

INFERNO

CANTO XXXIII

He raised his mouth from his atrocious meal, that sinner, and wiped it on the hair of the very head he had been ravaging.	3
Then he began: 'You ask me to revive the desperate grief that racks my heart even in thought, before I tell it.	6
'But if my words shall be the seeds that bear infamous fruit to the traitor I am gnawing, then you will see me speak and weep together.	9
'I don't know who you are, nor by what means you have come down here, but when I listen to you speak it seems to me you are indeed from Florence.	12
'Take note that I was Count Ugolino, and he Archbishop Ruggieri. Let me tell you why I'm such a neighbor to him.	15
'How, as the consummation of his malicious schemes, after I'd lodged my trust in him, he had me seized and put to death, there is no need to tell.	18
'But when you learn what you cannot have heard -- that is to say, the cruelty of my death -- then you shall know if he has wronged me.	21
'A little spyhole in the Mew, which now on my account is called the Tower of Hunger, where others yet shall be imprisoned,	24
'had through its opening shown me several moons, when, in a dreadful dream, the veil was rent, and I foresaw the future.	27
'This man appeared to be the lord and master, hunting the wolf and wolfcubs on the mountain that hides Lucca from the sight of Pisans.	30
'Along with well-trained hounds, lean and eager, he had ranged in his front rank Gualandi, Sismondi, and Lanfranchi.	33

'Father and sons, after a brief pursuit, seemed to be flagging, and it seemed to me I saw the flesh torn from their flanks by sharp incisors.	36
'When I awoke before the dawn of day I heard my children, in that prison with me, weep in their sleep and ask for bread.	39
'You are cruel indeed, thinking what my heart foretold, if you remain untouched by grief, and if you weep not, what can make you weep?	42
'Now they were awake, and the hour drew near at which they brought our food. Each of us was troubled by his dream.	45
'Down below I heard them nailing shut the entry to the dreadful tower. I looked my children in the face, without a word.	48
'I was so turned to stone inside I did not weep. But they were weeping, and my little Anselm said: "You look so strange, father, what's wrong?"	51
'Even then I shed no tear, and made no answer all that day, and all the night that followed until the next day's sun came forth upon the world.	54
'As soon as some few rays had made their way into the woeful prison, and I discerned four other faces stamped with my expression, the sorrow of it made me gnaw my hands. And they, imagining I was doing this from hunger, rose at once, saying:	60
"'Father, we would suffer less if you would feed on us: you clothed us in this wretched flesh -- now strip it off."	63
'Then, not to increase their grief, I calmed myself. That day and the next we did not speak a word. O hard earth, why did you not engulf us?	66
'When we had come as far as the fourth day my Gaddo threw himself on the ground before me, crying, "O father, why won't you help me?"	69
'There he died; and even as you see me now I watched the other three die, one by one, on the fifth day and the sixth. And I began,	72

'already blind, to grope over their bodies,
 and for two days called to them, though they were dead.
 Then fasting had more power than grief.' 75

Having said this, with maddened eyes he seized
 that wretched skull again between his teeth
 and clenched them on the bone just like a dog. 78

Ah Pisa, how you shame the people
 of that fair land where 'sì' is heard!
 Since your neighbors are so slow to punish you, 81
 may the islands of Capraia and Gorgona
 move in to block the Arno at its mouth
 and so drown every living soul in you! 84

Even if Count Ugolino bore the name
 of traitor to your castles, you still
 should not have put his children to such torture. 87

Their tender years, you modern Thebes,
 declared Uguiccione and Brigata innocent,
 and the other two this canto names above. 90

We went on farther, to where the ice-crust
 rudely wraps another sort of souls,
 their faces not turned down but up. 93

The very weeping there prevents their weeping,
 for the grief that meets a barrier at the eyelids
 turns inward to augment their anguish, 96
 since their first tears become a crust
 that like a crystal visor fills
 the cups beneath the eyebrows. 99

Although the cold had made
 all feeling leave my face
 as though it were a callus, 102
 I still could feel a breath of wind.

And I said: 'Master, who sets this in motion?
 Are not all winds banished here below?' 105

Thus he to me: 'You will come soon enough
 to where your eyes will give an answer,
 seeing the source that puts out such a blast.' 108

And one of the wretches in the icy crust
 cried out: 'O souls, so hard of heart
 you are assigned the lowest station, 111

'lift from my face these rigid veils
 so I can vent a while the grief that swells
 my heart, until my tears freeze up again.' 114

'If you want my help, let me know your name,'
 I answered. 'Then, if I do not relieve you,
 may I have to travel to the bottom of the ice.' 117

He spoke: 'I am Fra Alberigo. I am he
 who harvested the evil orchard,
 and here, for figs, I am repaid in dates.' 120

'Oh,' said I to him, 'are you already dead?'
 And he to me: 'I have no knowledge
 how my body fares in the world above.' 123

'Such privilege has this Ptolomea,
 that many times a soul may fall down here
 before Atropos has cut it loose.' 126

'So that you may be all the more inclined
 to scrape these tear-drops glazed upon my face,
 know that the moment a soul betrays 129

'as I did, its body is taken by a devil,
 who has it then in his control
 until the time allotted it has run.' 132

'The soul falls headlong to this cesspool.
 Perhaps the body of this shade, who spends
 the winter with me here, still walks the earth, 135

'as you must know, if you've come down just now.
 He is Branca d'Oria. Quite some years
 have passed since he was thus confined.' 138

'I think,' I said to him, 'you're fooling me.
 For Branca d'Oria is not yet dead: he eats
 and drinks and sleeps and puts on clothes.' 141

'In the ditch above, of the Malebranche,'
 he said, 'where the clingy pitch is at the boil,
 Michel Zanche had not yet arrived 144

'when this man left a devil in his stead
 to own his body, as did his kinsman,
 his partner in the treacherous act.' 147

'But now extend your hand and open
 my eyes for me.' I did not open them.
 And to be rude to him was courtesy. 150

O, men of Genoa, race estranged
from every virtue, crammed with every vice,
why have you not been driven from the earth? 153
With the most heinous spirit of Romagna
I found a son of yours who, for his evil deeds,
even now in Cocytus bathes his soul 156
while yet his body moves among the living. 157