both penitent and pardoning, forth From life we issued
reconciled to God, Who with desire to see Him stirs our hearts."

And I: "Although I gaze into your faces, No one I recognize; but if
may please you Aught I have power to do, ye well-born spirits,

Speak ye, and I will do it, by that peace Which, following the feet of
such a Guide, From world to world makes itself sought by me."

And one began: "Each one has confidence In thy good offices without
an oath, Unless the I cannot cut off the I will;

Whence I, who speak alone before the others, Pray thee, if ever thou
dost see the land That 'twixt Romagna lies and that of Charles,

Thou be so courteous to me of thy prayers In Fano, that they pray for
me devoutly, That I may purge away my grave offences.

From thence was I; but the deep wounds, through which Issued the
blood wherein I had my seat, Were dealt me in bosom of the Antenori,

There where I thought to be the most secure; 'Twas he of Este had it
done, who held me In hatred far beyond what justice willed.

But if towards the Mira I had fled, When I was overtaken at Oriaco, I
still should be o'er yonder where men breathe.

I ran to the lagoon, and reeds and mire Did so entangle me I fell, and
saw there A lake made from my veins upon the ground."

Then said another: "Ah, be that desire Fulfilled that draws thee to the
lofty mountain, As thou with pious pity aidest mine.

I was of Montefeltro, and am Buonconte; Giovanna, nor none other
cares for me; Hence among these I go with downcast front."

And I to him: "What violence or what chance Led thee astray so far
from Campaldino, That never has thy sepulture been known?"

"Oh," he replied, "at Casentino's foot A river crosses named Archiano,
born Above the Hermitage in Apennine.

There where the name thereof becometh void Did I arrive, pierced

through and through the throat, Fleeing on foot, and bloodying the plain;

There my sight lost I, and my utterance Ceased in the name of Mary,
and thereat I fell, and tenantless my flesh remained.

Truth will I speak, repeat it to the living; God's Angel took me up, and
he of hell Shouted: 'O thou from heaven, why dost thou rob me?

Thou bearest away the eternal part of him, For one poor little tear, that
takes him from me; But with the rest I'll deal in other fashion!'

Well knowest thou how in the air is gathered That humid vapour which
to water turns, Soon as it rises where the cold doth grasp it.

He joined that evil will, which aye seeks evil, To intellect, and moved
the mist and wind By means of power, which his own nature gave;

Thereafter, when the day was spent, the valley From Pratomagno to
the great yoke covered With fog, and made the heaven above intent,

So that the pregnant air to water changed; Down fell the rain, and to
the gullies came Whate'er of it earth tolerated not;

And as it mingled with the mighty torrents, Towards the royal river
with such speed It headlong rushed, that nothing held it back.

My frozen body near unto its outlet The robust Archian found, and into
Arno Thrust it, and loosened from my breast the cross

I made of me, when agony o'ercame me; It rolled me on the banks and
on the bottom, Then with its booty covered and begirt me."

"Ah, when thou hast returned unto the world, And rested thee from thy
long journeying," After the second followed the third spirit,

"Do thou remember me who am the Pia; Siena made me, unmade me
Maremma; He knoweth it, who had encircled first,

Espousing me, my finger with his gem."

Purgatorio: Canto VI

Whene'er is broken up the game of Zara, He who has lost remains
behind despondent, The throws repeating, and in sadness learns;

The people with the other all depart; One goes in front, and one behind
doth pluck him, And at his side one brings himself to mind;

He pauses not, and this and that one hears; They crowd no more to
whom his hand he stretches, And from the throng he thus defends himself.

Even such was I in that dense multitude, Turning to them this way and
that my face, And, promising, I freed myself therefrom.

There was the Aretine, who from the arms Untamed of Ghin di Tacco
had his death, And he who fleeing from pursuit was drowned.

There was imploring with his hands outstretched Frederick Novello,
and that one of Pisa Who made the good Marzucco seem so strong.

I saw Count Orso; and the soul divided By hatred and by envy from its
body, As it declared, and not for crime committed,

Pierre de la Brosse I say; and here provide While still on earth the
Lady of Brabant, So that for this she be of no worse flock!

As soon as I was free from all those shades Who only prayed that
some one else may pray, So as to hasten their becoming holy,

Began I: "It appears that thou deniest, O light of mine, expressly in
some text, That orison can bend decree of Heaven;

And ne'ertheless these people pray for this. Might then their
expectation bootless be? Or is to me thy saying not quite clear?"

And he to me: "My writing is explicit, And not fallacious is the hope
of these, If with sane intellect 'tis well regarded;

For top of judgment doth not vail itself, Because the fire of love fulfils
at once What he must satisfy who here installs him.

And there, where I affirmed that proposition, Defect was not amended
by a prayer, Because the prayer from God was separate.

Verily, in so deep a questioning Do not decide, unless she tell it thee,
Who light 'twixt truth and intellect shall be.

I know not if thou understand; I speak Of Beatrice; her shalt thou see
above, Smiling and happy, on this mountain's top."

And I: "Good Leader, let us make more haste, For I no longer tire me as before; And see, e'en now the hill a shadow casts."

"We will go forward with this day" he answered, "As far as now is possible for us; But otherwise the fact is than thou thinkest.

Ere thou art up there, thou shalt see return Him, who now hides himself behind the hill, So that thou dost not interrupt his rays.

But yonder there behold! a soul that stationed All, all alone is looking hitherward; It will point out to us the quickest way."

We came up unto it; O Lombard soul, How lofty and disdainful thou didst bear thee, And grand and slow in moving of thine eyes!

Nothing whatever did it say to us, But let us go our way, eying us only After the manner of a couchant lion;

Still near to it Virgilius drew, entreating That it would point us out the best ascent; And it replied not unto his demand,

But of our native land and of our life It questioned us; and the sweet Guide began: "Mantua,"--and the shade, all in itself recluse,

Rose tow'rds him from the place where first it was, Saying: "O Mantuan, I am Sordello Of thine own land!" and one embraced the other.

Ah! servile Italy, grief's hostelry! A ship without a pilot in great tempest! No Lady thou of Provinces, but brothel!

That noble soul was so impatient, only At the sweet sound of his own native land, To make its citizen glad welcome there;

And now within thee are not without war Thy living ones, and one doth gnaw the other Of those whom one wall and one fosse shut in!

Search, wretched one, all round about the shores Thy seaboard, and then look within thy bosom, If any part of thee enjoyeth peace!

What boots it, that for thee Justinian The bridle mend, if empty be the saddle? Withouten this the shame would be the less.

Ah! people, thou that oughtest to be devout, And to let Caesar sit upon the saddle, If well thou hearest what God teacheth thee,

Behold how fell this wild beast has become, Being no longer by the spur corrected, Since thou hast laid thy hand upon the bridle.

O German Albert! who abandonest Her that has grown recalcitrant and savage, And oughtest to bestride her saddle-bow,

May a just judgment from the stars down fall Upon thy blood, and be
it new and open, That thy successor may have fear thereof;

Because thy father and thyself have suffered, By greed of those
transalpine lands distrained, The garden of the empire to be waste.

Come and behold Montecchi and Cappelletti, Monaldi and Fillippeschi,
careless man! Those sad already, and these doubt-depressed!

Come, cruel one! come and behold the oppression Of thy nobility, and
cure their wounds, And thou shalt see how safe is Santafiore!

Come and behold thy Rome, that is lamenting, Widowed, alone, and
day and night exclaims, "My Caesar, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Come and behold how loving are the people; And if for us no pity
moveth thee, Come and be made ashamed of thy renown!

And if it lawful be, O Jove Supreme! Who upon earth for us wast
crucified, Are thy just eyes averted elsewhere?

Or preparation is 't, that, in the abyss Of thine own counsel, for some
good thou makest From our perception utterly cut off?

For all the towns of Italy are full Of tyrants, and becometh a Marcellus
Each peasant churl who plays the partisan!

My Florence! well mayst thou contented be With this digression,
which concerns thee not, Thanks to thy people who such forethought take!

Many at heart have justice, but shoot slowly, That unadvised they
come not to the bow, But on their very lips thy people have it!

Many refuse to bear the common burden; But thy solicitous people
answereth Without being asked, and crieth: "I submit."

Now be thou joyful, for thou hast good reason; Thou affluent, thou in
peace, thou full of wisdom! If I speak true, the event conceals it not.

Athens and Lacedaemon, they who made The ancient laws, and were
so civilized, Made towards living well a little sign

Compared with thee, who makest such fine-spun Provisions, that to
middle of November Reaches not what thou in October spinnest.

How oft, within the time of thy remembrance, Laws, money, offices,
and usages Hast thou remodelled, and renewed thy members?

And if thou mind thee well, and see the light, Thou shalt behold
thyself like a sick woman, Who cannot find repose upon her down,

But by her tossing wardeth off her pain.

Purgatorio: Canto VII

After the gracious and glad salutations
Had three and four times been
reiterated, Sordello backward drew and said, "Who are you?"

"Or ever to this mountain were directed
The souls deserving to ascend
to God, My bones were buried by Octavian.

I am Virgilius; and for no crime else
Did I lose heaven, than for not
having faith;" In this wise then my Leader made reply.

As one who suddenly before him sees
Something whereat he marvels,
who believes And yet does not, saying, "It is! it is not!"

So he appeared; and then bowed down his brow,
And with humility
returned towards him, And, where inferiors embrace, embraced him.

"O glory of the Latians, thou," he said, "Through whom our language
showed what it could do O pride eternal of the place I came from,

What merit or what grace to me reveals thee? If I to hear thy words be
worthy, tell me If thou dost come from Hell, and from what cloister."

"Through all the circles of the doleful realm," Responded he, "have I
come hitherward; Heaven's power impelled me, and with that I come.

I by not doing, not by doing, lost
The sight of that high sun which thou
desirest, And which too late by me was recognized.

A place there is below not sad with torments,
But darkness only, where
the lamentations Have not the sound of wailing, but are sighs.

There dwell I with the little innocents
Snatched by the teeth of Death,
or ever they Were from our human sinfulness exempt.

There dwell I among those who the three saintly
Virtues did not put on,
and without vice The others knew and followed all of them.

But if thou know and can, some indication
Give us by which we may
the sooner come Where Purgatory has its right beginning."

He answered: "No fixed place has been assigned us; 'Tis lawful for me
to go up and round; So far as I can go, as guide I join thee.

But see already how the day declines, And to go up by night we are
not able; Therefore 'tis well to think of some fair sojourn.

Souls are there on the right hand here withdrawn; If thou permit me I
will lead thee to them, And thou shalt know them not without delight."

"How is this?" was the answer; "should one wish To mount by night would he prevented be By others? or mayhap would not have power?"

And on the ground the good Sordello drew His finger, saying, "See, this line alone Thou couldst not pass after the sun is gone;

Not that aught else would hindrance give, however, To going up, save the nocturnal darkness; This with the want of power the will perplexes.

We might indeed therewith return below, And, wandering, walk the hill-side round about, While the horizon holds the day imprisoned."

Thereon my Lord, as if in wonder, said: "Do thou conduct us thither, where thou sayest That we can take delight in tarrying."

Little had we withdrawn us from that place, When I perceived the mount was hollowed out In fashion as the valleys here are hollowed.

"Thitherward," said that shade, "will we repair, Where of itself the hill-side makes a lap, And there for the new day will we await."

'Twixt hill and plain there was a winding path Which led us to the margin of that dell, Where dies the border more than half away.

Gold and fine silver, and scarlet and pearl-white, The Indian wood resplendent and serene, Fresh emerald the moment it is broken,

By herbage and by flowers within that hollow Planted, each one in colour would be vanquished, As by its greater vanquished is the less.

Nor in that place had nature painted only, But of the sweetness of a thousand odours Made there a mingled fragrance and unknown.

"Salve Regina," on the green and flowers There seated, singing, spirits I beheld, Which were not visible outside the valley.

"Before the scanty sun now seeks his nest," Began the Mantuan who had led us thither, "Among them do not wish me to conduct you.

Better from off this ledge the acts and faces Of all of them will you discriminate, Than in the plain below received among them.

He who sits highest, and the semblance bears Of having what he should have done neglected, And to the others' song moves not his lips,

Rudolph the Emperor was, who had the power To heal the wounds that Italy have slain, So that through others slowly she revives.

The other, who in look doth comfort him, Governed the region where the water springs, The Moldau bears the Elbe, and Elbe the sea.

His name was Ottocar; and in swaddling-clothes Far better he than
bearded Wincelous His son, who feeds in luxury and ease.

And the small-nosed, who close in council seems With him that has an
aspect so benign, Died fleeing and disflowering the lily;

Look there, how he is beating at his breast! Behold the other one, who
for his cheek Sighing has made of his own palm a bed;

Father and father-in-law of France's Pest Are they, and know his
vicious life and lewd, And hence proceeds the grief that so doth pierce
them.

He who appears so stalwart, and chimes in, Singing, with that one of
the manly nose, The cord of every valour wore begirt;

And if as King had after him remained The stripling who in rear of
him is sitting, Well had the valour passed from vase to vase,

Which cannot of the other heirs be said. Frederick and Jacomo possess
the realms, But none the better heritage possesses.

Not oftentimes upriseth through the branches The probity of man; and
this He wills Who gives it, so that we may ask of Him.

Eke to the large-nosed reach my words, no less Than to the other, Pier,
who with him sings; Whence Provence and Apulia grieve already

The plant is as inferior to its seed, As more than Beatrice and Margaret
Costanza boasteth of her husband still.

Behold the monarch of the simple life, Harry of England, sitting there
alone; He in his branches has a better issue.

He who the lowest on the ground among them Sits looking upward, is
the Marquis William, For whose sake Alessandria and her war

Make Monferrat and Canavese weep."

Purgatorio: Canto VIII

'Twas now the hour that turneth back desire In those who sail the sea,
and melts the heart, The day they've said to their sweet friends farewell,

And the new pilgrim penetrates with love, If he doth hear from far
away a bell That seemeth to deplore the dying day,

When I began to make of no avail My hearing, and to watch one of the
souls Uprisen, that begged attention with its hand.

It joined and lifted upward both its palms, Fixing its eyes upon the
orient, As if it said to God, "Naught else I care for."

"Te lucis ante" so devoutly issued Forth from its mouth, and with such
dulcet notes, It made me issue forth from my own mind.

And then the others, sweetly and devoutly, Accompanied it through all
the hymn entire, Having their eyes on the supernal wheels.

Here, Reader, fix thine eyes well on the truth, For now indeed so
subtile is the veil, Surely to penetrate within is easy.

I saw that army of the gentle-born Thereafterward in silence upward
gaze, As if in expectation, pale and humble;

And from on high come forth and down descend, I saw two Angels
with two flaming swords, Truncated and deprived of their points.

Green as the little leaflets just now born Their garments were, which,
by their verdant pinions Beaten and blown abroad, they trailed behind.

One just above us came to take his station, And one descended to the
opposite bank, So that the people were contained between them.

Clearly in them discerned I the blond head; But in their faces was the
eye bewildered, As faculty confounded by excess.

"From Mary's bosom both of them have come," Sordello said, "as
guardians of the valley Against the serpent, that will come anon."

Whereupon I, who knew not by what road, Turned round about, and
closely drew myself, Utterly frozen, to the faithful shoulders.

And once again Sordello: "Now descend we 'Mid the grand shades,
and we will speak to them; Right pleasant will it be for them to see you."

Only three steps I think that I descended, And was below, and saw one
who was looking Only at me, as if he fain would know me.

Already now the air was growing dark, But not so that between his eyes and mine It did not show what it before locked up.

Tow'rds me he moved, and I tow'rds him did move; Noble Judge Nino! how it me delighted, When I beheld thee not among the damned!

No greeting fair was left unsaid between us; Then asked he: "How long is it since thou camest O'er the far waters to the mountain's foot?"

"Oh!" said I to him, "through the dismal places I came this morn; and am in the first life, Albeit the other, going thus, I gain."

And on the instant my reply was heard, He and Sordello both shrank back from me, Like people who are suddenly bewildered.

One to Virgilius, and the other turned To one who sat there, crying, "Up, Currado! Come and behold what God in grace has willed!"

Then, turned to me: "By that especial grace Thou owest unto Him, who so conceals His own first wherefore, that it has no ford,

When thou shalt be beyond the waters wide, Tell my Giovanna that she pray for me, Where answer to the innocent is made.

I do not think her mother loves me more, Since she has laid aside her wimple white, Which she, unhappy, needs must wish again.

Through her full easily is comprehended How long in woman lasts the fire of love, If eye or touch do not relight it often.

So fair a hatchment will not make for her The Viper marshalling the Milanese A-field, as would have made Gallura's Cock."

In this wise spake he, with the stamp impressed Upon his aspect of that righteous zeal Which measurably burneth in the heart.

My greedy eyes still wandered up to heaven, Still to that point where slowest are the stars, Even as a wheel the nearest to its axle.

And my Conductor: "Son, what dost thou gaze at Up there?" And I to him: "At those three torches With which this hither pole is all on fire."

And he to me: "The four resplendent stars Thou sawest this morning are down yonder low, And these have mounted up to where those were."

As he was speaking, to himself Sordello Drew him, and said, "Lo there our Adversary!" And pointed with his finger to look thither. Upon the side on which the little valley No barrier hath, a serpent was; perchance The same which gave to Eve the bitter food.

'Twixt grass and flowers came on the evil streak, Turning at times its head about, and licking Its back like to a beast that smoothes itself.

I did not see, and therefore cannot say How the celestial falcons 'gan to move, But well I saw that they were both in motion.

Hearing the air cleft by their verdant wings, The serpent fled, and round the Angels wheeled, Up to their stations flying back alike.

The shade that to the Judge had near approached When he had called, throughout that whole assault Had not a moment loosed its gaze on me.

"So may the light that leadeth thee on high Find in thine own free-will as much of wax As needful is up to the highest azure,"

Began it, "if some true intelligence Of Valdimagra or its neighbourhood Thou knowest, tell it me, who once was great there.

Currado Malaspina was I called; I'm not the elder, but from him descended; To mine I bore the love which here refineth."

"O," said I unto him, "through your domains I never passed, but where is there a dwelling Throughout all Europe, where they are not known?

That fame, which doeth honour to your house, Proclaims its Signors and proclaims its land, So that he knows of them who ne'er was there.

And, as I hope for heaven, I swear to you Your honoured family in naught abates The glory of the purse and of the sword.

It is so privileged by use and nature, That though a guilty head misguide the world, Sole it goes right, and scorns the evil way."

And he: "Now go; for the sun shall not lie Seven times upon the pillow which the Ram With all his four feet covers and bestrides,

Before that such a courteous opinion Shall in the middle of thy head be nailed With greater nails than of another's speech,

Unless the course of justice standeth still."

Purgatorio: Canto IX

The concubine of old Tithonus now Gleamed white upon the eastern balcony, Forth from the arms of her sweet paramour;

With gems her forehead all relucent was, Set in the shape of that cold animal Which with its tail doth smite amain the nations,

And of the steps, with which she mounts, the Night Had taken two in that place where we were, And now the third was bending down its wings;

When I, who something had of Adam in me, Vanquished by sleep, upon the grass reclined, There were all five of us already sat.

Just at the hour when her sad lay begins The little swallow, near unto the morning, Perchance in memory of her former woes,

And when the mind of man, a wanderer More from the flesh, and less by thought imprisoned, Almost prophetic in its visions is,

In dreams it seemed to me I saw suspended An eagle in the sky, with plumes of gold, With wings wide open, and intent to stoop,

And this, it seemed to me, was where had been By Ganymede his kith and kin abandoned, When to the high consistory he was rapt.

I thought within myself, perchance he strikes From habit only here, and from elsewhere Disdains to bear up any in his feet.

Then wheeling somewhat more, it seemed to me, Terrible as the lightning he descended, And snatched me upward even to the fire.

Therein it seemed that he and I were burning, And the imagined fire did scorch me so, That of necessity my sleep was broken.

Not otherwise Achilles started up, Around him turning his awakened eyes, And knowing not the place in which he was,

What time from Chiron stealthily his mother Carried him sleeping in her arms to Scyros, Wherefrom the Greeks withdrew him afterwards,

Than I upstarted, when from off my face Sleep fled away; and pallid I became, As doth the man who freezes with affright.

Only my Comforter was at my side, And now the sun was more than two hours high, And turned towards the sea-shore was my face.

"Be not intimidated," said my Lord, "Be reassured, for all is well with us; Do not restrain, but put forth all thy strength.

Thou hast at length arrived at Purgatory; See there the cliff that closes it around; See there the entrance, where it seems disjointed.

Whilom at dawn, which doth precede the day, When inwardly thy spirit was asleep Upon the flowers that deck the land below,

There came a Lady and said: 'I am Lucia; Let me take this one up, who is asleep; So will I make his journey easier for him.'

Sordello and the other noble shapes Remained; she took thee, and, as day grew bright, Upward she came, and I upon her footsteps.

She laid thee here; and first her beauteous eyes That open entrance pointed out to me; Then she and sleep together went away."

In guise of one whose doubts are reassured, And who to confidence his fear doth change, After the truth has been discovered to him,

So did I change; and when without disquiet My Leader saw me, up along the cliff He moved, and I behind him, tow'rd the height.

Reader, thou seest well how I exalt My theme, and therefore if with greater art I fortify it, marvel not thereat.

Nearer approached we, and were in such place, That there, where first appeared to me a rift Like to a crevice that disparts a wall,

I saw a portal, and three stairs beneath, Diverse in colour, to go up to it, And a gate-keeper, who yet spake no word.

And as I opened more and more mine eyes, I saw him seated on the highest stair, Such in the face that I endured it not.

And in his hand he had a naked sword, Which so reflected back the sunbeams tow'rds us, That oft in vain I lifted up mine eyes.

"Tell it from where you are, what is't you wish?" Began he to exclaim; "where is the escort? Take heed your coming hither harm you not!"

"A Lady of Heaven, with these things conversant," My Master answered him, "but even now Said to us, 'Thither go; there is the portal.'"

"And may she speed your footsteps in all good," Again began the courteous janitor; "Come forward then unto these stairs of ours."

Thither did we approach; and the first stair Was marble white, so polished and so smooth, I mirrored myself therein as I appear.

The second, tinct of deeper hue than perse, Was of a calcined and uneven stone, Cracked all asunder lengthwise and across.

The third, that uppermost rests massively, Porphyry seemed to me, as flaming red As blood that from a vein is spirting forth.

Both of his feet was holding upon this The Angel of God, upon the threshold seated, Which seemed to me a stone of diamond.

Along the three stairs upward with good will Did my Conductor draw me, saying: "Ask Humbly that he the fastening may undo."

Devoutly at the holy feet I cast me, For mercy's sake besought that he would open, But first upon my breast three times I smote.

Seven P's upon my forehead he described With the sword's point, and, "Take heed that thou wash These wounds, when thou shalt be within," he said.

Ashes, or earth that dry is excavated, Of the same colour were with his attire, And from beneath it he drew forth two keys.

One was of gold, and the other was of silver; First with the white, and after with the yellow, Plied he the door, so that I was content.

"Whenever faileth either of these keys So that it turn not rightly in the lock," He said to us, "this entrance doth not open.

More precious one is, but the other needs More art and intellect ere it unlock, For it is that which doth the knot unloose.

From Peter I have them; and he bade me err Rather in opening than in keeping shut, If people but fall down before my feet."

Then pushed the portals of the sacred door, Exclaiming: "Enter; but I give you warning That forth returns whoever looks behind."

And when upon their hinges were turned round The swivels of that consecrated gate, Which are of metal, massive and sonorous,

Roared not so loud, nor so discordant seemed Tarpeia, when was ta'en from it the good Metellus, wherefore meagre it remained.

At the first thunder-peal I turned attentive, And "Te Deum laudamus" seemed to hear In voices mingled with sweet melody.

Exactly such an image rendered me That which I heard, as we are wont to catch, When people singing with the organ stand;

For now we hear, and now hear not, the words.

Purgatorio: Canto X

When we had crossed the threshold of the door Which the perverted
love of souls disuses, Because it makes the crooked way seem straight,

Re-echoing I heard it closed again; And if I had turned back mine eyes
upon it, What for my failing had been fit excuse?

We mounted upward through a rifted rock, Which undulated to this
side and that, Even as a wave receding and advancing.

"Here it behoves us use a little art," Began my Leader, "to adapt
ourselves Now here, now there, to the receding side."

And this our footsteps so infrequent made, That sooner had the moon's
decreasing disk Regained its bed to sink again to rest,

Than we were forth from out that needle's eye; But when we free and
in the open were, There where the mountain backward piles itself,

I wearied out, and both of us uncertain About our way, we stopped
upon a plain More desolate than roads across the deserts.

From where its margin borders on the void, To foot of the high bank
that ever rises, A human body three times told would measure;

And far as eye of mine could wing its flight, Now on the left, and on
the right flank now, The same this cornice did appear to me.

Thereon our feet had not been moved as yet, When I perceived the
embankment round about, Which all right of ascent had interdicted,

To be of marble white, and so adorned With sculptures, that not only
Polycletus, But Nature's self, had there been put to shame.

The Angel, who came down to earth with tidings Of peace, that had
been wept for many a year, And opened Heaven from its long interdict,

In front of us appeared so truthfully There sculptured in a gracious
attitude, He did not seem an image that is silent.

One would have sworn that he was saying, "Ave;" For she was there in
effigy portrayed Who turned the key to ope the exalted love,

And in her mien this language had impressed, "Ecce ancilla Dei," as
distinctly As any figure stamps itself in wax.

"Keep not thy mind upon one place alone," The gentle Master said,
who had me standing Upon that side where people have their hearts;

Whereat I moved mine eyes, and I beheld In rear of Mary, and upon that side Where he was standing who conducted me,

Another story on the rock imposed; Wherefore I passed Virgilius and drew near, So that before mine eyes it might be set.

There sculptured in the self-same marble were The cart and oxen, drawing the holy ark, Wherefore one dreads an office not appointed.

People appeared in front, and all of them In seven choirs divided, of two senses Made one say "No," the other, "Yes, they sing."

Likewise unto the smoke of the frankincense, Which there was imaged forth, the eyes and nose Were in the yes and no discordant made.

Preceded there the vessel benedict, Dancing with girded loins, the humble Psalmist, And more and less than King was he in this.

Opposite, represented at the window Of a great palace, Michal looked upon him, Even as a woman scornful and afflicted.

I moved my feet from where I had been standing, To examine near at hand another story, Which after Michal glimmered white upon me.

There the high glory of the Roman Prince Was chronicled, whose great beneficence Moved Gregory to his great victory;

'Tis of the Emperor Trajan I am speaking; And a poor widow at his bridle stood, In attitude of weeping and of grief.

Around about him seemed it thronged and full Of cavaliers, and the eagles in the gold Above them visibly in the wind were moving.

The wretched woman in the midst of these Seemed to be saying: "Give me vengeance, Lord, For my dead son, for whom my heart is breaking."

And he to answer her: "Now wait until I shall return." And she: "My Lord," like one In whom grief is impatient, "shouldst thou not

Return?" And he: "Who shall be where I am Will give it thee." And she: "Good deed of others What boots it thee, if thou neglect thine own?"

Whence he: "Now comfort thee, for it behoves me That I discharge my duty ere I move; Justice so wills, and pity doth retain me."

He who on no new thing has ever looked Was the creator of this visible language, Novel to us, for here it is not found.

While I delighted me in contemplating The images of such humility, And dear to look on for their Maker's sake,

"Behold, upon this side, but rare they make Their steps," the Poet murmured, "many people; These will direct us to the lofty stairs."

Mine eyes, that in beholding were intent To see new things, of which they curious are, In turning round towards him were not slow.

But still I wish not, Reader, thou shouldst swerve From thy good purposes, because thou hearest How God ordaineth that the debt be paid;

Attend not to the fashion of the torment, Think of what follows; think that at the worst It cannot reach beyond the mighty sentence.

"Master," began I, "that which I behold Moving towards us seems to me not persons, And what I know not, so in sight I waver."

And he to me: "The grievous quality Of this their torment bows them so to earth, That my own eyes at first contended with it;

But look there fixedly, and disentangle By sight what cometh underneath those stones; Already canst thou see how each is stricken."

O ye proud Christians! wretched, weary ones! Who, in the vision of the mind infirm Confidence have in your backsliding steps,

Do ye not comprehend that we are worms, Born to bring forth the angelic butterfly That flieth unto judgment without screen?

Why floats aloft your spirit high in air? Like are ye unto insects undeveloped, Even as the worm in whom formation fails!

As to sustain a ceiling or a roof, In place of corbel, oftentimes a figure Is seen to join its knees unto its breast,

Which makes of the unreal real anguish Arise in him who sees it, fashioned thus Beheld I those, when I had ta'en good heed.

True is it, they were more or less bent down, According as they more or less were laden; And he who had most patience in his looks

Weeping did seem to say, "I can no more!"

Purgatorio: Canto XI

"Our Father, thou who dwellest in the heavens, Not circumscribed,
but from the greater love Thou bearest to the first effects on high,

Praised be thy name and thine omnipotence By every creature, as
befitting is To render thanks to thy sweet effluence.

Come unto us the peace of thy dominion, For unto it we cannot of
ourselves, If it come not, with all our intellect.

Even as thine own Angels of their will Make sacrifice to thee, Hosanna
singing, So may all men make sacrifice of theirs.

Give unto us this day our daily manna, Withouten which in this rough
wilderness Backward goes he who toils most to advance.

And even as we the trespass we have suffered Pardon in one another,
pardon thou Benignly, and regard not our desert.

Our virtue, which is easily o'ercome, Put not to proof with the old
Adversary, But thou from him who spurs it so, deliver. This last petition
verily, dear Lord, Not for ourselves is made, who need it not, But for their
sake who have remained behind us."

Thus for themselves and us good furtherance Those shades imploring,
went beneath a weight Like unto that of which we sometimes dream,

Unequally in anguish round and round And weary all, upon that
foremost cornice, Purging away the smoke-stains of the world.

If there good words are always said for us, What may not here be said
and done for them, By those who have a good root to their will?

Well may we help them wash away the marks That hence they carried,
so that clean and light They may ascend unto the starry wheels!

"Ah! so may pity and justice you disburden Soon, that ye may have
power to move the wing, That shall uplift you after your desire,

Show us on which hand tow'rd the stairs the way Is shortest, and if
more than one the passes, Point us out that which least abruptly falls;

For he who cometh with me, through the burden Of Adam's flesh
wherewith he is invested, Against his will is chary of his climbing."

The words of theirs which they returned to those That he whom I was
following had spoken, It was not manifest from whom they came,

But it was said: "To the right hand come with us
Along the bank, and ye shall find a pass
Possible for living person to ascend.

And were I not impeded by the stone, Which this proud neck of mine
doth subjugate, Whence I am forced to hold my visage down,

Him, who still lives and does not name himself, Would I regard, to see
if I may know him And make him piteous unto this burden.

A Latian was I, and born of a great Tuscan; Guglielmo Aldobrandeschi
was my father; I know not if his name were ever with you.

The ancient blood and deeds of gallantry Of my progenitors so
arrogant made me That, thinking not upon the common mother,

All men I held in scorn to such extent I died therefor, as know the
Sienese, And every child in Campagnatico.

I am Umberto; and not to me alone Has pride done harm, but all my
kith and kin Has with it dragged into adversity.

And here must I this burden bear for it Till God be satisfied, since I did
not Among the living, here among the dead."

Listening I downward bent my countenance; And one of them, not this
one who was speaking, Twisted himself beneath the weight that cramps
him,

And looked at me, and knew me, and called out, Keeping his eyes
laboriously fixed On me, who all bowed down was going with them.

"O," asked I him, "art thou not Oderisi, Agobbio's honour, and honour
of that art Which is in Paris called illuminating?"

"Brother," said he, "more laughing are the leaves Touched by the brush
of Franco Bolognese; All his the honour now, and mine in part.

In sooth I had not been so courteous While I was living, for the great
desire Of excellence, on which my heart was bent.

Here of such pride is paid the forfeiture; And yet I should not be here,
were it not That, having power to sin, I turned to God.

O thou vain glory of the human powers, How little green upon thy
summit lingers, If't be not followed by an age of grossness!

In painting Cimabue thought that he Should hold the field, now Giotto
has the cry, So that the other's fame is growing dim.

So has one Guido from the other taken The glory of our tongue, and he

perchance Is born, who from the nest shall chase them both.

Naught is this mundane rumour but a breath Of wind, that comes now this way and now that, And changes name, because it changes side.

What fame shalt thou have more, if old peel off From thee thy flesh, than if thou hadst been dead Before thou left the 'pappo' and the 'dindi,'

Ere pass a thousand years? which is a shorter Space to the eterne, than twinkling of an eye Unto the circle that in heaven wheels slowest.

With him, who takes so little of the road In front of me, all Tuscany resounded; And now he scarce is lisped of in Siena,

Where he was lord, what time was overthrown The Florentine delirium, that superb Was at that day as now 'tis prostitute.

Your reputation is the colour of grass Which comes and goes, and that discolours it By which it issues green from out the earth."

And I: "Thy true speech fills my heart with good Humility, and great tumour thou assuagest; But who is he, of whom just now thou spakest?"

"That," he replied, "is Provenzan Salvani, And he is here because he had presumed To bring Siena all into his hands.

He has gone thus, and goeth without rest E'er since he died; such money renders back In payment he who is on earth too daring."

And I: "If every spirit who awaits The verge of life before that he repent, Remains below there and ascends not hither,

(Unless good orison shall him bestead,) Until as much time as he lived be passed, How was the coming granted him in largess?"

"When he in greatest splendour lived," said he, "Freely upon the Campo of Siena, All shame being laid aside, he placed himself;

And there to draw his friend from the duress Which in the prison-house of Charles he suffered, He brought himself to tremble in each vein.

I say no more, and know that I speak darkly; Yet little time shall pass before thy neighbours Will so demean themselves that thou canst gloss it.

This action has released him from those confines."

Purgatorio: Canto XII

Abreast, like oxen going in a yoke, I with that heavy-laden soul went on,
As long as the sweet pedagogue permitted;

But when he said, "Leave him, and onward pass, For here 'tis good that
with the sail and oars, As much as may be, each push on his barque;"

Upright, as walking wills it, I redressed My person, notwithstanding
that my thoughts Remained within me downcast and abashed.

I had moved on, and followed willingly The footsteps of my Master,
and we both Already showed how light of foot we were,

When unto me he said: "Cast down thine eyes; 'Twere well for thee, to
alleviate the way, To look upon the bed beneath thy feet."

As, that some memory may exist of them, Above the buried dead their
tombs in earth Bear sculptured on them what they were before;

Whence often there we weep for them afresh, From pricking of
remembrance, which alone To the compassionate doth set its spur;

So saw I there, but of a better semblance In point of artifice, with
figures covered Whate'er as pathway from the mount projects.

I saw that one who was created noble More than all other creatures,
down from heaven Flaming with lightnings fall upon one side.

I saw Briareus smitten by the dart Celestial, lying on the other side,
Heavy upon the earth by mortal frost.

I saw Thymbraeus, Pallas saw, and Mars, Still clad in armour round
about their father, Gaze at the scattered members of the giants.

I saw, at foot of his great labour, Nimrod, As if bewildered, looking at
the people Who had been proud with him in Sennaar.

O Niobe! with what afflicted eyes Thee I beheld upon the pathway
traced, Between thy seven and seven children slain!

O Saul! how fallen upon thy proper sword Didst thou appear there
lifeless in Gilboa, That felt thereafter neither rain nor dew!

O mad Arachne! so I thee beheld E'en then half spider, sad upon the
shreds Of fabric wrought in evil hour for thee!

O Rehoboam! no more seems to threaten Thine image there; but full of
consternation A chariot bears it off, when none pursues!

Displayed moreo'er the adamantine pavement How unto his own
mother made Alcmaeon Costly appear the luckless ornament;

Displayed how his own sons did throw themselves Upon Sennacherib
within the temple, And how, he being dead, they left him there;

Displayed the ruin and the cruel carnage That Tomyris wrought, when
she to Cyrus said, "Blood didst thou thirst for, and with blood I glut thee!"

Displayed how routed fled the Assyrians After that Holofernes had
been slain, And likewise the remainder of that slaughter.

I saw there Troy in ashes and in caverns; O Ilion! thee, how abject and
debased, Displayed the image that is there discerned!

Whoe'er of pencil master was or stile, That could portray the shades
and traits which there Would cause each subtile genius to admire?

Dead seemed the dead, the living seemed alive; Better than I saw not
who saw the truth, All that I trod upon while bowed I went.

Now wax ye proud, and on with looks uplifted, Ye sons of Eve, and
bow not down your faces So that ye may behold your evil ways!

More of the mount by us was now encompassed, And far more spent
the circuit of the sun, Than had the mind preoccupied imagined,

When he, who ever watchful in advance Was going on, began: "Lift up
thy head, 'Tis no more time to go thus meditating.

Lo there an Angel who is making haste To come towards us; lo,
returning is From service of the day the sixth handmaiden.

With reverence thine acts and looks adorn, So that he may delight to
speed us upward; Think that this day will never dawn again."

I was familiar with his admonition Ever to lose no time; so on this
theme He could not unto me speak covertly.

Towards us came the being beautiful Vested in white, and in his
countenance Such as appears the tremulous morning star.

His arms he opened, and opened then his wings; "Come," said he,
"near at hand here are the steps, And easy from henceforth is the ascent."

At this announcement few are they who come! O human creatures,
born to soar aloft, Why fall ye thus before a little wind?

He led us on to where the rock was cleft; There smote upon my
forehead with his wings, Then a safe passage promised unto me.

As on the right hand, to ascend the mount Where seated is the church
that lordeth it O'er the well-guided, above Rubaconte,

The bold abruptness of the ascent is broken By stairways that were
made there in the age When still were safe the ledger and the stave,

E'en thus attempered is the bank which falls Sheer downward from the
second circle there; But on this, side and that the high rock graze.

As we were turning thitherward our persons, "Beati pauperes spiritu,"
voices Sang in such wise that speech could tell it not.

Ah me! how different are these entrances From the Infernal! for with
anthems here One enters, and below with wild laments.

We now were hunting up the sacred stairs, And it appeared to me by
far more easy Than on the plain it had appeared before.

Whence I: "My Master, say, what heavy thing Has been uplifted from
me, so that hardly Aught of fatigue is felt by me in walking?"

He answered: "When the P's which have remained Still on thy face
almost obliterate Shall wholly, as the first is, be erased,

Thy feet will be so vanquished by good will, That not alone they shall
not feel fatigue, But urging up will be to them delight."

Then did I even as they do who are going With something on the head
to them unknown, Unless the signs of others make them doubt,

Wherefore the hand to ascertain is helpful, And seeks and finds, and
doth fulfill the office Which cannot be accomplished by the sight;

And with the fingers of the right hand spread I found but six the letters,
that had carved Upon my temples he who bore the keys;

Upon beholding which my Leader smiled.

Purgatorio: Canto XIII

We were upon the summit of the stairs, Where for the second time is cut away The mountain, which ascending shriveth all.

There in like manner doth a cornice bind The hill all round about, as does the first, Save that its arc more suddenly is curved.

Shade is there none, nor sculpture that appears; So seems the bank, and so the road seems smooth, With but the livid colour of the stone.

"If to inquire we wait for people here," The Poet said, "I fear that peradventure Too much delay will our election have."

Then steadfast on the sun his eyes he fixed, Made his right side the centre of his motion, And turned the left part of himself about.

"O thou sweet light! with trust in whom I enter Upon this novel journey, do thou lead us," Said he, "as one within here should be led.

Thou warmest the world, thou shinest over it; If other reason prompt not otherwise, Thy rays should evermore our leaders be!"

As much as here is counted for a mile, So much already there had we advanced In little time, by dint of ready will;

And tow'rds us there were heard to fly, albeit They were not visible, spirits uttering Unto Love's table courteous invitations,

The first voice that passed onward in its flight, "Vinum non habent," said in accents loud, And went reiterating it behind us.

And ere it wholly grew inaudible Because of distance, passed another, crying, "I am Orestes!" and it also stayed not.

"O," said I, "Father, these, what voices are they?" And even as I asked, behold the third, Saying: "Love those from whom ye have had evil!"

And the good Master said: "This circle scourges The sin of envy, and on that account Are drawn from love the lashes of the scourge.

The bridle of another sound shall be; I think that thou wilt hear it, as I judge, Before thou comest to the Pass of Pardon.

But fix thine eyes athwart the air right steadfast, And people thou wilt see before us sitting, And each one close against the cliff is seated."

Then wider than at first mine eyes I opened; I looked before me, and saw shades with mantles Not from the colour of the stone diverse.

And when we were a little farther onward, I heard a cry of, "Mary, pray for us!" A cry of, "Michael, Peter, and all Saints!"

I do not think there walketh still on earth A man so hard, that he would not be pierced With pity at what afterward I saw.

For when I had approached so near to them That manifest to me their acts became, Drained was I at the eyes by heavy grief.

Covered with sackcloth vile they seemed to me, And one sustained the other with his shoulder, And all of them were by the bank sustained.

Thus do the blind, in want of livelihood, Stand at the doors of churches asking alms, And one upon another leans his head,

So that in others pity soon may rise, Not only at the accent of their words, But at their aspect, which no less implores.

And as unto the blind the sun comes not, So to the shades, of whom just now I spake, Heaven's light will not be bounteous of itself;

For all their lids an iron wire transpierces, And sews them up, as to a sparrowhawk wild Is done, because it will not quiet stay.

To me it seemed, in passing, to do outrage, Seeing the others without being seen; Wherefore I turned me to my counsel sage.

Well knew he what the mute one wished to say, And therefore waited not for my demand, But said: "Speak, and be brief, and to the point."

I had Virgilius upon that side Of the embankment from which one may fall, Since by no border 'tis engarlanded;

Upon the other side of me I had The shades devout, who through the horrible seam Pressed out the tears so that they bathed their cheeks.

To them I turned me, and, "O people, certain," Began I, "of beholding the high light, Which your desire has solely in its care,

So may grace speedily dissolve the scum Upon your consciences, that limpidly Through them descend the river of the mind,

Tell me, for dear 'twill be to me and gracious, If any soul among you here is Latian, And 'twill perchance be good for him I learn it."

"O brother mine, each one is citizen Of one true city; but thy meaning is, Who may have lived in Italy a pilgrim."

By way of answer this I seemed to hear A little farther on than where I stood, Whereat I made myself still nearer heard.

Among the rest I saw a shade that waited In aspect, and should any one ask how, Its chin it lifted upward like a blind man.

"Spirit," I said, "who stoopest to ascend, If thou art he who did reply to me, Make thyself known to me by place or name."

"Sienese was I," it replied, "and with The others here recleanse my guilty life, Weeping to Him to lend himself to us.

Sapient I was not, although I Sapia Was called, and I was at another's harm More happy far than at my own good fortune.

And that thou mayst not think that I deceive thee, Hear if I was as foolish as I tell thee. The arc already of my years descending,

My fellow-citizens near unto Colle Were joined in battle with their adversaries, And I was praying God for what he willed.

Routed were they, and turned into the bitter Passes of flight; and I, the chase beholding, A joy received unequalled by all others;

So that I lifted upward my bold face Crying to God, 'Henceforth I fear thee not,' As did the blackbird at the little sunshine.

Peace I desired with God at the extreme Of my existence, and as yet would not My debt have been by penitence discharged,

Had it not been that in remembrance held me Pier Pettignano in his holy prayers, Who out of charity was grieved for me.

But who art thou, that into our conditions Questioning goest, and hast thine eyes unbound As I believe, and breathing dost discourse?"

"Mine eyes," I said, "will yet be here ta'en from me, But for short space; for small is the offence Committed by their being turned with envy.

Far greater is the fear, wherein suspended My soul is, of the torment underneath, For even now the load down there weighs on me."

And she to me: "Who led thee, then, among us Up here, if to return below thou thinkest?" And I: "He who is with me, and speaks not;

And living am I; therefore ask of me, Spirit elect, if thou wouldst have me move O'er yonder yet my mortal feet for thee."

"O, this is such a novel thing to hear," She answered, "that great sign it is God loves thee; Therefore with prayer of thine sometimes assist me.

And I implore, by what thou most desirest, If e'er thou treadest the soil of Tuscany, Well with my kindred reinstate my fame.

Them wilt thou see among that people vain Who hope in Talamone,
and will lose there More hope than in discovering the Diana;
But there still more the admirals will lose."

Purgatorio: Canto XIV

"Who is this one that goes about our mountain, Or ever Death has given him power of flight, And opes his eyes and shuts them at his will?"

"I know not who, but know he's not alone; Ask him thyself, for thou art nearer to him, And gently, so that he may speak, accost him."

Thus did two spirits, leaning tow'rds each other, Discourse about me there on the right hand; Then held supine their faces to address me.

And said the one: "O soul, that, fastened still Within the body, tow'rds the heaven art going, For charity console us, and declare

Whence comest and who art thou; for thou mak'st us As much to marvel at this grace of thine As must a thing that never yet has been."

And I: "Through midst of Tuscany there wanders A streamlet that is born in Falterona, And not a hundred miles of course suffice it;

From thereupon do I this body bring. To tell you who I am were speech in vain, Because my name as yet makes no great noise."

"If well thy meaning I can penetrate With intellect of mine," then answered me He who first spake, "thou speakest of the Arno."

And said the other to him: "Why concealed This one the appellation of that river, Even as a man doth of things horrible?"

And thus the shade that questioned was of this Himself acquitted: "I know not; but truly 'Tis fit the name of such a valley perish;

For from its fountain-head (where is so pregnant The Alpine mountain whence is cleft Peloro That in few places it that mark surpasses)

To where it yields itself in restoration Of what the heaven doth of the sea dry up, Whence have the rivers that which goes with them,

Virtue is like an enemy avoided By all, as is a serpent, through misfortune Of place, or through bad habit that impels them;

On which account have so transformed their nature The dwellers in that miserable valley, It seems that Circe had them in her pasture.

'Mid ugly swine, of acorns worthier Than other food for human use created, It first directeth its impoverished way.

Curs findeth it thereafter, coming downward, More snarling than their puissance demands, And turns from them disdainfully its muzzle.

It goes on falling, and the more it grows, The more it finds the dogs becoming wolves, This maledict and misadventurous ditch.

Descended then through many a hollow gulf, It finds the foxes so replete with fraud, They fear no cunning that may master them.

Nor will I cease because another hears me; And well 'twill be for him, if still he mind him Of what a truthful spirit to me unravels.

Thy grandson I behold, who doth become A hunter of those wolves upon the bank Of the wild stream, and terrifies them all.

He sells their flesh, it being yet alive; Thereafter slaughters them like ancient beeves; Many of life, himself of praise, deprives.

Blood-stained he issues from the dismal forest; He leaves it such, a thousand years from now In its primeval state 'tis not re-wooded."

As at the announcement of impending ills The face of him who listens is disturbed, From whate'er side the peril seize upon him;

So I beheld that other soul, which stood Turned round to listen, grow disturbed and sad, When it had gathered to itself the word.

The speech of one and aspect of the other Had me desirous made to know their names, And question mixed with prayers I made thereof,

Whereat the spirit which first spake to me Began again: "Thou wishest I should bring me To do for thee what thou'lt not do for me;

But since God willeth that in thee shine forth Such grace of his, I'll not be chary with thee; Know, then, that I Guido del Duca am.

My blood was so with envy set on fire, That if I had beheld a man make merry, Thou wouldst have seen me sprinkled o'er with pallor.

From my own sowing such the straw I reap! O human race! why dost thou set thy heart Where interdict of partnership must be?

This is Renier; this is the boast and honour Of the house of Calboli, where no one since Has made himself the heir of his desert.

And not alone his blood is made devoid, 'Twixt Po and mount, and sea-shore and the Reno, Of good required for truth and for diversion;

For all within these boundaries is full Of venomous roots, so that too tardily By cultivation now would they diminish.

Where is good Lizio, and Arrigo Manardi, Pier Traversaro, and Guido di Carpigna, O Romagnuoli into bastards turned?

When in Bologna will a Fabbro rise? When in Faenza a Bernardin di Fosco, The noble scion of ignoble seed?

Be not astonished, Tuscan, if I weep, When I remember, with Guido da Prata, Ugolin d' Azzo, who was living with us,

Frederick Tignoso and his company, The house of Traversara, and th' Anastagi, And one race and the other is extinct;

The dames and cavaliers, the toils and ease That filled our souls with love and courtesy, There where the hearts have so malicious grown!

O Brettinoro! why dost thou not flee, Seeing that all thy family is gone, And many people, not to be corrupted?

Bagnacaval does well in not begetting And ill does Castrocaro, and Conio worse, In taking trouble to beget such Counts.

Will do well the Pagani, when their Devil Shall have departed; but not therefore pure Will testimony of them e'er remain.

O Ugolin de' Fantoli, secure Thy name is, since no longer is awaited One who, degenerating, can obscure it!

But go now, Tuscan, for it now delights me To weep far better than it does to speak, So much has our discourse my mind distressed."

We were aware that those beloved souls Heard us depart; therefore, by keeping silent, They made us of our pathway confident.

When we became alone by going onward, Thunder, when it doth cleave the air, appeared A voice, that counter to us came, exclaiming:

"Shall slay me whosoever findeth me!" And fled as the reverberation dies If suddenly the cloud asunder bursts.

As soon as hearing had a truce from this, Behold another, with so great a crash, That it resembled thunderings following fast:

"I am Aglaurus, who became a stone!" And then, to press myself close to the Poet, I backward, and not forward, took a step.

Already on all sides the air was quiet; And said he to me: "That was the hard curb That ought to hold a man within his bounds;

But you take in the bait so that the hook Of the old Adversary draws you to him, And hence availeth little curb or call.

The heavens are calling you, and wheel around you, Displaying to you their eternal beauties, And still your eye is looking on the ground;

Whence He, who all discerns, chastises you."

Purgatorio: Canto XV

As much as 'twixt the close of the third hour And dawn of day
appeareth of that sphere Which aye in fashion of a child is playing,

So much it now appeared, towards the night, Was of his course
remaining to the sun; There it was evening, and 'twas midnight here;

And the rays smote the middle of our faces, Because by us the mount
was so encircled, That straight towards the west we now were going

When I perceived my forehead overpowered Beneath the splendour far
more than at first, And stupor were to me the things unknown,

Whereat towards the summit of my brow I raised my hands, and made
myself the visor Which the excessive glare diminishes.

As when from off the water, or a mirror, The sunbeam leaps unto the
opposite side, Ascending upward in the selfsame measure

That it descends, and deviates as far From falling of a stone in line
direct, (As demonstrate experiment and art,)

So it appeared to me that by a light Refracted there before me I was
smitten; On which account my sight was swift to flee.

"What is that, Father sweet, from which I cannot So fully screen my
sight that it avail me," Said I, "and seems towards us to be moving?"

"Marvel thou not, if dazzle thee as yet The family of heaven," he
answered me; "An angel 'tis, who comes to invite us upward.

Soon will it be, that to behold these things Shall not be grievous, but
delightful to thee As much as nature fashioned thee to feel."

When we had reached the Angel benedight, With joyful voice he said:
"Here enter in To stairway far less steep than are the others."

We mounting were, already thence departed, And "Beati misericordes"
was Behind us sung, "Rejoice, thou that o'ercomest!"

My Master and myself, we two alone Were going upward, and I
thought, in going, Some profit to acquire from words of his;

And I to him directed me, thus asking: "What did the spirit of
Romagna mean, Mentioning interdict and partnership?"

Whence he to me: "Of his own greatest failing He knows the harm;
and therefore wonder not If he reprove us, that we less may rue it.

Because are thither pointed your desires Where by companionship
each share is lessened, Envy doth ply the bellows to your sighs.

But if the love of the supernal sphere Should upwardly direct your
aspiration, There would not be that fear within your breast;

For there, as much the more as one says 'Our,' So much the more of
good each one possesses, And more of charity in that cloister burns."

"I am more hungering to be satisfied," I said, "than if I had before been
silent, And more of doubt within my mind I gather.

How can it be, that boon distributed The more possessors can more
wealthy make Therein, than if by few it be possessed?"

And he to me: "Because thou fixest still Thy mind entirely upon
earthly things, Thou pluckest darkness from the very light.

That goodness infinite and ineffable Which is above there, runneth
unto love, As to a lucid body comes the sunbeam.

So much it gives itself as it finds ardour, So that as far as charity
extends, O'er it increases the eternal valour.

And the more people thitherward aspire, More are there to love well,
and more they love there, And, as a mirror, one reflects the other.

And if my reasoning appease thee not, Thou shalt see Beatrice; and
she will fully Take from thee this and every other longing.

Endeavour, then, that soon may be extinct, As are the two already, the
five wounds That close themselves again by being painful."

Even as I wished to say, "Thou dost appease me," I saw that I had
reached another circle, So that my eager eyes made me keep silence.

There it appeared to me that in a vision Ecstatic on a sudden I was rapt,
And in a temple many persons saw;

And at the door a woman, with the sweet Behaviour of a mother,
saying: "Son, Why in this manner hast thou dealt with us?"

Lo, sorrowing, thy father and myself Were seeking for thee;"--and as
here she ceased, That which appeared at first had disappeared.

Then I beheld another with those waters Adown her cheeks which
grief distils whenever From great disdain of others it is born,

And saying: "If of that city thou art lord, For whose name was such
strife among the gods, And whence doth every science scintillate,

Avenge thyself on those audacious arms That clasped our daughter, O
Pisistratus;" And the lord seemed to me benign and mild

To answer her with aspect temperate: "What shall we do to those who
wish us ill, If he who loves us be by us condemned?"

Then saw I people hot in fire of wrath, With stones a young man
slaying, clamorously Still crying to each other, "Kill him! kill him!"

And him I saw bow down, because of death That weighed already on
him, to the earth, But of his eyes made ever gates to heaven,

Imploring the high Lord, in so great strife, That he would pardon those
his persecutors, With such an aspect as unlocks compassion.

Soon as my soul had outwardly returned To things external to it which
are true, Did I my not false errors recognize.

My Leader, who could see me bear myself Like to a man that rouses
him from sleep, Exclaimed: "What ails thee, that thou canst not stand?"

But hast been coming more than half a league Veiling thine eyes, and
with thy legs entangled, In guise of one whom wine or sleep subdues?"

"O my sweet Father, if thou listen to me, I'll tell thee," said I, "what
appeared to me, When thus from me my legs were ta'en away."

And he: "If thou shouldst have a hundred masks Upon thy face, from
me would not be shut Thy cogitations, howsoever small.

What thou hast seen was that thou mayst not fail To ope thy heart unto
the waters of peace, Which from the eternal fountain are diffused.

I did not ask, 'What ails thee?' as he does Who only looketh with the
eyes that see not When of the soul bereft the body lies,

But asked it to give vigour to thy feet; Thus must we needs urge on the
sluggards, slow To use their wakefulness when it returns."

We passed along, athwart the twilight peering Forward as far as ever
eye could stretch Against the sunbeams serotine and lucent;

And lo! by slow degrees a smoke approached In our direction, sombre
as the night, Nor was there place to hide one's self therefrom.

This of our eyes and the pure air bereft us.

Purgatorio: Canto XVI

Darkness of hell, and of a night deprived Of every planet under a
poor sky, As much as may be tenebrous with cloud,

Ne'er made unto my sight so thick a veil, As did that smoke which
there enveloped us, Nor to the feeling of so rough a texture;

For not an eye it suffered to stay open; Whereat mine escort, faithful
and sagacious, Drew near to me and offered me his shoulder.

E'en as a blind man goes behind his guide, Lest he should wander, or
should strike against Aught that may harm or peradventure kill him,

So went I through the bitter and foul air, Listening unto my Leader,
who said only, "Look that from me thou be not separated."

Voices I heard, and every one appeared To supplicate for peace and
misericord The Lamb of God who takes away our sins.

Still "Agnus Dei" their exordium was; One word there was in all, and
metre one, So that all harmony appeared among them.

"Master," I said, "are spirits those I hear?" And he to me: "Thou
apprehendest truly, And they the knot of anger go unloosing."

"Now who art thou, that cleavest through our smoke And art
discoursing of us even as though Thou didst by calends still divide the
time?"

After this manner by a voice was spoken; Whereon my Master said:
"Do thou reply, And ask if on this side the way go upward."

And I: "O creature that dost cleanse thyself To return beautiful to Him
who made thee, Thou shalt hear marvels if thou follow me."

"Thee will I follow far as is allowed me," He answered; "and if smoke
prevent our seeing, Hearing shall keep us joined instead thereof."

Thereon began I: "With that swathing band Which death unwindeth
am I going upward, And hither came I through the infernal anguish.

And if God in his grace has me infolded, So that he wills that I behold
his court By method wholly out of modern usage,

Conceal not from me who ere death thou wast, But tell it me, and tell
me if I go Right for the pass, and be thy words our escort."

"Lombard was I, and I was Marco called; The world I knew, and loved

that excellence, At which has each one now unbent his bow.

For mounting upward, thou art going right." Thus he made answer, and subjoined: "I pray thee To pray for me when thou shalt be above."

And I to him: "My faith I pledge to thee To do what thou dost ask me; but am bursting Inly with doubt, unless I rid me of it. First it was simple, and is now made double By thy opinion, which makes certain to me, Here and elsewhere, that which I couple with it.

The world forsooth is utterly deserted By every virtue, as thou tellest me, And with iniquity is big and covered;

But I beseech thee point me out the cause, That I may see it, and to others show it; For one in the heavens, and here below one puts it."

A sigh profound, that grief forced into Ai! He first sent forth, and then began he: "Brother, The world is blind, and sooth thou comest from it!

Ye who are living every cause refer Still upward to the heavens, as if all things They of necessity moved with themselves.

If this were so, in you would be destroyed Free will, nor any justice would there be In having joy for good, or grief for evil.

The heavens your movements do initiate, I say not all; but granting that I say it, Light has been given you for good and evil,

And free volition; which, if some fatigue In the first battles with the heavens it suffers, Afterwards conquers all, if well 'tis nurtured.

To greater force and to a better nature, Though free, ye subject are, and that creates The mind in you the heavens have not in charge.

Hence, if the present world doth go astray, In you the cause is, be it sought in you; And I therein will now be thy true spy.

Forth from the hand of Him, who fondles it Before it is, like to a little girl Weeping and laughing in her childish sport,

Issues the simple soul, that nothing knows, Save that, proceeding from a joyous Maker, Gladly it turns to that which gives it pleasure.

Of trivial good at first it tastes the savour; Is cheated by it, and runs after it, If guide or rein turn not aside its love.

Hence it behoved laws for a rein to place, Behoved a king to have, who at the least Of the true city should discern the tower.

The laws exist, but who sets hand to them? No one; because the

shepherd who precedes Can ruminates, but cleaveth not the hoof;

Wherefore the people that perceives its guide Strike only at the good for which it hankers, Feeds upon that, and farther seeketh not.

Clearly canst thou perceive that evil guidance The cause is that has made the world depraved, And not that nature is corrupt in you.

Rome, that reformed the world, accustomed was Two suns to have, which one road and the other, Of God and of the world, made manifest.

One has the other quenched, and to the crosier The sword is joined, and ill beseemeth it That by main force one with the other go,

Because, being joined, one feareth not the other; If thou believe not, think upon the grain, For by its seed each herb is recognized.

In the land laved by Po and Adige, Valour and courtesy used to be found, Before that Frederick had his controversy;

Now in security can pass that way Whoever will abstain, through sense of shame, From speaking with the good, or drawing near them.

True, three old men are left, in whom upbraids The ancient age the new, and late they deem it That God restore them to the better life:

Currado da Palazzo, and good Gherardo, And Guido da Castel, who better named is, In fashion of the French, the simple Lombard:

Say thou henceforward that the Church of Rome, Confounding in itself two governments, Falls in the mire, and soils itself and burden."

"O Marco mine," I said, "thou reasonest well; And now discern I why the sons of Levi Have been excluded from the heritage.

But what Gherardo is it, who, as sample Of a lost race, thou sayest has remained In reprobation of the barbarous age?"

"Either thy speech deceives me, or it tempts me," He answered me; "for speaking Tuscan to me, It seems of good Gherardo naught thou knowest.

By other surname do I know him not, Unless I take it from his daughter Gaia. May God be with you, for I come no farther.

Behold the dawn, that through the smoke rays out, Already whitening; and I must depart-- Yonder the Angel is--ere he appear."

Thus did he speak, and would no farther hear me.

Purgatorio: Canto XVII

Remember, Reader, if e'er in the Alps A mist o'ertook thee, through
which thou couldst see Not otherwise than through its membrane mole,

How, when the vapours humid and condensed Begin to dissipate
themselves, the sphere Of the sun feebly enters in among them,

And thy imagination will be swift In coming to perceive how I re-saw
The sun at first, that was already setting.

Thus, to the faithful footsteps of my Master Mating mine own, I issued
from that cloud To rays already dead on the low shores.

O thou, Imagination, that dost steal us So from without sometimes,
that man perceives not, Although around may sound a thousand trumpets,

Who moveth thee, if sense impel thee not? Moves thee a light, which
in the heaven takes form, By self, or by a will that downward guides it.

Of her impiety, who changed her form Into the bird that most delights
in singing, In my imagining appeared the trace;

And hereupon my mind was so withdrawn Within itself, that from
without there came Nothing that then might be received by it.

Then reigned within my lofty fantasy One crucified, disdainful and
ferocious In countenance, and even thus was dying.

Around him were the great Ahasuerus, Esther his wife, and the just
Mordecai, Who was in word and action so entire.

And even as this image burst asunder Of its own self, in fashion of a
bubble In which the water it was made of fails,

There rose up in my vision a young maiden Bitterly weeping, and she
said: "O queen, Why hast thou wished in anger to be naught?

Thou'st slain thyself, Lavinia not to lose; Now hast thou lost me; I am
she who mourns, Mother, at thine ere at another's ruin."

As sleep is broken, when upon a sudden New light strikes in upon the
eyelids closed, And broken quivers ere it dieth wholly,

So this imagining of mine fell down As soon as the effulgence smote
my face, Greater by far than what is in our wont.

I turned me round to see where I might be, When said a voice, "Here is
the passage up;" Which from all other purposes removed me,

And made my wish so full of eagerness To look and see who was it
that was speaking, It never rests till meeting face to face;

But as before the sun, which quells the sight, And in its own excess its
figure veils, Even so my power was insufficient here.

"This is a spirit divine, who in the way Of going up directs us without
asking, And who with his own light himself conceals.

He does with us as man doth with himself; For he who sees the need,
and waits the asking, Malignly leans already tow'rds denial.

Accord we now our feet to such inviting, Let us make haste to mount
ere it grow dark; For then we could not till the day return."

Thus my Conductor said; and I and he Together turned our footsteps to
a stairway; And I, as soon as the first step I reached,

Near me perceived a motion as of wings, And fanning in the face, and
saying, "'Beati Pacifici,' who are without ill anger."

Already over us were so uplifted The latest sunbeams, which the night
pursues, That upon many sides the stars appeared.

"O manhood mine, why dost thou vanish so?" I said within myself; for
I perceived The vigour of my legs was put in truce.

We at the point were where no more ascends The stairway upward, and
were motionless, Even as a ship, which at the shore arrives;

And I gave heed a little, if I might hear Aught whatsoever in the circle
new; Then to my Master turned me round and said:

"Say, my sweet Father, what delinquency Is purged here in the circle
where we are? Although our feet may pause, pause not thy speech."

And he to me: "The love of good, remiss In what it should have done,
is here restored; Here plied again the ill-belated oar;

But still more openly to understand, Turn unto me thy mind, and thou
shalt gather Some profitable fruit from our delay.

Neither Creator nor a creature ever, Son," he began, "was destitute of
love Natural or spiritual; and thou knowest it.

The natural was ever without error; But err the other may by evil
object, Or by too much, or by too little vigour.

While in the first it well directed is, And in the second moderates itself,
It cannot be the cause of sinful pleasure;

But when to ill it turns, and, with more care Or lesser than it ought,
runs after good, 'Gainst the Creator works his own creation.

Hence thou mayst comprehend that love must be The seed within
yourselves of every virtue, And every act that merits punishment.

Now inasmuch as never from the welfare Of its own subject can love
turn its sight, From their own hatred all things are secure;

And since we cannot think of any being Standing alone, nor from the
First divided, Of hating Him is all desire cut off.

Hence if, discriminating, I judge well, The evil that one loves is of
one's neighbour, And this is born in three modes in your clay.

There are, who, by abasement of their neighbour, Hope to excel, and
therefore only long That from his greatness he may be cast down;

There are, who power, grace, honour, and renown Fear they may lose
because another rises, Thence are so sad that the reverse they love;

And there are those whom injury seems to chafe, So that it makes
them greedy for revenge, And such must needs shape out another's harm.

This threefold love is wept for down below; Now of the other will I
have thee hear, That runneth after good with measure faulty.

Each one confusedly a good conceives Wherein the mind may rest,
and longeth for it; Therefore to overtake it each one strives.

If languid love to look on this attract you, Or in attaining unto it, this
cornice, After just penitence, torments you for it.

There's other good that does not make man happy; 'Tis not felicity, 'tis
not the good Essence, of every good the fruit and root.

The love that yields itself too much to this Above us is lamented in
three circles; But how tripartite it may be described,

I say not, that thou seek it for thyself."

Purgatorio: Canto XVIII

An end had put unto his reasoning The lofty Teacher, and attent was looking
Into my face, if I appeared content;

And I, whom a new thirst still goaded on, Without was mute, and said
within: "Perchance The too much questioning I make annoys him."

But that true Father, who had comprehended The timid wish, that
opened not itself, By speaking gave me hardihood to speak.

Whence I: "My sight is, Master, vivified So in thy light, that clearly I
discern Whate'er thy speech importeth or describes.

Therefore I thee entreat, sweet Father dear, To teach me love, to which
thou dost refer Every good action and its contrary."

"Direct," he said, "towards me the keen eyes Of intellect, and clear
will be to thee The error of the blind, who would be leaders.

The soul, which is created apt to love, Is mobile unto everything that
pleases, Soon as by pleasure she is waked to action.

Your apprehension from some real thing An image draws, and in
yourselves displays it So that it makes the soul turn unto it.

And if, when turned, towards it she incline, Love is that inclination; it
is nature, Which is by pleasure bound in you anew

Then even as the fire doth upward move By its own form, which to
ascend is born, Where longest in its matter it endures,

So comes the captive soul into desire, Which is a motion spiritual, and
ne'er rests Until she doth enjoy the thing beloved.

Now may apparent be to thee how hidden The truth is from those
people, who aver All love is in itself a laudable thing;

Because its matter may perchance appear Aye to be good; but yet not
each impression Is good, albeit good may be the wax."

"Thy words, and my sequacious intellect," I answered him, "have love
revealed to me; But that has made me more impregnated with doubt;

For if love from without be offered us, And with another foot the soul
go not, If right or wrong she go, 'tis not her merit."

And he to me: "What reason seeth here, Myself can tell thee; beyond
that await For Beatrice, since 'tis a work of faith.

Every substantial form, that segregate From matter is, and with it is united, Specific power has in itself collected,

Which without act is not perceptible, Nor shows itself except by its effect, As life does in a plant by the green leaves.

But still, whence cometh the intelligence Of the first notions, man is ignorant, And the affection for the first allurements,

Which are in you as instinct in the bee To make its honey; and this first desire Merit of praise or blame containeth not.

Now, that to this all others may be gathered, Innate within you is the power that counsels, And it should keep the threshold of assent.

This is the principle, from which is taken Occasion of desert in you, according As good and guilty loves it takes and winnows.

Those who, in reasoning, to the bottom went, Were of this innate liberty aware, Therefore bequeathed they Ethics to the world.

Supposing, then, that from necessity Springs every love that is within you kindled, Within yourselves the power is to restrain it.

The noble virtue Beatrice understands By the free will; and therefore see that thou Bear it in mind, if she should speak of it."

The moon, belated almost unto midnight, Now made the stars appear to us more rare, Formed like a bucket, that is all ablaze,

And counter to the heavens ran through those paths Which the sun sets aflame, when he of Rome Sees it 'twixt Sardes and Corsicans go down;

And that patrician shade, for whom is named Pietola more than any Mantuan town, Had laid aside the burden of my lading;

Whence I, who reason manifest and plain In answer to my questions had received, Stood like a man in drowsy reverie.

But taken from me was this drowsiness Suddenly by a people, that behind Our backs already had come round to us.

And as, of old, Ismenus and Asopus Beside them saw at night the rush and throng, If but the Thebans were in need of Bacchus,

So they along that circle curve their step, From what I saw of those approaching us, Who by good-will and righteous love are ridden.

Full soon they were upon us, because running Moved onward all that mighty multitude, And two in the advance cried out, lamenting,

"Mary in haste unto the mountain ran, And Caesar, that he might subdue Iberda, Thrust at Marseilles, and then ran into Spain."

"Quick! quick! so that the time may not be lost By little love!" forthwith the others cried, "For ardour in well-doing freshens grace!"

"O folk, in whom an eager fervour now Supplies perhaps delay and negligence, Put by you in well-doing, through lukewarmness,

This one who lives, and truly I lie not, Would fain go up, if but the sun relight us; So tell us where the passage nearest is."

These were the words of him who was my Guide; And some one of those spirits said: "Come on Behind us, and the opening shalt thou find;

So full of longing are we to move onward, That stay we cannot; therefore pardon us, If thou for churlishness our justice take.

I was San Zeno's Abbot at Verona, Under the empire of good Barbarossa, Of whom still sorrowing Milan holds discourse;

And he has one foot in the grave already, Who shall ere long lament that monastery, And sorry be of having there had power,

Because his son, in his whole body sick, And worse in mind, and who was evil-born, He put into the place of its true pastor."

If more he said, or silent was, I know not, He had already passed so far beyond us; But this I heard, and to retain it pleased me.

And he who was in every need my succour Said: "Turn thee hitherward; see two of them Come fastening upon slothfulness their teeth."

In rear of all they shouted: "Sooner were The people dead to whom the sea was opened, Than their inheritors the Jordan saw;

And those who the fatigue did not endure Unto the issue, with Anchises' son, Themselves to life withouten glory offered."

Then when from us so separated were Those shades, that they no longer could be seen, Within me a new thought did entrance find,

Whence others many and diverse were born; And so I lapsed from one into another, That in a reverie mine eyes I closed,

And meditation into dream transmuted.

Purgatorio: Canto XIX

It was the hour when the diurnal heat No more can warm the coldness
of the moon, Vanquished by earth, or peradventure Saturn,

When geomancers their Fortuna Major See in the orient before the
dawn Rise by a path that long remains not dim,

There came to me in dreams a stammering woman, Squint in her eyes,
and in her feet distorted, With hands dissevered and of sallow hue.

I looked at her; and as the sun restores The frigid members which the
night benumbs, Even thus my gaze did render voluble

Her tongue, and made her all erect thereafter In little while, and the
lost countenance As love desires it so in her did colour.

When in this wise she had her speech unloosed, She 'gan to sing so,
that with difficulty Could I have turned my thoughts away from her.

"I am," she sang, "I am the Siren sweet Who mariners amid the main
unman, So full am I of pleasantness to hear.

I drew Ulysses from his wandering way Unto my song, and he who
dwells with me Seldom departs so wholly I content him."

Her mouth was not yet closed again, before Appeared a Lady saintly
and alert Close at my side to put her to confusion.

"Virgilius, O Virgilius! who is this?" Sternly she said; and he was
drawing near With eyes still fixed upon that modest one.

She seized the other and in front laid open, Rending her garments, and
her belly showed me; This waked me with the stench that issued from it.

I turned mine eyes, and good Virgilius said: "At least thrice have I
called thee; rise and come; Find we the opening by which thou mayst
enter."

I rose; and full already of high day Were all the circles of the Sacred
Mountain, And with the new sun at our back we went.

Following behind him, I my forehead bore Like unto one who has it
laden with thought, Who makes himself the half arch of a bridge,

When I heard say, "Come, here the passage is," Spoken in a manner
gentle and benign, Such as we hear not in this mortal region.

With open wings, which of a swan appeared, Upward he turned us

who thus spake to us, Between the two walls of the solid granite.

He moved his pinions afterwards and fanned us, Affirming those 'qui lugent' to be blessed, For they shall have their souls with comfort filled.

"What aileth thee, that aye to earth thou gazest?" To me my Guide began to say, we both Somewhat beyond the Angel having mounted.

And I: "With such misgiving makes me go A vision new, which bends me to itself, So that I cannot from the thought withdraw me."

"Didst thou behold," he said, "that old enchantress, Who sole above us henceforth is lamented? Didst thou behold how man is freed from her?"

Suffice it thee, and smite earth with thy heels, Thine eyes lift upward to the lure, that whirls The Eternal King with revolutions vast."

Even as the hawk, that first his feet surveys, Then turns him to the call and stretches forward, Through the desire of food that draws him thither,

Such I became, and such, as far as cleaves The rock to give a way to him who mounts, Went on to where the circling doth begin.

On the fifth circle when I had come forth, People I saw upon it who were weeping, Stretched prone upon the ground, all downward turned.

"Adhaesit pavimento anima mea," I heard them say with sighings so profound, That hardly could the words be understood.

"O ye elect of God, whose sufferings Justice and Hope both render less severe, Direct ye us towards the high ascents."

"If ye are come secure from this prostration, And wish to find the way most speedily, Let your right hands be evermore outside."

Thus did the Poet ask, and thus was answered By them somewhat in front of us; whence I In what was spoken divined the rest concealed,

And unto my Lord's eyes mine eyes I turned; Whence he assented with a cheerful sign To what the sight of my desire implored.

When of myself I could dispose at will, Above that creature did I draw myself, Whose words before had caused me to take note,

Saying: "O Spirit, in whom weeping ripens That without which to God we cannot turn, Suspend awhile for me thy greater care.

Who wast thou, and why are your backs turned upwards, Tell me, and if thou wouldst that I procure thee Anything there whence living I departed." And he to me: "Wherefore our backs the heaven Turns to itself,

know shalt thou; but beforehand 'Scias quod ego fui successor Petri.'

Between Siestri and Chiaveri descends A river beautiful, and of its name
The title of my blood its summit makes.

A month and little more essayed I how Weighs the great cloak on him
from mire who keeps it, For all the other burdens seem a feather.

Tardy, ah woe is me! was my conversion; But when the Roman
Shepherd I was made, Then I discovered life to be a lie.

I saw that there the heart was not at rest, Nor farther in that life could
one ascend; Whereby the love of this was kindled in me.

Until that time a wretched soul and parted From God was I, and
wholly avaricious; Now, as thou seest, I here am punished for it.

What avarice does is here made manifest In the purgation of these
souls converted, And no more bitter pain the Mountain has.

Even as our eye did not uplift itself Aloft, being fastened upon earthly
things, So justice here has merged it in the earth.

As avarice had extinguished our affection For every good, whereby
was action lost, So justice here doth hold us in restraint,

Bound and imprisoned by the feet and hands; And so long as it pleases
the just Lord Shall we remain immovable and prostrate."

I on my knees had fallen, and wished to speak; But even as I began,
and he was 'ware, Only by listening, of my reverence,

"What cause," he said, "has downward bent thee thus?" And I to him:
"For your own dignity, Standing, my conscience stung me with remorse."

"Straighten thy legs, and upward raise thee, brother," He answered:
"Err not, fellow-servant am I With thee and with the others to one power.

If e'er that holy, evangelic sound, Which sayeth 'neque nubent,' thou
hast heard, Well canst thou see why in this wise I speak.

Now go; no longer will I have thee linger, Because thy stay doth
incommode my weeping, With which I ripen that which thou hast said.

On earth I have a grandchild named Alagia, Good in herself, unless
indeed our house Malevolent may make her by example,

And she alone remains to me on earth."

Purgatorio: Canto XX

Ill strives the will against a better will; Therefore, to pleasure him,
against my pleasure I drew the sponge not saturate from the water.

Onward I moved, and onward moved my Leader, Through vacant
places, skirting still the rock, As on a wall close to the battlements;

For they that through their eyes pour drop by drop The malady which
all the world pervades, On the other side too near the verge approach.

Accursed mayst thou be, thou old she-wolf, That more than all the
other beasts hast prey, Because of hunger infinitely hollow!

O heaven, in whose gyrations some appear To think conditions here
below are changed, When will he come through whom she shall depart?

Onward we went with footsteps slow and scarce, And I attentive to the
shades I heard Piteously weeping and bemoaning them;

And I by peradventure heard "Sweet Mary!" Uttered in front of us
amid the weeping Even as a woman does who is in child-birth;

And in continuance: "How poor thou wast Is manifested by that
hostelry Where thou didst lay thy sacred burden down."

Thereafterward I heard: "O good Fabricius, Virtue with poverty didst
thou prefer To the possession of great wealth with vice."

So pleasurable were these words to me That I drew farther onward to
have knowledge Touching that spirit whence they seemed to come.

He furthermore was speaking of the largess Which Nicholas unto the
maidens gave, In order to conduct their youth to honour.

"O soul that dost so excellently speak, Tell me who wast thou," said I,
"and why only Thou dost renew these praises well deserved?"

Not without recompense shall be thy word, If I return to finish the
short journey Of that life which is flying to its end."

And he: "I'll tell thee, not for any comfort I may expect from earth, but
that so much Grace shines in thee or ever thou art dead.

I was the root of that malignant plant Which overshadows all the
Christian world, So that good fruit is seldom gathered from it;

But if Douay and Ghent, and Lille and Bruges Had Power, soon
vengeance would be taken on it; And this I pray of Him who judges all.

Hugh Capet was I called upon the earth; From me were born the
Louises and Philips, By whom in later days has France been governed. I
was the son of a Parisian butcher, What time the ancient kings had
perished all, Excepting one, contrite in cloth of gray.

I found me grasping in my hands the rein Of the realm's government,
and so great power Of new acquest, and so with friends abounding,

That to the widowed diadem promoted The head of mine own
offspring was, from whom The consecrated bones of these began.

So long as the great dowry of Provence Out of my blood took not the
sense of shame, 'Twas little worth, but still it did no harm.

Then it began with falsehood and with force Its rapine; and thereafter,
for amends, Took Ponthieu, Normandy, and Gascony.

Charles came to Italy, and for amends A victim made of Conradin, and
then Thrust Thomas back to heaven, for amends.

A time I see, not very distant now, Which draweth forth another
Charles from France, The better to make known both him and his.

Unarmed he goes, and only with the lance That Judas jousted with;
and that he thrusts So that he makes the paunch of Florence burst.

He thence not land, but sin and infamy, Shall gain, so much more
grievous to himself As the more light such damage he accounts.

The other, now gone forth, ta'en in his ship, See I his daughter sell, and
chaffer for her As corsairs do with other female slaves.

What more, O Avarice, canst thou do to us, Since thou my blood so to
thysself hast drawn, It careth not for its own proper flesh?

That less may seem the future ill and past, I see the flower-de-luce
Alagna enter, And Christ in his own Vicar captive made.

I see him yet another time derided; I see renewed the vinegar and gall,
And between living thieves I see him slain.

I see the modern Pilate so relentless, This does not sate him, but
without decretal He to the temple bears his sordid sails!

When, O my Lord! shall I be joyful made By looking on the
vengeance which, concealed, Makes sweet thine anger in thy secrecy?

What I was saying of that only bride Of the Holy Ghost, and which
occasioned thee To turn towards me for some commentary,

So long has been ordained to all our prayers As the day lasts; but when the night comes on, Contrary sound we take instead thereof.

At that time we repeat Pygmalion, Of whom a traitor, thief, and parricide Made his insatiable desire of gold;

And the misery of avaricious Midas, That followed his inordinate demand, At which forevermore one needs but laugh.

The foolish Achan each one then records, And how he stole the spoils; so that the wrath Of Joshua still appears to sting him here.

Then we accuse Sapphira with her husband, We laud the hoof-beats Heliodorus had, And the whole mount in infamy encircles

Polymnestor who murdered Polydorus. Here finally is cried: 'O Crassus, tell us, For thou dost know, what is the taste of gold?'

Sometimes we speak, one loud, another low, According to desire of speech, that spurs us To greater now and now to lesser pace.

But in the good that here by day is talked of, Erewhile alone I was not; yet near by No other person lifted up his voice."

From him already we departed were, And made endeavour to o'ercome the road As much as was permitted to our power,

When I perceived, like something that is falling, The mountain tremble, whence a chill seized on me, As seizes him who to his death is going.

Certes so violently shook not Delos, Before Latona made her nest therein To give birth to the two eyes of the heaven.

Then upon all sides there began a cry, Such that the Master drew himself towards me, Saying, "Fear not, while I am guiding thee."

"Gloria in excelsis Deo," all Were saying, from what near I comprehended, Where it was possible to hear the cry.

We paused immovable and in suspense, Even as the shepherds who first heard that song, Until the trembling ceased, and it was finished.

Then we resumed again our holy path, Watching the shades that lay upon the ground, Already turned to their accustomed plaint.

No ignorance ever with so great a strife Had rendered me importunate to know, If erreth not in this my memory,

As meditating then I seemed to have; Nor out of haste to question did I dare, Nor of myself I there could aught perceive;

So I went onward timorous and thoughtful.

Purgatorio: Canto XXI

The natural thirst, that ne'er is satisfied Excepting with the water for
whose grace The woman of Samaria besought,

Put me in travail, and haste goaded me Along the encumbered path
behind my Leader And I was pitying that righteous vengeance;

And lo! in the same manner as Luke writeth That Christ appeared to
two upon the way From the sepulchral cave already risen,

A shade appeared to us, and came behind us, Down gazing on the
prostrate multitude, Nor were we ware of it, until it spake,

Saying, "My brothers, may God give you peace!" We turned us
suddenly, and Virgilius rendered To him the countersign thereto
conforming.

Thereon began he: "In the blessed council, Thee may the court
veracious place in peace, That me doth banish in eternal exile!"

"How," said he, and the while we went with speed, "If ye are shades
whom God deigns not on high, Who up his stairs so far has guided you?"

And said my Teacher: "If thou note the marks Which this one bears,
and which the Angel traces Well shalt thou see he with the good must
reign.

But because she who spinneth day and night For him had not yet
drawn the distaff off, Which Clotho lays for each one and compacts,

His soul, which is thy sister and my own, In coming upwards could not
come alone, By reason that it sees not in our fashion.

Whence I was drawn from out the ample throat Of Hell to be his guide,
and I shall guide him As far on as my school has power to lead.

But tell us, if thou knowest, why such a shudder Erewhile the
mountain gave, and why together All seemed to cry, as far as its moist
feet?"

In asking he so hit the very eye Of my desire, that merely with the
hope My thirst became the less unsatisfied.

"Naught is there," he began, "that without order May the religion of
the mountain feel, Nor aught that may be foreign to its custom.

Free is it here from every permutation; What from itself heaven in

itself receiveth Can be of this the cause, and naught beside;

Because that neither rain, nor hail, nor snow, Nor dew, nor hoar-frost
any higher falls Than the short, little stairway of three steps.

Dense clouds do not appear, nor rarefied, Nor coruscation, nor the
daughter of Thaumias, That often upon earth her region shifts;

No arid vapour any farther rises Than to the top of the three steps I
spake of, Whereon the Vicar of Peter has his feet.

Lower down perchance it trembles less or more, But, for the wind that
in the earth is hidden I know not how, up here it never trembled.

It trembles here, whenever any soul Feels itself pure, so that it soars,
or moves To mount aloft, and such a cry attends it.

Of purity the will alone gives proof, Which, being wholly free to
change its convent, Takes by surprise the soul, and helps it fly.

First it wills well; but the desire permits not, Which divine justice with
the self-same will There was to sin, upon the torment sets.

And I, who have been lying in this pain Five hundred years and more,
but just now felt A free volition for a better seat.

Therefore thou heardst the earthquake, and the pious Spirits along the
mountain rendering praise Unto the Lord, that soon he speed them
upwards."

So said he to him; and since we enjoy As much in drinking as the thirst
is great, I could not say how much it did me good.

And the wise Leader: "Now I see the net That snares you here, and
how ye are set free, Why the earth quakes, and wherefore ye rejoice.

Now who thou wast be pleased that I may know; And why so many
centuries thou hast here Been lying, let me gather from thy words."

"In days when the good Titus, with the aid Of the supremest King,
avenged the wounds Whence issued forth the blood by Judas sold,

Under the name that most endures and honours, Was I on earth," that
spirit made reply, "Greatly renowned, but not with faith as yet.

My vocal spirit was so sweet, that Rome Me, a Thoulousian, drew
unto herself, Where I deserved to deck my brows with myrtle.

Staius the people name me still on earth; I sang of Thebes, and then of
great Achilles; But on the way fell with my second burden.

The seeds unto my ardour were the sparks Of that celestial flame
which heated me, Whereby more than a thousand have been fired;

Of the Aeneid speak I, which to me A mother was, and was my nurse
in song; Without this weighed I not a drachma's weight.

And to have lived upon the earth what time Virgilius lived, I would
accept one sun More than I must ere issuing from my ban."

These words towards me made Virgilius turn With looks that in their
silence said, "Be silent!" But yet the power that wills cannot do all things;

For tears and laughter are such pursuivants Unto the passion from
which each springs forth, In the most truthful least the will they follow.

I only smiled, as one who gives the wink; Whereat the shade was silent,
and it gazed Into mine eyes, where most expression dwells;

And, "As thou well mayst consummate a labour So great," it said,
"why did thy face just now Display to me the lightning of a smile?"

Now am I caught on this side and on that; One keeps me silent, one to
speak conjures me, Wherefore I sigh, and I am understood.

"Speak," said my Master, "and be not afraid Of speaking, but speak
out, and say to him What he demands with such solicitude."

Whence I: "Thou peradventure marvellest, O antique spirit, at the
smile I gave; But I will have more wonder seize upon thee.

This one, who guides on high these eyes of mine, Is that Virgilius,
from whom thou didst learn To sing aloud of men and of the Gods.

If other cause thou to my smile imputedst, Abandon it as false, and
trust it was Those words which thou hast spoken concerning him."

Already he was stooping to embrace My Teacher's feet; but he said to
him: "Brother, Do not; for shade thou art, and shade beholdest."

And he uprising: "Now canst thou the sum Of love which warms me to
thee comprehend, When this our vanity I disremember,

Treating a shadow as substantial thing."

Purgatorio: Canto XXII

Already was the Angel left behind us, The Angel who to the sixth round had turned us, Having erased one mark from off my face;

And those who have in justice their desire Had said to us, "Beati," in their voices, With "sitio," and without more ended it.

And I, more light than through the other passes, Went onward so, that without any labour I followed upward the swift-footed spirits;

When thus Virgilius began: "The love Kindled by virtue aye another kindles, Provided outwardly its flame appear.

Hence from the hour that Juvenal descended Among us into the infernal Limbo, Who made apparent to me thy affection,

My kindness towards thee was as great As ever bound one to an unseen person, So that these stairs will now seem short to me.

But tell me, and forgive me as a friend, If too great confidence let loose the rein, And as a friend now hold discourse with me;

How was it possible within thy breast For avarice to find place, 'mid so much wisdom As thou wast filled with by thy diligence?"

These words excited Statius at first Somewhat to laughter; afterward he answered: "Each word of thine is love's dear sign to me.

Verily oftentimes do things appear Which give fallacious matter to our doubts, Instead of the true causes which are hidden!

Thy question shows me thy belief to be That I was niggard in the other life, It may be from the circle where I was;

Therefore know thou, that avarice was removed Too far from me; and this extravagance Thousands of lunar periods have punished.

And were it not that I my thoughts uplifted, When I the passage heard where thou exclaimest, As if indignant, unto human nature,

'To what impellest thou not, O cursed hunger Of gold, the appetite of mortal men?' Revolving I should feel the dismal joustings.

Then I perceived the hands could spread too wide Their wings in spending, and repented me As well of that as of my other sins;

How many with shorn hair shall rise again Because of ignorance, which from this sin Cuts off repentance living and in death!

And know that the transgression which rebuts By direct opposition any
sin Together with it here its verdure dries.

Therefore if I have been among that folk Which mourns its avarice, to
purify me, For its opposite has this befallen me."

"Now when thou sangest the relentless weapons Of the twofold
affliction of Jocasta," The singer of the Songs Bucolic said,

"From that which Clio there with thee preludes, It does not seem that
yet had made thee faithful That faith without which no good works suffice.

If this be so, what candles or what sun Scattered thy darkness so that
thou didst trim Thy sails behind the Fisherman thereafter?"

And he to him: "Thou first directedst me Towards Parnassus, in its
grotts to drink, And first concerning God didst me enlighten.

Thou didst as he who walketh in the night, Who bears his light behind,
which helps him not, But wary makes the persons after him,

When thou didst say: 'The age renews itself, Justice returns, and man's
primeval time, And a new progeny descends from heaven.'

Through thee I Poet was, through thee a Christian; But that thou better
see what I design, To colour it will I extend my hand.

Already was the world in every part Pregnant with the true creed,
disseminated By messengers of the eternal kingdom;

And thy assertion, spoken of above, With the new preachers was in
unison; Whence I to visit them the custom took.

Then they became so holy in my sight, That, when Domitian
persecuted them, Not without tears of mine were their laments;

And all the while that I on earth remained, Them I befriended, and
their upright customs Made me disparage all the other sects.

And ere I led the Greeks unto the rivers Of Thebes, in poetry, I was
baptized, But out of fear was covertly a Christian,

For a long time professing paganism; And this lukewarmness caused
me the fourth circle To circuit round more than four centuries.

Thou, therefore, who hast raised the covering That hid from me
whatever good I speak of, While in ascending we have time to spare,

Tell me, in what place is our friend Terentius, Caecilius, Plautus, Varro,
if thou knowest; Tell me if they are damned, and in what alley."

"These, Persius and myself, and others many," Replied my Leader,
"with that Grecian are Whom more than all the rest the Muses suckled,

In the first circle of the prison blind; Ofttimes we of the mountain hold
discourse Which has our nurses ever with itself.

Euripides is with us, Antiphon, Simonides, Agatho, and many other
Greeks who of old their brows with laurel decked.

There some of thine own people may be seen, Antigone, Deiphile and
Argia, And there Ismene mournful as of old.

There she is seen who pointed out Langia; There is Tiresias' daughter,
and there Thetis, And there Deidamia with her sisters."

Silent already were the poets both, Attent once more in looking round
about, From the ascent and from the walls released;

And four handmaidens of the day already Were left behind, and at the
pole the fifth Was pointing upward still its burning horn,

What time my Guide: "I think that tow'rds the edge Our dexter
shoulders it behoves us turn, Circling the mount as we are wont to do."

Thus in that region custom was our ensign; And we resumed our way
with less suspicion For the assenting of that worthy soul

They in advance went on, and I alone Behind them, and I listened to
their speech, Which gave me lessons in the art of song.

But soon their sweet discourses interrupted A tree which midway in
the road we found, With apples sweet and grateful to the smell.

And even as a fir-tree tapers upward From bough to bough, so
downwardly did that; I think in order that no one might climb it.

On that side where our pathway was enclosed Fell from the lofty rock
a limpid water, And spread itself abroad upon the leaves.

The Poets twain unto the tree drew near, And from among the foliage a
voice Cried: "Of this food ye shall have scarcity."

Then said: "More thoughtful Mary was of making The marriage feast
complete and honourable, Than of her mouth which now for you responds;

And for their drink the ancient Roman women With water were
content; and Daniel Disparaged food, and understanding won.

The primal age was beautiful as gold; Acorns it made with hunger
savourous, And nectar every rivulet with thirst.

Honey and locusts were the aliments That fed the Baptist in the
wilderness; Whence he is glorious, and so magnified
As by the Evangel is revealed to you."

Purgatorio: Canto XXIII

The while among the verdant leaves mine eyes I riveted, as he is wont to do Who wastes his life pursuing little birds,

My more than Father said unto me: "Son, Come now; because the time that is ordained us More usefully should be apportioned out."

I turned my face and no less soon my steps Unto the Sages, who were speaking so They made the going of no cost to me;

And lo! were heard a song and a lament, "Labia mea, Domine," in fashion Such that delight and dolence it brought forth.

"O my sweet Father, what is this I hear?" Began I; and he answered: "Shades that go Perhaps the knot unloosing of their debt."

In the same way that thoughtful pilgrims do, Who, unknown people on the road o'ertaking, Turn themselves round to them, and do not stop,

Even thus, behind us with a swifter motion Coming and passing onward, gazed upon us A crowd of spirits silent and devout.

Each in his eyes was dark and cavernous, Pallid in face, and so emaciate That from the bones the skin did shape itself.

I do not think that so to merest rind Could Erisichthon have been withered up By famine, when most fear he had of it.

Thinking within myself I said: "Behold, This is the folk who lost Jerusalem, When Mary made a prey of her own son."

Their sockets were like rings without the gems; Whoever in the face of men reads 'omo' Might well in these have recognised the 'm.'

Who would believe the odour of an apple, Begetting longing, could consume them so, And that of water, without knowing how?

I still was wondering what so famished them, For the occasion not yet manifest Of their emaciation and sad squalor;

And lo! from out the hollow of his head His eyes a shade turned on me, and looked keenly; Then cried aloud: "What grace to me is this?"

Never should I have known him by his look; But in his voice was evident to me That which his aspect had suppressed within it.

This spark within me wholly re-enkindled My recognition of his altered face, And I recalled the features of Forese.

"Ah, do not look at this dry leprosy," Entreated he, "which doth my skin discolour, Nor at default of flesh that I may have;

But tell me truth of thee, and who are those Two souls, that yonder make for thee an escort; Do not delay in speaking unto me."

"That face of thine, which dead I once bewept, Gives me for weeping now no lesser grief," I answered him, "beholding it so changed!

But tell me, for God's sake, what thus denudes you? Make me not speak while I am marvelling, For ill speaks he who's full of other longings."

And he to me: "From the eternal council Falls power into the water and the tree Behind us left, whereby I grow so thin.

All of this people who lamenting sing, For following beyond measure appetite In hunger and thirst are here re-sanctified.

Desire to eat and drink enkindles in us The scent that issues from the apple-tree, And from the spray that sprinkles o'er the verdure;

And not a single time alone, this ground Encompassing, is refreshed our pain,-- I say our pain, and ought to say our solace,--

For the same wish doth lead us to the tree Which led the Christ rejoicing to say 'Eli,' When with his veins he liberated us."

And I to him: "Forese, from that day When for a better life thou changedst worlds, Up to this time five years have not rolled round.

If sooner were the power exhausted in thee Of sinning more, than thee the hour surprised Of that good sorrow which to God reweds us,

How hast thou come up hitherward already? I thought to find thee down there underneath, Where time for time doth restitution make."

And he to me: "Thus speedily has led me To drink of the sweet wormwood of these torments, My Nella with her overflowing tears;

She with her prayers devout and with her sighs Has drawn me from the coast where one where one awaits, And from the other circles set me free.

So much more dear and pleasing is to God My little widow, whom so much I loved, As in good works she is the more alone;

For the Barbagia of Sardinia By far more modest in its women is Than the Barbagia I have left her in.

O brother sweet, what wilt thou have me say? A future time is in my

sight already, To which this hour will not be very old,

When from the pulpit shall be interdicted To the unblushing
womankind of Florence To go about displaying breast and paps.

What savages were e'er, what Saracens, Who stood in need, to make
them covered go, Of spiritual or other discipline?

But if the shameless women were assured Of what swift Heaven
prepares for them, already Wide open would they have their mouths to
howl;

For if my foresight here deceive me not, They shall be sad ere he has
bearded cheeks Who now is hushed to sleep with lullaby.

O brother, now no longer hide thee from me; See that not only I, but
all these people Are gazing there, where thou dost veil the sun."

Whence I to him: "If thou bring back to mind What thou with me hast
been and I with thee, The present memory will be grievous still.

Out of that life he turned me back who goes In front of me, two days
agone when round The sister of him yonder showed herself,"

And to the sun I pointed. "Through the deep Night of the truly dead
has this one led me, With this true flesh, that follows after him.

Thence his encouragements have led me up, Ascending and still
circling round the mount That you doth straighten, whom the world made
crooked.

He says that he will bear me company, Till I shall be where Beatrice
will be; There it behoves me to remain without him.

This is Virgilius, who thus says to me," And him I pointed at; "the
other is That shade for whom just now shook every slope

Your realm, that from itself discharges him."

Purgatorio: Canto XXIV

Nor speech the going, nor the going that Slackened; but talking we went bravely on, Even as a vessel urged by a good wind.

And shadows, that appeared things doubly dead, From out the sepulchres of their eyes betrayed Wonder at me, aware that I was living.

And I, continuing my colloquy, Said: "Peradventure he goes up more slowly Than he would do, for other people's sake.

But tell me, if thou knowest, where is Piccarda; Tell me if any one of note I see Among this folk that gazes at me so."

"My sister, who, 'twixt beautiful and good, I know not which was more, triumphs rejoicing Already in her crown on high Olympus."

So said he first, and then: "'Tis not forbidden To name each other here, so milked away Is our resemblance by our dieting.

This," pointing with his finger, "is Buonagiunta, Buonagiunta, of Lucca; and that face Beyond him there, more peaked than the others,

Has held the holy Church within his arms; From Tours was he, and purges by his fasting Bolsena's eels and the Vernaccia wine."

He named me many others one by one; And all contented seemed at being named, So that for this I saw not one dark look.

I saw for hunger bite the empty air Ubaldin dalla Pila, and Boniface, Who with his crook had pastured many people.

I saw Messer Marchese, who had leisure Once at Forli for drinking with less dryness, And he was one who ne'er felt satisfied.

But as he does who scans, and then doth prize One more than others, did I him of Lucca, Who seemed to take most cognizance of me.

He murmured, and I know not what Gentucca From that place heard I, where he felt the wound Of justice, that doth macerate them so.

"O soul," I said, "that seemest so desirous To speak with me, do so that I may hear thee, And with thy speech appease thyself and me."

"A maid is born, and wears not yet the veil," Began he, "who to thee shall pleasant make My city, howsoever men may blame it.

Thou shalt go on thy way with this prevision; If by my murmuring thou hast been deceived, True things hereafter will declare it to thee.

But say if him I here behold, who forth Evoked the new-invented rhymes, beginning, 'Ladies, that have intelligence of love?'"

And I to him: "One am I, who, whenever Love doth inspire me, note, and in that measure Which he within me dictates, singing go."

"O brother, now I see," he said, "the knot Which me, the Notary, and Guittone held Short of the sweet new style that now I hear. I do perceive full clearly how your pens Go closely following after him who dictates, Which with our own forsooth came not to pass;

And he who sets himself to go beyond, No difference sees from one style to another;" And as if satisfied, he held his peace.

Even as the birds, that winter tow'rds the Nile, Sometimes into a phalanx form themselves, Then fly in greater haste, and go in file;

In such wise all the people who were there, Turning their faces, hurried on their steps, Both by their leanness and their wishes light.

And as a man, who weary is with trotting, Lets his companions onward go, and walks, Until he vents the panting of his chest;

So did Forese let the holy flock Pass by, and came with me behind it, saying, "When will it be that I again shall see thee?"

"How long," I answered, "I may live, I know not; Yet my return will not so speedy be, But I shall sooner in desire arrive;

Because the place where I was set to live From day to day of good is more depleted, And unto dismal ruin seems ordained."

"Now go," he said, "for him most guilty of it At a beast's tail behold I dragged along Towards the valley where is no repentance.

Faster at every step the beast is going, Increasing evermore until it smites him, And leaves the body vilely mutilated.

Not long those wheels shall turn," and he uplifted His eyes to heaven, "ere shall be clear to thee That which my speech no farther can declare.

Now stay behind; because the time so precious Is in this kingdom, that I lose too much By coming onward thus abreast with thee."

As sometimes issues forth upon a gallop A cavalier from out a troop that ride, And seeks the honour of the first encounter,

So he with greater strides departed from us; And on the road remained I with those two, Who were such mighty marshals of the world.

And when before us he had gone so far Mine eyes became to him such
pursuivants As was my understanding to his words,

Appeared to me with laden and living boughs Another apple-tree, and
not far distant, From having but just then turned thitherward.

People I saw beneath it lift their hands, And cry I know not what
towards the leaves, Like little children eager and deluded,

Who pray, and he they pray to doth not answer, But, to make very keen
their appetite, Holds their desire aloft, and hides it not.

Then they departed as if undeceived; And now we came unto the
mighty tree Which prayers and tears so manifold refuses.

"Pass farther onward without drawing near; The tree of which Eve ate
is higher up, And out of that one has this tree been raised."

Thus said I know not who among the branches; Whereat Virgilius,
Staius, and myself Went crowding forward on the side that rises.

"Be mindful," said he, "of the accursed ones Formed of the cloud-rack,
who inebriate Combated Theseus with their double breasts;

And of the Jews who showed them soft in drinking, Whence Gideon
would not have them for companions When he tow'rds Midian the hills
descended."

Thus, closely pressed to one of the two borders, On passed we, hearing
sins of gluttony, Followed forsooth by miserable gains;

Then set at large upon the lonely road, A thousand steps and more we
onward went, In contemplation, each without a word.

"What go ye thinking thus, ye three alone?" Said suddenly a voice,
whereat I started As terrified and timid beasts are wont.

I raised my head to see who this might be, And never in a furnace was
there seen Metals or glass so lucent and so red

As one I saw who said: "If it may please you To mount aloft, here it
behoves you turn; This way goes he who goeth after peace."

His aspect had bereft me of my sight, So that I turned me back unto
my Teachers, Like one who goeth as his hearing guides him.

And as, the harbinger of early dawn, The air of May doth move and
breathe out fragrance, Impregnate all with herbage and with flowers,

So did I feel a breeze strike in the midst My front, and felt the moving

of the plumes That breathed around an odour of ambrosia;

And heard it said: "Blessed are they whom grace So much illumines,
that the love of taste Excites not in their breasts too great desire,

Hungering at all times so far as is just."

Purgatorio: Canto XXV

Now was it the ascent no hindrance brooked, Because the sun had his
meridian circle To Taurus left, and night to Scorpio;

Wherefore as doth a man who tarries not, But goes his way, whate'er to
him appear, If of necessity the sting transfix him,

In this wise did we enter through the gap, Taking the stairway, one
before the other, Which by its narrowness divides the climbers.

And as the little stork that lifts its wing With a desire to fly, and does
not venture To leave the nest, and lets it downward droop,

Even such was I, with the desire of asking Kindled and quenched, unto
the motion coming He makes who doth address himself to speak.

Not for our pace, though rapid it might be, My father sweet forbore,
but said: "Let fly The bow of speech thou to the barb hast drawn."

With confidence I opened then my mouth, And I began: "How can one
meagre grow There where the need of nutriment applies not?"

"If thou wouldst call to mind how Meleager Was wasted by the
wasting of a brand, This would not," said he, "be to thee so sour;

And wouldst thou think how at each tremulous motion Trembles
within a mirror your own image; That which seems hard would mellow
seem to thee.

But that thou mayst content thee in thy wish Lo Statius here; and him I
call and pray He now will be the healer of thy wounds."

"If I unfold to him the eternal vengeance," Responded Statius, "where
thou present art, Be my excuse that I can naught deny thee."

Then he began: "Son, if these words of mine Thy mind doth
contemplate and doth receive, They'll be thy light unto the How thou
sayest.

The perfect blood, which never is drunk up Into the thirsty veins, and
which remaineth Like food that from the table thou removest,

Takes in the heart for all the human members Virtue informative, as
being that Which to be changed to them goes through the veins

Again digest, descends it where 'tis better Silent to be than say; and
then drops thence Upon another's blood in natural vase.

There one together with the other mingles, One to be passive meant,
the other active By reason of the perfect place it springs from;

And being conjoined, begins to operate, Coagulating first, then
vivifying What for its matter it had made consistent.

The active virtue, being made a soul As of a plant, (in so far different,
This on the way is, that arrived already,)

Then works so much, that now it moves and feels Like a sea-fungus,
and then undertakes To organize the powers whose seed it is.

Now, Son, dilates and now distends itself The virtue from the
generator's heart, Where nature is intent on all the members.

But how from animal it man becomes Thou dost not see as yet; this is
a point Which made a wiser man than thou once err

So far, that in his doctrine separate He made the soul from possible
intellect, For he no organ saw by this assumed.

Open thy breast unto the truth that's coming, And know that, just as
soon as in the foetus The articulation of the brain is perfect,

The primal Motor turns to it well pleased At so great art of nature, and
inspires A spirit new with virtue all replete,

Which what it finds there active doth attract Into its substance, and
becomes one soul, Which lives, and feels, and on itself revolves.

And that thou less may wonder at my word, Behold the sun's heat,
which becometh wine, Joined to the juice that from the vine distils.

Whenever Lachesis has no more thread, It separates from the flesh,
and virtually Bears with itself the human and divine;

The other faculties are voiceless all; The memory, the intelligence, and
the will In action far more vigorous than before.

Without a pause it falleth of itself In marvellous way on one shore or
the other; There of its roads it first is cognizant.

Soon as the place there circumscribeth it, The virtue informative rays
round about, As, and as much as, in the living members.

And even as the air, when full of rain, By alien rays that are therein
reflected, With divers colours shows itself adorned,

So there the neighbouring air doth shape itself Into that form which
doth impress upon it Virtually the soul that has stood still.

And then in manner of the little flame, Which followeth the fire
where'er it shifts, After the spirit followeth its new form.

Since afterwards it takes from this its semblance, It is called shade;
and thence it organizes Thereafter every sense, even to the sight.

Thence is it that we speak, and thence we laugh; Thence is it that we
form the tears and sighs, That on the mountain thou mayhap hast heard.

According as impress us our desires And other affections, so the shade
is shaped, And this is cause of what thou wonderest at."

And now unto the last of all the circles Had we arrived, and to the
right hand turned, And were attentive to another care.

There the embankment shoots forth flames of fire, And upward doth
the cornice breathe a blast That drives them back, and from itself
sequesters.

Hence we must needs go on the open side, And one by one; and I did
fear the fire On this side, and on that the falling down.

My Leader said: "Along this place one ought To keep upon the eyes a
tightened rein, Seeing that one so easily might err."

"Summae Deus clementiae," in the bosom Of the great burning
chanted then I heard, Which made me no less eager to turn round;

And spirits saw I walking through the flame; Wherefore I looked, to
my own steps and theirs Apportioning my sight from time to time.

After the close which to that hymn is made, Aloud they shouted,
"Virum non cognosco;" Then recommenced the hymn with voices low.

This also ended, cried they: "To the wood Diana ran, and drove forth
Helice Therefrom, who had of Venus felt the poison."

Then to their song returned they; then the wives They shouted, and the
husbands who were chaste. As virtue and the marriage vow imposes.

And I believe that them this mode suffices, For all the time the fire is
burning them; With such care is it needful, and such food,

That the last wound of all should be closed up.

Purgatorio: Canto XXVI

While on the brink thus one before the other We went upon our way,
oft the good Master Said: "Take thou heed! suffice it that I warn thee."

On the right shoulder smote me now the sun, That, raying out, already
the whole west Changed from its azure aspect into white.

And with my shadow did I make the flame Appear more red; and even
to such a sign Shades saw I many, as they went, give heed.

This was the cause that gave them a beginning To speak of me; and to
themselves began they To say: "That seems not a factitious body!"

Then towards me, as far as they could come, Came certain of them,
always with regard Not to step forth where they would not be burned.

"O thou who goest, not from being slower But reverent perhaps,
behind the others, Answer me, who in thirst and fire am burning.

Nor to me only is thine answer needful; For all of these have greater
thirst for it Than for cold water Ethiop or Indian.

Tell us how is it that thou makest thyself A wall unto the sun, as if thou
hadst not Entered as yet into the net of death."

Thus one of them addressed me, and I straight Should have revealed
myself, were I not bent On other novelty that then appeared.

For through the middle of the burning road There came a people face
to face with these, Which held me in suspense with gazing at them.

There see I hastening upon either side Each of the shades, and kissing
one another Without a pause, content with brief salute.

Thus in the middle of their brown battalions Muzzle to muzzle one ant
meets another Perchance to spy their journey or their fortune.

No sooner is the friendly greeting ended, Or ever the first footstep
passes onward, Each one endeavours to outcry the other;

The new-come people: "Sodom and Gomorrah!" The rest: "Into the
cow Pasiphae enters, So that the bull unto her lust may run!"

Then as the cranes, that to Rhiphaean mountains Might fly in part, and
part towards the sands, These of the frost, those of the sun avoidant,

One folk is going, and the other coming, And weeping they return to
their first songs, And to the cry that most befitteth them;

And close to me approached, even as before, The very same who had entreated me, Attent to listen in their countenance.

I, who their inclination twice had seen, Began: "O souls secure in the possession, Whene'er it may be, of a state of peace,

Neither unripe nor ripened have remained My members upon earth, but here are with me With their own blood and their articulations.

I go up here to be no longer blind; A Lady is above, who wins this grace, Whereby the mortal through your world I bring.

But as your greatest longing satisfied May soon become, so that the Heaven may house you Which full of love is, and most amply spreads,

Tell me, that I again in books may write it, Who are you, and what is that multitude Which goes upon its way behind your backs?"

Not otherwise with wonder is bewildered The mountaineer, and staring round is dumb, When rough and rustic to the town he goes,

Than every shade became in its appearance; But when they of their stupor were disburdened, Which in high hearts is quickly quieted,

"Blessed be thou, who of our border-lands," He recommenced who first had questioned us, "Experience freightest for a better life.

The folk that comes not with us have offended In that for which once Caesar, triumphing, Heard himself called in contumely, 'Queen.'

Therefore they separate, exclaiming, 'Sodom!' Themselves reproving, even as thou hast heard, And add unto their burning by their shame.

Our own transgression was hermaphrodite; But because we observed not human law, Following like unto beasts our appetite,

In our opprobrium by us is read, When we part company, the name of her Who bestialized herself in bestial wood.

Now knowest thou our acts, and what our crime was; Wouldst thou perchance by name know who we are, There is not time to tell, nor could I do it.

Thy wish to know me shall in sooth be granted; I'm Guido Guinicelli, and now purge me, Having repented ere the hour extreme."

The same that in the sadness of Lycurgus Two sons became, their mother re-beholding, Such I became, but rise not to such height,

The moment I heard name himself the father Of me and of my betters,

who had ever Practised the sweet and gracious rhymes of love;

And without speech and hearing thoughtfully For a long time I went,
beholding him, Nor for the fire did I approach him nearer.

When I was fed with looking, utterly Myself I offered ready for his
service, With affirmation that compels belief.

And he to me: "Thou leavest footprints such In me, from what I hear,
and so distinct, Lethe cannot efface them, nor make dim.

But if thy words just now the truth have sworn, Tell me what is the
cause why thou displayest In word and look that dear thou holdest me?"

And I to him: "Those dulcet lays of yours Which, long as shall endure
our modern fashion, Shall make for ever dear their very ink!"

"O brother," said he, "he whom I point out," And here he pointed at a
spirit in front, "Was of the mother tongue a better smith.

Verses of love and proses of romance, He mastered all; and let the
idiots talk, Who think the Lemosin surpasses him.

To clamour more than truth they turn their faces, And in this way
establish their opinion, Ere art or reason has by them been heard.

Thus many ancients with Guittone did, From cry to cry still giving him
applause, Until the truth has conquered with most persons.

Now, if thou hast such ample privilege 'Tis granted thee to go unto the
cloister Wherein is Christ the abbot of the college,

To him repeat for me a Paternoster, So far as needful to us of this
world, Where power of sinning is no longer ours."

Then, to give place perchance to one behind, Whom he had near, he
vanished in the fire As fish in water going to the bottom.

I moved a little tow'rds him pointed out, And said that to his name my
own desire An honourable place was making ready.

He of his own free will began to say: 'Tan m' abellis vostre cortes
deman, Que jeu nom' puesc ni vueill a vos cobrire;

Jeu sui Arnaut, que plor e vai chantan; Consiros vei la passada folor, E
vei jauzen lo jorn qu' esper denan.

Ara vus prec per aquella valor, Que vus condus al som de la scalina,
Sovenga vus a temprar ma dolor.*

Then hid him in the fire that purifies them.

* So pleases me your courteous demand, I cannot and I will not hide me from you. I am Arnaut, who weep and singing go; Contrite I see the folly of the past, And joyous see the hoped-for day before me. Therefore do I implore you, by that power Which guides you to the summit of the stairs, Be mindful to assuage my suffering!

Purgatorio: Canto XXVII

As when he vibrates forth his earliest rays, In regions where his
Maker shed his blood, (The Ebro falling under lofty Libra,

And waters in the Ganges burnt with noon,) So stood the Sun; hence
was the day departing, When the glad Angel of God appeared to us.

Outside the flame he stood upon the verge, And chanted forth, "Beati
mundo corde," In voice by far more living than our own.

Then: "No one farther goes, souls sanctified, If first the fire bite not;
within it enter, And be not deaf unto the song beyond."

When we were close beside him thus he said; Wherefore e'en such
became I, when I heard him, As he is who is put into the grave.

Upon my clasped hands I straightened me, Scanning the fire, and
vividly recalling The human bodies I had once seen burned.

Towards me turned themselves my good Conductors, And unto me
Virgilius said: "My son, Here may indeed be torment, but not death.

Remember thee, remember! and if I On Geryon have safely guided
thee, What shall I do now I am nearer God?

Believe for certain, shouldst thou stand a full Millennium in the bosom
of this flame, It could not make thee bald a single hair.

And if perchance thou think that I deceive thee, Draw near to it, and
put it to the proof With thine own hands upon thy garment's hem.

Now lay aside, now lay aside all fear, Turn hitherward, and onward
come securely;" And I still motionless, and 'gainst my conscience!

Seeing me stand still motionless and stubborn, Somewhat disturbed he
said: "Now look thou, Son, 'Twixt Beatrice and thee there is this wall."

As at the name of Thisbe oped his lids The dying Pyramus, and gazed
upon her, What time the mulberry became vermilion,

Even thus, my obduracy being softened, I turned to my wise Guide,
hearing the name That in my memory evermore is welling.

Whereat he wagged his head, and said: "How now? Shall we stay on
this side?" then smiled as one Does at a child who's vanquished by an
apple.

Then into the fire in front of me he entered, Beseeching Statius to

come after me, Who a long way before divided us.

When I was in it, into molten glass I would have cast me to refresh myself, So without measure was the burning there!

And my sweet Father, to encourage me, Discoursing still of Beatrice went on, Saying: "Her eyes I seem to see already!"

A voice, that on the other side was singing, Directed us, and we, attent alone On that, came forth where the ascent began.

"Venite, benedicti Patris mei," Sounded within a splendour, which was there Such it o'ercame me, and I could not look.

"The sun departs," it added, "and night cometh; Tarry ye not, but onward urge your steps, So long as yet the west becomes not dark."

Straight forward through the rock the path ascended In such a way that I cut off the rays Before me of the sun, that now was low.

And of few stairs we yet had made assay, Ere by the vanished shadow the sun's setting Behind us we perceived, I and my Sages.

And ere in all its parts immeasurable The horizon of one aspect had become, And Night her boundless dispensation held,

Each of us of a stair had made his bed; Because the nature of the mount took from us The power of climbing, more than the delight.

Even as in ruminating passive grow The goats, who have been swift and venturesome Upon the mountain-tops ere they were fed,

Hushed in the shadow, while the sun is hot, Watched by the herdsman, who upon his staff Is leaning, and in leaning tendeth them;

And as the shepherd, lodging out of doors, Passes the night beside his quiet flock, Watching that no wild beast may scatter it,

Such at that hour were we, all three of us, I like the goat, and like the herdsmen they, Begirt on this side and on that by rocks.

Little could there be seen of things without; But through that little I beheld the stars More luminous and larger than their wont.

Thus ruminating, and beholding these, Sleep seized upon me,--sleep, that oftentimes Before a deed is done has tidings of it.

It was the hour, I think, when from the East First on the mountain Citherea beamed, Who with the fire of love seems always burning;

Youthful and beautiful in dreams methought I saw a lady walking in a

meadow, Gathering flowers; and singing she was saying:

"Know whosoever may my name demand That I am Leah, and go
moving round My beauteous hands to make myself a garland.

To please me at the mirror, here I deck me, But never does my sister
Rachel leave Her looking-glass, and sitteth all day long.

To see her beauteous eyes as eager is she, As I am to adorn me with
my hands; Her, seeing, and me, doing satisfies."

And now before the antelucan splendours That unto pilgrims the more
grateful rise, As, home-returning, less remote they lodge,

The darkness fled away on every side, And slumber with it;
whereupon I rose, Seeing already the great Masters risen.

"That apple sweet, which through so many branches The care of
mortals goeth in pursuit of, To-day shall put in peace thy hungerings."

Speaking to me, Virgilius of such words As these made use; and never
were there guerdons That could in pleasantness compare with these.

Such longing upon longing came upon me To be above, that at each
step thereafter For flight I felt in me the pinions growing.

When underneath us was the stairway all Run o'er, and we were on the
highest step, Virgilius fastened upon me his eyes,

And said: "The temporal fire and the eternal, Son, thou hast seen, and
to a place art come Where of myself no farther I discern.

By intellect and art I here have brought thee; Take thine own pleasure
for thy guide henceforth; Beyond the steep ways and the narrow art thou.

Behold the sun, that shines upon thy forehead; Behold the grass, the
flowerets, and the shrubs Which of itself alone this land produces.

Until rejoicing come the beauteous eyes Which weeping caused me to
come unto thee, Thou canst sit down, and thou canst walk among them.

Expect no more or word or sign from me; Free and upright and sound
is thy free-will, And error were it not to do its bidding;

Thee o'er thyself I therefore crown and mitre!"

Purgatorio: Canto XXVIII

Eager already to search in and round The heavenly forest, dense and living-green, Which tempered to the eyes the new-born day,

Withouten more delay I left the bank, Taking the level country slowly, slowly Over the soil that everywhere breathes fragrance.

A softly-breathing air, that no mutation Had in itself, upon the forehead smote me No heavier blow than of a gentle wind,

Whereat the branches, lightly tremulous, Did all of them bow downward toward that side Where its first shadow casts the Holy Mountain;

Yet not from their upright direction swayed, So that the little birds upon their tops Should leave the practice of each art of theirs;

But with full ravishment the hours of prime, Singing, received they in the midst of leaves, That ever bore a burden to their rhymes,

Such as from branch to branch goes gathering on Through the pine forest on the shore of Chiassi, When Eolus unlooses the Sirocco.

Already my slow steps had carried me Into the ancient wood so far, that I Could not perceive where I had entered it.

And lo! my further course a stream cut off, Which tow'rd the left hand with its little waves Bent down the grass that on its margin sprang.

All waters that on earth most limpid are Would seem to have within themselves some mixture Compared with that which nothing doth conceal,

Although it moves on with a brown, brown current Under the shade perpetual, that never Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.

With feet I stayed, and with mine eyes I passed Beyond the rivulet, to look upon The great variety of the fresh may.

And there appeared to me (even as appears Suddenly something that doth turn aside Through very wonder every other thought)

A lady all alone, who went along Singing and culling floweret after floweret, With which her pathway was all painted over.

"Ah, beauteous lady, who in rays of love Dost warm thyself, if I may trust to looks, Which the heart's witnesses are wont to be,

May the desire come unto thee to draw Near to this river's bank," I

said to her, "So much that I might hear what thou art singing.

Thou makest me remember where and what Proserpina that moment was when lost Her mother her, and she herself the Spring."

As turns herself, with feet together pressed And to the ground, a lady who is dancing, And hardly puts one foot before the other,

On the vermilion and the yellow flowerets She turned towards me, not in other wise Than maiden who her modest eyes casts down;

And my entreaties made to be content, So near approaching, that the dulcet sound Came unto me together with its meaning

As soon as she was where the grasses are. Bathed by the waters of the beauteous river, To lift her eyes she granted me the boon.

I do not think there shone so great a light Under the lids of Venus, when transfixed By her own son, beyond his usual custom!

Erect upon the other bank she smiled, Bearing full many colours in her hands, Which that high land produces without seed.

Apart three paces did the river make us; But Hellespont, where Xerxes passed across, (A curb still to all human arrogance,)

More hatred from Leander did not suffer For rolling between Sestos and Abydos, Than that from me, because it oped not then.

"Ye are new-comers; and because I smile," Began she, "peradventure, in this place Elect to human nature for its nest,

Some apprehension keeps you marvelling; But the psalm 'Delectasti' giveth light Which has the power to uncloud your intellect.

And thou who foremost art, and didst entreat me, Speak, if thou wouldst hear more; for I came ready To all thy questionings, as far as needful."

"The water," said I, "and the forest's sound, Are combating within me my new faith In something which I heard opposed to this." Whence she: "I will relate how from its cause Proceedeth that which maketh thee to wonder, And purge away the cloud that smites upon thee.

The Good Supreme, sole in itself delighting, Created man good, and this goodly place Gave him as hansom of eternal peace.

By his default short while he sojourned here; By his default to weeping and to toil He changed his innocent laughter and sweet play.

That the disturbance which below is made
By exhalations of the land
and water, (Which far as may be follow after heat,)

Might not upon mankind wage any war,
This mount ascended tow'rds
the heaven so high, And is exempt, from there where it is locked.

Now since the universal atmosphere
Turns in a circuit with the primal
motion Unless the circle is broken on some side,

Upon this height, that all is disengaged
In living ether, doth this
motion strike And make the forest sound, for it is dense;

And so much power the stricken plant possesses
That with its virtue it
impregns the air, And this, revolving, scatters it around;

And yonder earth, according as 'tis worthy
In self or in its clime,
conceives and bears Of divers qualities the divers trees;

It should not seem a marvel then on earth,
This being heard, whenever
any plant Without seed manifest there taketh root.

And thou must know, this holy table-land
In which thou art is full of
every seed, And fruit has in it never gathered there.

The water which thou seest springs not from vein
Restored by vapour
that the cold condenses, Like to a stream that gains or loses breath;

But issues from a fountain safe and certain,
Which by the will of God
as much regains As it discharges, open on two sides.

Upon this side with virtue it descends,
Which takes away all memory
of sin; On that, of every good deed done restores it.

Here Lethe, as upon the other side Eunoë, it is called; and worketh not
If first on either side it be not tasted.

This every other savour doth transcend; And notwithstanding slaked so
far may be Thy thirst, that I reveal to thee no more,

I'll give thee a corollary still in grace, Nor think my speech will be to
thee less dear If it spread out beyond my promise to thee.

Those who in ancient times have feigned in song
The Age of Gold and
its felicity, Dreamed of this place perhaps upon Parnassus.

Here was the human race in innocence; Here evermore was Spring,
and every fruit; This is the nectar of which each one speaks."

Then backward did I turn me wholly round
Unto my Poets, and saw
that with a smile They had been listening to these closing words;

Then to the beautiful lady turned mine eyes.

Purgatorio: Canto XXIX

Singing like unto an enamoured lady She, with the ending of her words, continued: "Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata."

And even as Nymphs, that wandered all alone Among the sylvan shadows, sedulous One to avoid and one to see the sun,

She then against the stream moved onward, going Along the bank, and I abreast of her, Her little steps with little steps attending.

Between her steps and mine were not a hundred, When equally the margins gave a turn, In such a way, that to the East I faced.

Nor even thus our way continued far Before the lady wholly turned herself Unto me, saying, "Brother, look and listen!"

And lo! a sudden lustre ran across On every side athwart the spacious forest, Such that it made me doubt if it were lightning.

But since the lightning ceases as it comes, And that continuing brightened more and more, Within my thought I said, "What thing is this?"

And a delicious melody there ran Along the luminous air, whence holy zeal Made me rebuke the hardihood of Eve;

For there where earth and heaven obedient were, The woman only, and but just created, Could not endure to stay 'neath any veil;

Underneath which had she devoutly stayed, I sooner should have tasted those delights Ineffable, and for a longer time.

While 'mid such manifold first-fruits I walked Of the eternal pleasure all enrapt, And still solicitous of more delights,

In front of us like an enkindled fire Became the air beneath the verdant boughs, And the sweet sound as singing now was heard.

O Virgins sacrosanct! if ever hunger, Vigils, or cold for you I have endured, The occasion spurs me their reward to claim!

Now Helicon must needs pour forth for me, And with her choir Urania must assist me, To put in verse things difficult to think.

A little farther on, seven trees of gold In semblance the long space still intervening Between ourselves and them did counterfeit;

But when I had approached so near to them The common object, which the sense deceives, Lost not by distance any of its marks,

The faculty that lends discourse to reason Did apprehend that they were candlesticks, And in the voices of the song "Hosanna!"

Above them flamed the harness beautiful, Far brighter than the moon in the serene Of midnight, at the middle of her month.

I turned me round, with admiration filled, To good Virgilius, and he answered me With visage no less full of wonderment.

Then back I turned my face to those high things, Which moved themselves towards us so sedately, They had been distanced by new-wedded brides.

The lady chid me: "Why dost thou burn only So with affection for the living lights, And dost not look at what comes after them?"

Then saw I people, as behind their leaders, Coming behind them, garmented in white, And such a whiteness never was on earth.

The water on my left flank was resplendent, And back to me reflected my left side, E'en as a mirror, if I looked therein.

When I upon my margin had such post That nothing but the stream divided us, Better to see I gave my steps repose;

And I beheld the flamelets onward go, Leaving behind themselves the air depicted, And they of trailing pennons had the semblance,

So that it overhead remained distinct With sevenfold lists, all of them of the colours Whence the sun's bow is made, and Delia's girdle.

These standards to the rearward longer were Than was my sight; and, as it seemed to me, Ten paces were the outermost apart.

Under so fair a heaven as I describe The four and twenty Elders, two by two, Came on incoronate with flower-de-luce.

They all of them were singing: "Blessed thou Among the daughters of Adam art, and blessed For evermore shall be thy loveliness."

After the flowers and other tender grasses In front of me upon the other margin Were disencumbered of that race elect,

Even as in heaven star followeth after star, There came close after them four animals, Incoronate each one with verdant leaf.

Plumed with six wings was every one of them, The plumage full of eyes; the eyes of Argus If they were living would be such as these.

Reader! to trace their forms no more I waste My rhymes; for other

spendings press me so, That I in this cannot be prodigal.

But read Ezekiel, who depicteth them As he beheld them from the region cold
Coming with cloud, with whirlwind, and with fire;

And such as thou shalt find them in his pages, Such were they here;
saving that in their plumage John is with me, and differeth from him.

The interval between these four contained A chariot triumphal on two wheels,
Which by a Griffin's neck came drawn along;

And upward he extended both his wings Between the middle list and three and three,
So that he injured none by cleaving it.

So high they rose that they were lost to sight; His limbs were gold, so far as he was bird,
And white the others with vermilion mingled.

Not only Rome with no such splendid car E'er gladdened Africanus, or Augustus,
But poor to it that of the Sun would be,--

That of the Sun, which swerving was burnt up At the importunate orison of Earth,
When Jove was so mysteriously just.

Three maidens at the right wheel in a circle Came onward dancing;
one so very red That in the fire she hardly had been noted.

The second was as if her flesh and bones Had all been fashioned out of emerald;
The third appeared as snow but newly fallen.

And now they seemed conducted by the white, Now by the red, and from the song of her
The others took their step, or slow or swift.

Upon the left hand four made holiday Vested in purple, following the measure
Of one of them with three eyes in her head.

In rear of all the group here treated of Two old men I beheld, unlike in habit,
But like in gait, each dignified and grave.

One showed himself as one of the disciples Of that supreme Hippocrates,
whom nature Made for the animals she holds most dear;

Contrary care the other manifested, With sword so shining and so sharp,
it caused Terror to me on this side of the river.

Thereafter four I saw of humble aspect, And behind all an aged man alone
Walking in sleep with countenance acute.

And like the foremost company these seven Were habited; yet of the flower-de-luce
No garland round about the head they wore,

But of the rose, and other flowers vermilion; At little distance would

the sight have sworn That all were in a flame above their brows.

And when the car was opposite to me Thunder was heard; and all that
folk august Seemed to have further progress interdicted,

There with the vanward ensigns standing still.

Purgatorio: Canto XXX

When the Septentrion of the highest heaven (Which never either
setting knew or rising, Nor veil of other cloud than that of sin,

And which made every one therein aware Of his own duty, as the
lower makes Whoever turns the helm to come to port)

Motionless halted, the veracious people, That came at first between it
and the Griffin, Turned themselves to the car, as to their peace.

And one of them, as if by Heaven commissioned, Singing, "Veni,
sponsa, de Libano" Shouted three times, and all the others after.

Even as the Blessed at the final summons Shall rise up quickened each
one from his cavern, Uplifting light the reinvested flesh,

So upon that celestial chariot A hundred rose 'ad vocem tanti senis,'
Ministers and messengers of life eternal.

They all were saying, "Benedictus qui venis," And, scattering flowers
above and round about, "Manibus o date lilia plenis."

Ere now have I beheld, as day began, The eastern hemisphere all
tinged with rose, And the other heaven with fair serene adorned;

And the sun's face, uprising, overshadowed So that by tempering
influence of vapours For a long interval the eye sustained it;

Thus in the bosom of a cloud of flowers Which from those hands
angelical ascended, And downward fell again inside and out,

Over her snow-white veil with olive cinct Appeared a lady under a
green mantle, Vested in colour of the living flame.

And my own spirit, that already now So long a time had been, that in
her presence Trembling with awe it had not stood abashed,

Without more knowledge having by mine eyes, Through occult virtue
that from her proceeded Of ancient love the mighty influence felt.

As soon as on my vision smote the power Sublime, that had already
pierced me through Ere from my boyhood I had yet come forth,

To the left hand I turned with that reliance With which the little child
runs to his mother, When he has fear, or when he is afflicted,

To say unto Virgilius: "Not a drachm Of blood remains in me, that
does not tremble; I know the traces of the ancient flame."

But us Virgilius of himself deprived Had left, Virgilius, sweetest of all fathers, Virgilius, to whom I for safety gave me:

Nor whatsoever lost the ancient mother Aailed my cheeks now purified from dew, That weeping they should not again be darkened.

"Dante, because Virgilius has departed Do not weep yet, do not weep yet awhile; For by another sword thou need'st must weep." E'en as an admiral, who on poop and prow Comes to behold the people that are working In other ships, and cheers them to well-doing,

Upon the left hand border of the car, When at the sound I turned of my own name, Which of necessity is here recorded,

I saw the Lady, who erewhile appeared Veiled underneath the angelic festival, Direct her eyes to me across the river.

Although the veil, that from her head descended, Encircled with the foliage of Minerva, Did not permit her to appear distinctly,

In attitude still royally majestic Continued she, like unto one who speaks, And keeps his warmest utterance in reserve:

"Look at me well; in sooth I'm Beatrice! How didst thou deign to come unto the Mountain? Didst thou not know that man is happy here?"

Mine eyes fell downward into the clear fountain, But, seeing myself therein, I sought the grass, So great a shame did weigh my forehead down.

As to the son the mother seems superb, So she appeared to me; for somewhat bitter Tasteth the savour of severe compassion.

Silent became she, and the Angels sang Suddenly, "In te, Domine, speravi:" But beyond 'pedes meos' did not pass.

Even as the snow among the living rafters Upon the back of Italy congeals, Blown on and drifted by Sclavonian winds,

And then, dissolving, trickles through itself Whene'er the land that loses shadow breathes, So that it seems a fire that melts a taper;

E'en thus was I without a tear or sigh, Before the song of those who sing for ever After the music of the eternal spheres.

But when I heard in their sweet melodies Compassion for me, more than had they said, "O wherefore, lady, dost thou thus upbraid him?"

The ice, that was about my heart congealed, To air and water changed, and in my anguish Through mouth and eyes came gushing from my breast.

She, on the right-hand border of the car Still firmly standing, to those holy beings Thus her discourse directed afterwards:

"Ye keep your watch in the eternal day, So that nor night nor sleep can steal from you One step the ages make upon their path;

Therefore my answer is with greater care, That he may hear me who is weeping yonder, So that the sin and dole be of one measure.

Not only by the work of those great wheels, That destine every seed unto some end, According as the stars are in conjunction,

But by the largess of celestial graces, Which have such lofty vapours for their rain That near to them our sight approaches not,

Such had this man become in his new life Potentially, that every righteous habit Would have made admirable proof in him;

But so much more malignant and more savage Becomes the land untilled and with bad seed, The more good earthly vigour it possesses.

Some time did I sustain him with my look; Revealing unto him my youthful eyes, I led him with me turned in the right way.

As soon as ever of my second age I was upon the threshold and changed life, Himself from me he took and gave to others.

When from the flesh to spirit I ascended, And beauty and virtue were in me increased, I was to him less dear and less delightful;

And into ways untrue he turned his steps, Pursuing the false images of good, That never any promises fulfil;

Nor prayer for inspiration me availed, By means of which in dreams and otherwise I called him back, so little did he heed them.

So low he fell, that all appliances For his salvation were already short, Save showing him the people of perdition.

For this I visited the gates of death, And unto him, who so far up has led him, My intercessions were with weeping borne.

God's lofty fiat would be violated, If Lethe should be passed, and if such viands Should tasted be, withouten any scot

Of penitence, that gushes forth in tears."

Purgatorio: Canto XXXI

"O thou who art beyond the sacred river," Turning to me the point of her discourse, That edgewise even had seemed to me so keen,

She recommenced, continuing without pause, "Say, say if this be true; to such a charge, Thy own confession needs must be conjoined."

My faculties were in so great confusion, That the voice moved, but sooner was extinct Than by its organs it was set at large.

Awhile she waited; then she said: "What thinkest? Answer me; for the mournful memories In thee not yet are by the waters injured."

Confusion and dismay together mingled Forced such a Yes! from out my mouth, that sight Was needful to the understanding of it.

Even as a cross-bow breaks, when 'tis discharged Too tensely drawn the bowstring and the bow, And with less force the arrow hits the mark,

So I gave way beneath that heavy burden, Outpouring in a torrent tears and sighs, And the voice flagged upon its passage forth.

Whence she to me: "In those desires of mine Which led thee to the loving of that good, Beyond which there is nothing to aspire to,

What trenches lying traverse or what chains Didst thou discover, that of passing onward Thou shouldst have thus despoiled thee of the hope?

And what allurements or what vantages Upon the forehead of the others showed, That thou shouldst turn thy footsteps unto them?"

After the heaving of a bitter sigh, Hardly had I the voice to make response, And with fatigue my lips did fashion it.

Weeping I said: "The things that present were With their false pleasure turned aside my steps, Soon as your countenance concealed itself."

And she: "Shouldst thou be silent, or deny What thou confessest, not less manifest Would be thy fault, by such a Judge 'tis known.

But when from one's own cheeks comes bursting forth The accusal of the sin, in our tribunal Against the edge the wheel doth turn itself.

But still, that thou mayst feel a greater shame For thy transgression, and another time Hearing the Sirens thou mayst be more strong,

Cast down the seed of weeping and attend; So shalt thou hear, how in an opposite way My buried flesh should have directed thee.

Never to thee presented art or nature
Pleasure so great as the fair limbs
wherein I was enclosed, which scattered are in earth.

And if the highest pleasure thus did fail thee
By reason of my death,
what mortal thing Should then have drawn thee into its desire?

Thou oughtest verily at the first shaft
Of things fallacious to have risen
up To follow me, who was no longer such.

Thou oughtest not to have stooped thy pinions downward
To wait for
further blows, or little girl, Or other vanity of such brief use.

The callow birdlet waits for two or three,
But to the eyes of those
already fledged, In vain the net is spread or shaft is shot."

Even as children silent in their shame
Stand listening with their eyes
upon the ground, And conscious of their fault, and penitent;

So was I standing; and she said: "If thou
In hearing sufferest pain, lift
up thy beard And thou shalt feel a greater pain in seeing."

With less resistance is a robust holm
Uprooted, either by a native wind
Or else by that from regions of Iarbas,

Than I upraised at her command my chin; And when she by the beard
the face demanded, Well I perceived the venom of her meaning.

And as my countenance was lifted up, Mine eye perceived those
creatures beautiful Had rested from the strewing of the flowers;

And, still but little reassured, mine eyes
Saw Beatrice turned round
towards the monster, That is one person only in two natures.

Beneath her veil, beyond the margent green,
She seemed to me far
more her ancient self To excel, than others here, when she was here.

So pricked me then the thorn of penitence, That of all other things the
one which turned me Most to its love became the most my foe.

Such self-conviction stung me at the heart O'erpowered I fell, and
what I then became She knoweth who had furnished me the cause.

Then, when the heart restored my outward sense, The lady I had found
alone, above me I saw, and she was saying, "Hold me, hold me."

Up to my throat she in the stream had drawn me, And, dragging me
behind her, she was moving Upon the water lightly as a shuttle.

When I was near unto the blessed shore, "Asperges me," I heard so
sweetly sung, Remember it I cannot, much less write it.

The beautiful lady opened wide her arms, Embraced my head, and
plunged me underneath, Where I was forced to swallow of the water.

Then forth she drew me, and all dripping brought Into the dance of the
four beautiful, And each one with her arm did cover me.

'We here are Nymphs, and in the Heaven are stars; Ere Beatrice
descended to the world, We as her handmaids were appointed her.

We'll lead thee to her eyes; but for the pleasant Light that within them
is, shall sharpen thine The three beyond, who more profoundly look.'

Thus singing they began; and afterwards Unto the Griffin's breast they
led me with them, Where Beatrice was standing, turned towards us.

"See that thou dost not spare thine eyes," they said; "Before the
emeralds have we stationed thee, Whence Love aforetime drew for thee
his weapons."

A thousand longings, hotter than the flame, Fastened mine eyes upon
those eyes reluctant, That still upon the Griffin steadfast stayed.

As in a glass the sun, not otherwise Within them was the twofold
monster shining, Now with the one, now with the other nature.

Think, Reader, if within myself I marvelled, When I beheld the thing
itself stand still, And in its image it transformed itself.

While with amazement filled and jubilant, My soul was tasting of the
food, that while It satisfies us makes us hunger for it,

Themselves revealing of the highest rank In bearing, did the other
three advance, Singing to their angelic saraband.

"Turn, Beatrice, O turn thy holy eyes," Such was their song, "unto thy
faithful one, Who has to see thee ta'en so many steps.

In grace do us the grace that thou unveil Thy face to him, so that he
may discern The second beauty which thou dost conceal."

O splendour of the living light eternal! Who underneath the shadow of
Parnassus Has grown so pale, or drunk so at its cistern,

He would not seem to have his mind encumbered Striving to paint thee
as thou didst appear, Where the harmonious heaven o'ershadowed thee,

When in the open air thou didst unveil?

Purgatorio: Canto XXXII

So steadfast and attentive were mine eyes In satisfying their
decennial thirst, That all my other senses were extinct,

And upon this side and on that they had Walls of indifference, so the
holy smile Drew them unto itself with the old net

When forcibly my sight was turned away Towards my left hand by
those goddesses, Because I heard from them a "Too intently!"

And that condition of the sight which is In eyes but lately smitten by
the sun Bereft me of my vision some short while;

But to the less when sight re-shaped itself, I say the less in reference to
the greater Splendour from which perforce I had withdrawn,

I saw upon its right wing wheeled about The glorious host returning
with the sun And with the sevenfold flames upon their faces.

As underneath its shields, to save itself, A squadron turns, and with its
banner wheels, Before the whole thereof can change its front,

That soldiery of the celestial kingdom Which marched in the advance
had wholly passed us Before the chariot had turned its pole.

Then to the wheels the maidens turned themselves, And the Griffin
moved his burden benedict, But so that not a feather of him fluttered.

The lady fair who drew me through the ford Followed with Statius and
myself the wheel Which made its orbit with the lesser arc.

So passing through the lofty forest, vacant By fault of her who in the
serpent trusted, Angelic music made our steps keep time.

Perchance as great a space had in three flights An arrow loosened from
the string o'erpassed, As we had moved when Beatrice descended.

I heard them murmur altogether, "Adam!" Then circled they about a
tree despoiled Of blooms and other leafage on each bough.

Its tresses, which so much the more dilate As higher they ascend, had
been by Indians Among their forests marvelled at for height.

"Blessed art thou, O Griffin, who dost not Pluck with thy beak these
branches sweet to taste, Since appetite by this was turned to evil."

After this fashion round the tree robust The others shouted; and the
twofold creature: "Thus is preserved the seed of all the just."

And turning to the pole which he had dragged, He drew it close
beneath the widowed bough, And what was of it unto it left bound.

In the same manner as our trees (when downward Falls the great light,
with that together mingled Which after the celestial Lasca shines)

Begin to swell, and then renew themselves, Each one with its own
colour, ere the Sun Harness his steeds beneath another star:

Less than of rose and more than violet A hue disclosing, was renewed
the tree That had erewhile its boughs so desolate.

I never heard, nor here below is sung, The hymn which afterward that
people sang, Nor did I bear the melody throughout.

Had I the power to paint how fell asleep Those eyes compassionless,
of Syrinx hearing, Those eyes to which more watching cost so dear,

Even as a painter who from model paints I would portray how I was
lulled asleep; He may, who well can picture drowsihood.

Therefore I pass to what time I awoke, And say a splendour rent from
me the veil Of slumber, and a calling: "Rise, what dost thou?"

As to behold the apple-tree in blossom Which makes the Angels
greedy for its fruit, And keeps perpetual bridals in the Heaven,

Peter and John and James conducted were, And, overcome, recovered
at the word By which still greater slumbers have been broken,

And saw their school diminished by the loss Not only of Elias, but of
Moses, And the apparel of their Master changed;

So I revived, and saw that piteous one Above me standing, who had
been conductress Aforetime of my steps beside the river,

And all in doubt I said, "Where's Beatrice?" And she: "Behold her
seated underneath The leafage new, upon the root of it.

Behold the company that circles her; The rest behind the Griffin are
ascending With more melodious song, and more profound."

And if her speech were more diffuse I know not, Because already in
my sight was she Who from the hearing of aught else had shut me.

Alone she sat upon the very earth, Left there as guardian of the chariot
Which I had seen the biform monster fasten.

Encircling her, a cloister made themselves The seven Nymphs, with
those lights in their hands Which are secure from Aquilon and Auster.

"Short while shalt thou be here a forester, And thou shalt be with me
for evermore A citizen of that Rome where Christ is Roman.

Therefore, for that world's good which liveth ill, Fix on the car thine
eyes, and what thou seest, Having returned to earth, take heed thou write."

Thus Beatrice; and I, who at the feet Of her commandments all
devoted was, My mind and eyes directed where she willed.

Never descended with so swift a motion Fire from a heavy cloud,
when it is raining From out the region which is most remote,

As I beheld the bird of Jove descend Down through the tree, rending
away the bark, As well as blossoms and the foliage new,

And he with all his might the chariot smote, Whereat it reeled, like
vessel in a tempest Tossed by the waves, now starboard and now larboard.

Thereafter saw I leap into the body Of the triumphal vehicle a Fox,
That seemed unfed with any wholesome food.

But for his hideous sins upbraiding him, My Lady put him to as swift a
flight As such a fleshless skeleton could bear.

Then by the way that it before had come, Into the chariot's chest I saw
the Eagle Descend, and leave it feathered with his plumes.

And such as issues from a heart that mourns, A voice from Heaven
there issued, and it said: "My little bark, how badly art thou freighted!"

Methought, then, that the earth did yawn between Both wheels, and I
saw rise from it a Dragon, Who through the chariot upward fixed his tail,

And as a wasp that draweth back its sting, Drawing unto himself his
tail malign, Drew out the floor, and went his way rejoicing.

That which remained behind, even as with grass A fertile region, with
the feathers, offered Perhaps with pure intention and benign,

Reclothed itself, and with them were reclathed The pole and both the
wheels so speedily, A sigh doth longer keep the lips apart.

Transfigured thus the holy edifice Thrust forward heads upon the parts
of it, Three on the pole and one at either corner.

The first were horned like oxen; but the four Had but a single horn
upon the forehead; A monster such had never yet been seen!

Firm as a rock upon a mountain high, Seated upon it, there appeared to
me A shameless whore, with eyes swift glancing round,

And, as if not to have her taken from him, Upright beside her I beheld
a giant; And ever and anon they kissed each other.

But because she her wanton, roving eye Turned upon me, her angry
paramour Did scourge her from her head unto her feet.

Then full of jealousy, and fierce with wrath, He loosed the monster,
and across the forest Dragged it so far, he made of that alone

A shield unto the whore and the strange beast.

Purgatorio: Canto XXXIII

"Deus venerunt gentes," alternating Now three, now four, melodious psalmody The maidens in the midst of tears began;

And Beatrice, compassionate and sighing, Listened to them with such a countenance, That scarce more changed was Mary at the cross.

But when the other virgins place had given For her to speak, uprisen to her feet With colour as of fire, she made response:

"'Modicum, et non videbitis me; Et iterum,' my sisters predilect, 'Modicum, et vos videbitis me.'"

Then all the seven in front of her she placed; And after her, by beckoning only, moved Me and the lady and the sage who stayed.

So she moved onward; and I do not think That her tenth step was placed upon the ground, When with her eyes upon mine eyes she smote,

And with a tranquil aspect, "Come more quickly," To me she said, "that, if I speak with thee, To listen to me thou mayst be well placed."

As soon as I was with her as I should be, She said to me: "Why, brother, dost thou not Venture to question now, in coming with me?"

As unto those who are too reverential, Speaking in presence of superiors, Who drag no living utterance to their teeth,

It me befell, that without perfect sound Began I: "My necessity, Madonna, You know, and that which thereunto is good."

And she to me: "Of fear and bashfulness Henceforward I will have thee strip thyself, So that thou speak no more as one who dreams.

Know that the vessel which the serpent broke Was, and is not; but let him who is guilty Think that God's vengeance does not fear a sop.

Without an heir shall not for ever be The Eagle that left his plumes upon the car, Whence it became a monster, then a prey;

For verily I see, and hence narrate it, The stars already near to bring the time, From every hindrance safe, and every bar,

Within which a Five-hundred, Ten, and Five, One sent from God, shall slay the thievish woman And that same giant who is sinning with her.

And peradventure my dark utterance, Like Themis and the Sphinx, may less persuade thee, Since, in their mode, it clouds the intellect;

But soon the facts shall be the Naiades Who shall this difficult enigma solve, Without destruction of the flocks and harvests.

Note thou; and even as by me are uttered These words, so teach them unto those who live That life which is a running unto death;

And bear in mind, whene'er thou writest them, Not to conceal what thou hast seen the plant, That twice already has been pillaged here.

Whoever pillages or shatters it, With blasphemy of deed offendeth God, Who made it holy for his use alone.

For biting that, in pain and in desire Five thousand years and more the first-born soul Craved Him, who punished in himself the bite.

Thy genius slumbers, if it deem it not For special reason so pre-eminent In height, and so inverted in its summit.

And if thy vain imaginings had not been Water of Elsa round about thy mind, And Pyramus to the mulberry, their pleasure,

Thou by so many circumstances only The justice of the interdict of God Morally in the tree wouldst recognize.

But since I see thee in thine intellect Converted into stone and stained with sin, So that the light of my discourse doth daze thee,

I will too, if not written, at least painted, Thou bear it back within thee, for the reason That cinct with palm the pilgrim's staff is borne."

And I: "As by a signet is the wax Which does not change the figure stamped upon it, My brain is now imprinted by yourself.

But wherefore so beyond my power of sight Soars your desirable discourse, that aye The more I strive, so much the more I lose it?"

"That thou mayst recognize," she said, "the school Which thou hast followed, and mayst see how far Its doctrine follows after my discourse,

And mayst behold your path from the divine Distant as far as separated is From earth the heaven that highest hastens on."

Whence her I answered: "I do not remember That ever I estranged myself from you, Nor have I conscience of it that reproves me."

"And if thou art not able to remember," Smiling she answered, "recollect thee now That thou this very day hast drunk of Lethe;

And if from smoke a fire may be inferred, Such an oblivion clearly demonstrates Some error in thy will elsewhere intent.

Truly from this time forward shall my words
Be naked, so far as it is
befitting To lay them open unto thy rude gaze."

And more coruscant and with slower steps
The sun was holding the
meridian circle, Which, with the point of view, shifts here and there

When halted (as he cometh to a halt, Who goes before a squadron as
its escort, If something new he find upon his way)

The ladies seven at a dark shadow's edge, Such as, beneath green
leaves and branches black, The Alp upon its frigid border wears.

In front of them the Tigris and Euphrates Methought I saw forth issue
from one fountain, And slowly part, like friends, from one another.

"O light, O glory of the human race! What stream is this which here
unfolds itself From out one source, and from itself withdraws?"

For such a prayer, 'twas said unto me, "Pray Matilda that she tell thee;"
and here answered, As one does who doth free himself from blame,

The beautiful lady: "This and other things Were told to him by me; and
sure I am The water of Lethe has not hid them from him."

And Beatrice: "Perhaps a greater care, Which oftentimes our memory
takes away, Has made the vision of his mind obscure.

But Eunoe behold, that yonder rises; Lead him to it, and, as thou art
accustomed, Revive again the half-dead virtue in him."

Like gentle soul, that maketh no excuse, But makes its own will of
another's will As soon as by a sign it is disclosed,

Even so, when she had taken hold of me, The beautiful lady moved,
and unto Statius Said, in her womanly manner, "Come with him."

If, Reader, I possessed a longer space For writing it, I yet would sing
in part Of the sweet draught that ne'er would satiate me; But inasmuch as
full are all the leaves Made ready for this second canticle, The curb of art
no farther lets me go.

From the most holy water I returned Regenerate, in the manner of new
trees That are renewed with a new foliage,

Pure and disposed to mount unto the stars.