

PARADISO

CANTO X

Gazing on His Son with the Love the One and the Other eternally breathe forth, the inexpressible and primal Power	3
made with such order all things that revolve that he who studies it, in mind and in space, cannot but taste of Him.	6
With me, then, reader, raise your eyes up to the lofty wheels, directly to that part where the one motion and the other intersect,	9
and from that point begin to gaze in rapture at the Master's work. He so loves it in Himself that never does His eye depart from it.	12
See how from there the oblique circle that bears the planets on it branches off to satisfy the world that calls for them.	15
And if their pathway were not thus deflected, many powers in the heavens would be vain and quite dead almost every potency on earth.	18
And, if it slanted farther or less far in the upper or the lower hemisphere, much would be lacking in the order of the world.	21
Stay on your bench now, reader, thinking of the joy you have but tasted, if, well before you tire, you would be happy.	24
I have set your table. From here on feed yourself, for my attention now resides in that matter of which I have become the scribe.	27
Nature's sublime and greatest minister, who imprints Heaven's power on the world and in his shining measures out our time,	30
in conjunction with the place I note above, was wheeling through those spirals in which he comes forth earlier each day.	33

And I was in it, aware of my ascent
no more than one becomes aware
of the beginnings of a thought before it comes. 36

It is Beatrice who leads from good
to better so suddenly that her action
has no measurement in time. 39

Whatever I saw within the sun, how shining
it must have been, for, when I entered,
it revealed itself, not by color, but by light. 42

Were I to call on genius, skill, and practice,
I could not ever tell how this might be imagined.
Enough if one believes and longs to see it. 45

And if the powers of our imagination
are too earthbound for such height, it is no wonder,
for eye has never seen light brighter than the sun. 48

So brilliant the fourth family of the highest Father,
who forever gives it satisfaction, shone,
revealing how He breathes and how begets. 51

And Beatrice began: 'Give thanks, give thanks
to the Sun who makes the angels shine and who,
by His grace, has raised you to this visible sun.' 54

Never was mortal heart so well prepared
for worship, nor so swift to yield itself
to God with absolute assent 57

as was mine when I heard those words,
and all my love was so set on Him
that it eclipsed Beatrice in forgetfulness. 60

This did not displease her. Instead, she smiled,
so that the splendor of her smiling eyes
divided my mind's focus among many things. 63

I saw many living lights of blinding brightness
make of us a center and of themselves a crown,
their voices sweeter than the radiance of their faces. 66

Thus ringed we sometimes see Latona's daughter
when the air has grown so heavy
that it retains the thread that forms her belt. 69

In the court of Heaven, from which I have returned,
there are many gems of such worth and beauty
that they may not be taken from the realm. 72

These lights were singing of those jewels.
 He who fails to wing himself to fly there
 might as well await the dumb to tell the news. 75

When, with just such songs, those blazing suns
 had three times made their way around us,
 like stars right near the still and steady poles, 78
 they seemed to me like ladies, poised to dance,
 pausing, silent, as they listen,
 until they have made out the new refrain. 81

And from one of them I heard: 'Since the ray
 of grace by which true love is kindled
 and which, by loving, sees itself increase, 84
 'multiplied in you, is so resplendent
 that it conducts you up that stair
 which none descends except to mount again, 87
 'he who would deny your thirst the wine
 out of his bottle would not be free to do so,
 as water has no option but to flow into the sea. 90

'You want to know with what plants and blossoms
 this garland is in flower, encircling with delight
 the lovely lady who strengthens you for Heaven. 93

'I was a lamb among the holy flock
 led by Dominic along the road
 where sheep are fattened if they do not stray. 96

'He that is nearest to me on the right
 was both my brother and my teacher --
 he, Albert of Cologne, I, Thomas of Aquino. 99

'If you would like to find out who the others are,
 follow, as I name them, with your eyes,
 turning up your gaze along the blessed wreath. 102

'The next flame issues from the smile of Gratian,
 who served one and the other court so well
 his service now gives joy in Paradise. 105

'The next one to adorn our choir
 was the Peter who, like the poor widow,
 offered up his treasure to Holy Church. 108

'The fifth light, the most beautiful among us,
 breathes forth such love that all the world below
 is greedy to discover how his soul has fared. 111

'Within his light there dwells a lofty mind,
its wisdom so profound, if truth is true,
there never rose another of such vision. 114

'Next to him behold the flaming of the candle
that in the flesh below saw farthest
into the nature and the ministry of angels. 117

'In the other little light there
smiles that defender of the Christian Church
of whose account Augustine made good use. 120

'If the eye of your mind is being drawn
from light to light, following my praises,
you are already thirsting for the eighth. 123

'Within it rejoices, in his vision of all goodness,
the holy soul who makes quite plain
the world's deceit to one who listens well. 126

'The body from which it was driven out
lies down there in Cieldauro, and he has risen
from martyrdom and exile to this peace. 129

'See, blazing just beyond him, the fiery breath
of Isidore, of Bede, and then of Richard,
the last in contemplation more than human. 132

'This one, from whom your look comes back to me,
is the light of a spirit to whom it seemed,
in his grave meditation, that death came on too slow. 135

'It is the eternal light of Siger,
who, instructing in the Street of Straw,
demonstrated enviable truths.' 138

Then, like a clock that calls us at the hour
when the bride of God gets up to sing
matins to her bridegroom, that he should love her still, 141
when a cog pulls one wheel and drives another,
chiming its ting-ting with notes so sweet
that the willing spirit swells with love, 144

thus I saw that glorious wheel in motion,
matching voice to voice in harmony
and with sweetness that cannot be known 147

except where joy becomes eternal. 148