

PARADISO

CANTO IX

After your Charles had enlightened me,
fair Clemence, he told of the deceptions
his seed was destined still to bear, 3
but said: 'Be silent, and let the years roll by.'
And so I can reveal no more than this: fitting grief
shall find the ones who do your family wrong. 6
By now the spirit in its holy light
had turned back to the Sun that fills its being,
as to the goodness that suffices in all things. 9
Ah, souls beguiled, creatures without reverence,
who wrench your hearts away from so much good
and set your minds on emptiness! 12
Now another of those splendors moved
in my direction, while its brightened glow
proclaimed its wish to bring me joy. 15
The eyes of Beatrice, fixed on me,
as they had been before, held loving reassurance
of her glad consent to my desire. 18
'Please let my wish receive its quick reward,
blessèd spirit,' I asked, 'and give me proof
that what I think reflects itself in you.' 21
At that the radiance, as yet unknown to me,
out of the very depth from which it sang before,
responded as does someone who delights in doing good: 24
'In that part of degenerate Italy
that extends from the Rialto
to the sources of the Brenta and the Piave 27
'there rises a hill of no great height
from which a firebrand came hurtling down
to scourge the region with its fierce assault. 30
'This torch and I were born from a single root.
Cunizza was my name and, overcome
by this star's splendor, I shine here. 33

'I gladly pardon in myself the reason for my lot,
nor does it grieve me -- a fact that may
seem strange, perhaps, to those unschooled among you. 36

'Of this scintillating, precious jewel beside me
in this heaven, great fame was left on earth.
And, before it dies away completely, 39

'this centennial year will come again five times.
Consider, then, should a man not strive to excel
so that his first life leave behind a better? 42

'Of this the present rabble there enclosed
by the Tagliamento and the Àdige have no thought,
nor, for all their scourgings, do they yet repent. 45

'But soon the time will come when Padua shall stain
the color of the water of Vicenza's marshes,
because the people there resist their duty. 48

'Where the rivers Sile and Cagnano converge,
one man lords it, with his head held high --
but even now the web is spun to catch him. 51

'Feltre must still bewail the perfidy
of her godless shepherd. This shall be so foul
that, for its like, none yet has gone to prison. 54

'Large indeed the vat would have to be
to hold so much of Ferrarese blood,
and weary he who had to weigh it ounce by ounce, 57

'the blood this generous priest will offer as a gift
to show his party just how staunch he is --
such gifts will suit that city's way of life. 60

'Above us are the mirrors you call Thrones.
From them the judging God shines down on us,
so that we think it good to say such things.' 63

Here she was silent and it seemed to me
her thoughts had turned to other cares
as she rejoined the ring where she had been before. 66

The other joy, already known to me
as precious, before my eyes became a splendid ruby,
sparkling in the bright rays of the sun. 69

There above, brightness is gained by joy,
as is laughter here, but down below
a shade shows dark when sadness clouds its mind. 72

'God sees all, and your sight is so in-Himmed,
blessèd spirit,' I said, 'that no wish of any kind
is able to conceal itself from you. 75

'Why then does your voice, which ever pleases Heaven,
together with the singing of those loving flames
that form their cowls from their six wings, 78
'not offer my desires their satisfaction?
I would not await your question
if I in-you'd me as you in-me'd you.' 81

'The widest expanse of water inside shores,'
were the initial words of his response,
'drawn from the sea encircling all the world, 84
'between its opposing shores extends so far
against the wheeling sun, it places the meridian
where at first lay only the horizon. 87

'I was a dweller on that water's shore
between the Ebro and the brief run of the Magra
that separates the Tuscan from the Genovese. 90

'So close they nearly share sunset and dawn
lie Bougie and the city that I came from.
Once it made its harbor warm with its own blood. 93

'Folco the people called me, if they knew
my name, and now this heaven
is marked by me, as I was marked by it, 96

'for the daughter of Belus was no more aflame,
bringing grief to Sychaeus and to Creusa,
than I, until the color of my hair began to fade, 99
'nor was she of Rhodope, who was deceived
by Demophoön, nor Alcides,
when he embraced Iole in his heart. 102

'Yet here we don't repent, but smile instead,
not at our fault, which comes not back to mind,
but for that Power which ordered and foresaw. 105

'Here we contemplate the craft that beautifies
such love, and here discern the good
with which the world above informs the one below. 108

'However, so that you may leave this sphere
with every wish that here has been engendered
satisfied, I must go on. 111

'You want to know who occupies this luminescence
that scintillates beside me here,
like a sunbeam gleaming on clear water. 114

'Know then that within it Rahab is at peace,
and, since she is of our number,
our highest rank receives its seal from her. 117

'Into this heaven, where the shadow of your world
comes to a point, before any other,
first in Christ's triumph, she was taken up. 120

'Fitting it was indeed to leave her in one heaven,
a trophy of the lofty victory
He gained with both of His two palms, 123

'because she aided Joshua when he gained
his first triumph in the Holy Land -- a place
that hardly touches the memory of the pope. 126

'Your city, which was planted by him,
the first to turn his back upon his Maker
and from whose envy comes such great distress, 129

'puts forth and spreads the accursèd flower
that has led astray both sheep and lambs,
for it has made a wolf out of its shepherd. 132

'For it the Gospels and the lofty doctors
are neglected and the Decretals alone are studied,
as is readily apparent from their margins. 135

'To it the pope and his cardinals devote themselves,
without a single thought for Nazareth,
where Gabriel spread out his wings. 138

'But Vatican hill and other chosen Roman places
that became the burial-ground
for the soldiery that followed Peter 141

will soon be free of this adultery. 142