

PARADISO

CANTO XXVII

'To the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,
glory,' cried all the souls of Paradise,
and I became drunk on the sweetness of their song. 3

It seemed to me I saw the universe
smile, so that my drunkenness
came now through hearing and through sight. 6

O happiness! O joy beyond description!
O life fulfilled in love and peace!
O riches held in store, exempt from craving! 9

Before my eyes four torches were aflame.
The one who, luminous, had come forth first
began to glow more brilliantly, 12

his aspect changing, as would Jupiter's
if he and Mars were birds
and had exchanged their plumage. 15

The providence that there assigns
both time and duty had imposed silence
on every member of the holy choir, 18

when I heard: 'If my color changes, do not be amazed,
for while I am speaking you shall see
the color of each soul here change as well. 21

'He who on earth usurps my place,
my place, my place, which in the eyes
of God's own Son is vacant, 24

'has made my tomb a sewer of blood and filth,
so that the Evil One, who fell from here above,
takes satisfaction there below.' 27

Then I saw that all this heaven was suffused
with the very color painted on those clouds
that face the sun at dawn or dusk. 30

As a chaste woman, certain of her virtue,
merely on hearing of another's fault,
makes evident the shame she feels for it, 33

just so did Beatrice change in her appearance, and just such an eclipse, I think, there was above when the Omnipotent felt pain.	36
Then he added these words to his first with voice so altered from its former state that even his looks were not more changed:	39
'The Bride of Christ was not nurtured with my blood -- nor that of Linus and of Cletus -- to serve the cause of gaining gold.	42
'Rather, to gain this joyous way of life Sixtus, Pius, Calixtus, and Urban shed their blood after many tears.	45
'It was never our intention that the one part of Christ's fold should be seated on the right of our successors, and the other on the left,	48
'nor that the keys entrusted to my keeping should become devices on the standards borne in battles waged against the baptized,	51
'nor that I become the imprint in a seal on sale for fraudulence and bribes so that I blush, in turn, with rage and shame.	54
'Ravenous wolves in shepherds' clothing can be seen, from here above, in every pasture. O God our defender, why do you not act?	57
'Cahorsines and Gascons prepare to drink our blood. O lofty promise, to what base end are you condemned to fall?	60
'But Providence on high, which by the deeds of Scipio preserved in Rome the glory of the world, shall, as I can clearly see, soon bring assistance.	63
'And you, my son, who, for your mortal burden, must return below, make sure they hear this from your mouth, not hiding what I do not hide.'	66
As when the sun touches the horn of the heavenly Goat and the air lets its frozen vapors fall in flakes,	69
so I saw the celestial sphere adorned with triumphant flakes of vapor soaring upward, souls who had now been with us for some time.	72

My eyes were following their forms
 and followed them until the wider intervening space
 made me unable to pursue them higher. 75

My lady, therefore, who saw that I was freed
 from staring upward, said: 'Cast your sight below
 and see how wide a circle you have traveled.' 78

Since the last time I looked down
 I saw I had traversed all of the arc
 from the midpoint of the first clime to its end, 81

so that on the one side I could see, beyond Gades,
 the mad track of Ulysses, on the other, nearly
 to the shore where Europa made sweet burden of herself. 84

More space of this small patch of earth
 could I have seen, had not the sun, beneath my feet,
 now moved a sign and more away. 87

My loving mind, which always lingers lovingly
 on my lady, ardently longed, still more than ever,
 to let my eyes once more be fixed on her. 90

And if nature or art have fashioned lures
 of human flesh, or of paintings done of it,
 to catch the eyes and thus possess the mind, 93

all these combined would seem as nothing
 compared to that divine beauty that shone on me
 when I turned back and saw her smiling face. 96

And the power that her look bestowed on me
 drew me from the fair nest of Leda
 and thrust me into heaven's swiftest sphere. 99

Its most rapid and its most exalted parts
 are so alike I cannot tell
 which of them Beatrice chose to set me in. 102

But she, who knew my wish, began to speak,
 smiling with such gladness that her face
 seemed to express the very joy of God. 105

'The nature of the universe, which holds
 the center still and moves all else around it,
 starts here as from its boundary line. 108

'This heaven has no other where
 but in the mind of God, in which is kindled
 the love that turns it and the power it pours down. 111

'Light and love enclose it in a circle, as it contains the others. Of that girding He that girds it is the sole Intelligence.	114
'Its motion is not measured by another's, but from it all the rest receive their measures, even as does ten from its half and from its fifth.	117
'How time should have its roots in a single flower pot and its foliage in all the others may now become quite clear to you.	120
'O greed, it is you who plunge all mortals so deep into your depths that not one has the power to lift his eyes above your waves!	123
'The will of man bursts into blossom but the never-ceasing rain reduces the ripening plums to blighted rot.	126
'Loyalty and innocence are found in little children only. Then, before their cheeks are bearded, both are fled.	129
'One, still babbling, observes the fastdays, who later, once his tongue is free, devours any kind of food no matter what the month.	132
'Another, babbling, loves and heeds his mother, who later, once his speech has been developed, longs to see her buried in her grave.	135
'Thus does the white skin turn to black in the first aspect of the lovely daughter of him who brings the day and leaves behind the night.	138
'Lest you wonder at this, consider that, on earth, there is no one to govern and, in consequence, the human family strays.	141
'But, before all January leaves the winter for the hundredth part neglected there below, rays from these lofty circles shall shine forth	144
'so that the long-awaited tempest turn the ships, setting their poops where now they have their prows. Then shall the fleet run its true course	147
and the blossom shall be followed by good fruit.'	148