

PURGATORIO

CANTO XI

'Our Father, who are in Heaven,
circumscribed only by the greater love
you have for your first works on high, 3
'praised be your name and power
by every creature, as is fitting
to render thanks for your sweet breath. 6
'May the peace of your kingdom come to us,
for we cannot attain it of ourselves
if it come not, for all our striving. 9
'As your angels make sacrifice to you
of their free wills, singing *hosanna*,
so let men make an offering of theirs. 12
'Give us this day the daily manna
without which he who labors to advance
goes backward through this bitter wilderness. 15
'And, as we forgive those who have wronged us,
do you forgive us in your loving kindness--
measure us not as we deserve. 18
'Do not put to proof our powers,
which yield so lightly to the ancient foe,
but deliver us from him who tempts them. 21
'This last petition, our dear Lord, is made
now not for ourselves--for us there is no need--
but for the ones whom we have left behind.' 24
Thus praying for safe haven for themselves and us,
those shades trudged on beneath their burden,
the kind that sometimes weighs us down in dreams, 27
as they, unequally distressed,
plodded their weary round on that first ledge,
purging away the darkness of the world. 30
If good is always said of us up there,
what can be said and done for them on earth
by those whose wills have roots in good? 33

Surely we should help them wash away the stains they carried with them, so that pure and light they may approach the star-hung spheres.	36
'Please, so may justice and mercy soon unburden you and give you wings to lift you up as high as you desire,	39
'show us the shortest crossing to the stairs, and if there is more than one ascent, let us know where the drop is not so steep,	42
'for he that comes along with me, burdened with the weight of Adam's flesh, though eager to ascend, is slow at climbing.'	45
It was not clear from whom now came words spoken in response to those voiced by the man I followed,	48
but we heard: 'Come with us on the bank, keeping to the right, to find the stairs a living man can climb.	51
'If I were not encumbered by the stone that serves to bend my stiff-necked pride so that I cannot lift my face,	54
'I would look at this man, still alive but nameless, to see if he is known to me and make him feel pity for my heavy load.	57
'I was Italian, a noble Tuscan's son. Guglielmo Aldobrandesco was my father-- I do not know if you have ever heard his name.	60
'The ancient blood and gallant deeds done by my forebears raised such arrogance in me that, forgetful of our common mother,	63
'I held all men in such great scorn it caused my death--how, all in Siena know, and every child in Campagnatico.	66
'I am Umberto. Pride has undone not only me but all my kinsmen, whom it has dragged into calamity.	69
'And for this pride, I must here bear this load-- here among the dead, since I did not among the living--until God is satisfied.'	72

Listening, I bent down my face, and one of them, not he who spoke, twisted himself beneath the load that weighed him down,	75
saw me and knew me and called out, with difficulty keeping his eyes fixed on me, as I, all hunched, trudged on beside them.	78
'Oh,' I said to him, 'are you not Oderisi, the honor of Gubbio and of that art which they in Paris call illumination?'	81
'Brother,' he said, 'the pages smile brighter from the brush of Franco of Bologna. The honor is all his now--and only mine in part.	84
'Indeed, I hardly would have been so courteous while I still lived--an overwhelming need to excel at any cost held fast my heart.	87
'For such pride here we pay our debt. I would not be here yet, except, while living, and with the means to sin, I turned to God.	90
'O vanity of human powers, how briefly lasts the crowning green of glory, unless an age of darkness follows!	93
'In painting Cimabue thought he held the field but now it's Giotto has the cry, so that the other's fame is dimmed.	96
'Thus has one Guido taken from the other the glory of our tongue, and he, perhaps, is born who will drive one and then the other from the nest.	99
'Worldly fame is nothing but a gust of wind, first blowing from one quarter, then another, changing name with every new direction.	102
'Will greater fame be yours if you put off your flesh when it is old than had you died with <i>pappo</i> and <i>dindi</i> still upon your lips	105
'after a thousand years have passed? To eternity, that time is shorter than the blinking of an eye is to one circling of the slowest-moving sphere.	108
'All Tuscany resounded with the name-- now barely whispered even in Siena-- of him who moves so slow in front of me.	111

'He was the ruler there when they put down
 the insolence of Florence,
 a city then as proud as now she is a whore. 114

'Your renown is but the hue of grass, which comes
 and goes, and the same sun that makes it spring
 green from the ground will wither it.' 117

And I to him: 'Your true words pierce my heart
 with fit humility and ease a heavy swelling there.
 But who is he of whom you spoke just now?' 120

'That,' he replied, 'is Provenzan Salvani,
 and he is here because in his presumption
 he sought to have all Siena in his grasp. 123

'Thus burdened he has gone, and goes on without rest,
 ever since he died. Such coin he pays,
 who is too bold on earth, in recompense.' 126

And I said: 'If the spirit that puts off
 repentance to the very edge of life
 must stay below, before he comes up here, 129

'as long as he has lived--
 unless he's helped by holy prayers--
 how was his coming here allowed?' 132

'While he was living in his greatest glory,' he said,
 'he willingly sat in the marketplace
 of Siena, putting aside all shame, 135

'and there, to redeem his friend
 from the torment he endured in Charles's prison,
 he was reduced to trembling in every vein. 138

'I say no more, and know my speech obscure.
 It won't be long before they act, your townsmen,
 in such a way that you'll know how to gloss it. 141

It was that deed which brought him past those confines.' 142