THE DIVINE COMEDY

OF DANTE ALIGHIERI
(1265-1321)

TRANSLATED BY
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW
(1807-1882)

CANTICLE I: INFERNO

CREDITS

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Dennis McCarthy, July 1997
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The Divine Comedy
translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(ε-text courtesy ILT’s Digital Dante Project)

INFERNO

Inferno: Canto I

Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.

Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,
Which in the very thought renewes the fear.

So bitter is it, death is little more;
But of the good to treat, which there I found,
Speak will I of the other things I saw there.

I cannot well repeat how there I entered,
So full was I of slumber at the moment
In which I had abandoned the true way.

But after I had reached a mountain’s foot,
At that point where the valley terminated,
Which had with consternation pierced my heart,

Upward I looked, and I beheld its shoulders,
Vested already with that planet’s rays
Which leadeth others right by every road.

Then was the fear a little quieted
That in my heart’s lake had endured throughout
The night, which I had passed so piteously.

And even as he, who, with distressful breath,
Forth issued from the sea upon the shore,
Turns to the water perilous and gazes;

So did my soul, that still was fleeing onward,
Turn itself back to re-behold the pass
Which never yet a living person left.

After my weary body I had rested,
The way resumed I on the desert slope,
So that the firm foot ever was the lower.

And lo! almost where the ascent began,
A panther light and swift exceedingly,
Which with a spotted skin was covered o’er!

And never moved she from before my face,
Nay, rather did impede so much my way,
That many times I to return had turned.

The time was the beginning of the morning,
And up the sun was mounting with those stars
That with him were, what time the Love Divine

At first in motion set those beauteous things;
So were to me occasion of good hope,
The variegated skin of that wild beast,

The hour of time, and the delicious season;
But not so much, that did not give me fear
A lion’s aspect which appeared to me.

He seemed as if against me he were coming
With head uplifted, and with ravenous hunger,
So that it seemed the air was afraid of him;

And a she-wolf, that with all hungerings
Seemed to be laden in her meagreness,
And many folk has caused to live forlorn!

She brought upon me so much heaviness,
With the affright that from her aspect came,
That I the hope relinquished of the height.

And as he is who willingly acquires,
And the time comes that causes him to lose,
Who weeps in all his thoughts and is despondent,

E’en such made me that beast withouten peace,
Which, coming on against me by degrees
Thrust me back thither where the sun is silent.

While I was rushing downward to the lowland,
Before mine eyes did one present himself,
Who seemed from long-continued silence hoarse.

When I beheld him in the desert vast,
‘Have pity on me,’ unto him I cried,
‘Whiche’er thou art, or shade or real man!’

He answered me: ‘Not man; man once I was,
And both my parents were of Lombardy,
And Mantuans by country both of them.

‘Sub Julio’ was I born, though it was late,
And lived at Rome under the good Augustus,
During the time of false and lying gods.

After my weary body I had rested,
The way resumed I on the desert slope,
So that the firm foot ever was the lower.

And lo! almost where the ascent began,
A panther light and swift exceedingly,
Which with a spotted skin was covered o’er!
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

With her at my departure I will leave thee;

Because that Emperor, who reigns above,
In that I was rebellious to his law,
Wills that through me none come into his city.

He governs everywhere, and there he reigns;
There is his city and his lofty throne;
O happy he whom thereto he elects!

And I to him: “Poet, I thee entreat,
By that same God whom thou didst never know,
So that I may escape this woe and worse,
That have impelled me to explore thy volume!

That wouldst conduct me there where thou hast said,
Behold the beast, for which I have turned back;
Do thou protect me from her, famous Sage,
For she doth make my veins and pulses tremble.”

Because this beast, at which thou criest out,
Suffers not any one to pass her way,
But so doth harass him, that she destroys him;
And has a nature so malign and ruthless,
That never doth she glut her greedy will,
And after food is hungrier than before.

Many the animals with whom she weds,
And more they shall be still, until the Greyhound
Comes, who shall make her perish in her pain.

He shall not feed on either earth or pelf,
But upon wisdom, and on love and virtue;
‘Twixt Feltro and Feltro shall his nation be;
Of that low Italy shall he be the saviour,
On whose account the maid Camilla died,
Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds;
Through every city shall he hunt her down,
Until he shall have driven her back to Hell,
There from whence envy first did let her loose.

Therefore I think and judge it for thy best
Thou follow me, and I will be thy guide,
And lead thee hence through the eternal place,
Where thou shalt hear the desperate lamentations,
Shalt see the ancient spirits disconsolate,
Who cry out each one for the second death;
And thou shalt see those who contented are
Within the fire, because they hope to come,
Whence’er it may be, to the blessed people;
To whom, then, if thou wistest to ascend,
A soul shall be for that than I more worthy;

Inferno: Canto II

Day was departing, and the embrowned air
Released the animals that are on earth
From their fatigues; and I the only one
Made myself ready to sustain the war,
Both of the way and likewise of the woe,
Which memory that errs not shall retrace.

O Muses, O high genius, now assist me!
O memory, that didst write down what I saw,
Here thy nobility shall be manifest!

And I began: “Poet, who guidest me,
Regard my manhood, if it be sufficient,
Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds;
Ere to the arduous pass thou dost confide me.
Through every city shall he hunt her down,
Until he shall have driven her back to Hell,
There from whence envy first did let her loose.

Therefore I think and judge it for thy best
Thou follow me, and I will be thy guide,
And lead thee hence through the eternal place,
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Therefore I think and judge it for thy best
Thou follow me, and I will be thy guide,
And lead thee hence through the eternal place,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Both of his victory and the papal mantle.

Thither went afterwards the Chosen Vessel,
To bring back comfort thence unto that Faith,
Which of salvation's way is the beginning.

But I, why thither come, or who conceives it?
I not Aeneas am, I am not Paul,
Nor I, nor others, think me worthy of it.

Therefore, if I resign myself to come,
I fear the coming may be ill-advised;
Thou’rt wise, and knowest better than I speak.”

And as he is, who unwills what he willed,
And by new thoughts doth his intention change,
So that from his design he quite withdraws,

Such I became, upon that dark hillside,
Because, in thinking, I consumed the emprise,
Which was so very prompt in the beginning.

“If I have well thy language understood,”
Replied that shade of the Magnanimous,
“Thy soul attainted is with cowardice,

Which many times a man encumbers so,
It turns him back from honoured enterprise,
As false sight doth a beast, when he is shy.

That thou mayst free thee from this apprehension,
I’ll tell thee why I came, and what I heard
At the first moment when I grieved for thee.

Among those was I who are in suspense,
And a fair, saintly Lady called to me
In such wise, I besought her to command me.

Her eyes where shining brighter than the Star;
And she began to say, gentle and low,
With voice angelical, in her own language:

‘O spirit courteous of Mantua,
Of whom the fame still in the world endures,
And shall endure, long-lasting as the world;

A friend of mine, and not the friend of fortune,
Upon the desert slope is so impeded
Upon his way, that he has turned through terror,

And may, I fear, already be so lost,
That I too late have risen to his succour,
From that which I have heard of him in Heaven.

Bestir thee now, and with thy speech ornate,
And with what needful is for his release,
Assist him so, that I may be consoled.

Beatrice am I, who do bid thee go;
I come from there, where I would fain return;

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Love moved me, which compelleth me to speak.

When I shall be in presence of my Lord,
Full often will I praise thee unto him.’
Then paused she, and thereafter I began:

‘O Lady of virtue, thou alone through whom
The human race exceedeth all contained
Within the heaven that has the lesser circles,

So grateful unto me is thy commandment,
To obey, if ‘twere already done, were late;
No farther need’st thou ope to me thy wish.

But the cause tell me why thou dost not shun
The here descending down into this centre,
From the vast place thou burnest to return to.’

‘Since thou wouldst fain so inwardly discern,
Briefly will I relate,’ she answered me,
‘Why I am not afraid to enter here.

Of those things only should one be afraid
Which have the power of doing others harm;
Of the rest, no; because they are not fearful.

God in his mercy such created me
That misery of yours attains me not,
Nor any flame assails me of this burning.

A gentle Lady is in Heaven, who grieves
At this impediment, to which I send thee,
So that stern judgment there above is broken.

In her entreaty she besought Lucia,
And said, “Thy faithful one now stands in need
Of thee, and unto thee I recommend him.”

Lucia, foe of all that cruel is,
Hastened away, and came unto the place
Where I was sitting with the ancient Rachel.

“Beatrice” said she, “the true praise of God,
Why succourest thou not him, who loved thee so,
For thee he issued from the vulgar herd?

Dost thou not hear the pity of his plaint?
Dost thou not see the death that combats him
Beside that flood, where ocean has no vaunt?”

Never were persons in the world so swift
To work their weal and to escape their woe,
As I, after such words as these were uttered,

Came hither downward from my blessed seat,
Confiding in thy dignified discourse,
Which honours thee, and those who’ve listened to it.’

After she thus had spoken unto me,
Weeping, her shining eyes she turned away;
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Whereby she made me swifter in my coming;
And unto thee I came, as she desired;
I have delivered thee from that wild beast,
Which barred the beautiful mountain's short ascent.

What is it, then? Why, why dost thou delay?
Why is such baseness bedded in thy heart?
Daring and hardihood why hast thou not,
Seeing that three such Ladies benedight
Are caring for thee in the court of Heaven,
And so much good my speech doth promise thee?"

Even as the flowerets, by nocturnal chill,
Bowed down and closed, when the sun whitens them,
Uplift themselves all open on their stems;
Such I became with my exhausted strength,
And such good courage to my heart there courséd,
That I began, like an intrepid person:

"O she compassionate, who succoured me,
And courteous thou, who hast obeyed so soon
The words of truth which she addressed to thee!
Thou hast my heart so with desire disposed
To the adventure, with these words of thine,
That to my first intent I have returned.

Now go, for one sole will is in us both,
Thou Leader, and thou Lord, and Master thou.”
Thus said I to him; and when he had moved,
I entered on the deep and savage way.

Inferno: Canto III

“Through me the way is to the city dolent;
Through me the way is to eternal dole;
Through me the way among the people lost.

Justice incited my sublime Creator;
Created me divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.

Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
All hope abandon, ye who enter in!”

These words in sombre colour I beheld
Written upon the summit of a gate;
Whence I: “Their sense is, Master, hard to me!”

And he to me, as one experienced:
“Here all suspicion needs must be abandoned,
All cowardice must needs be here extinct.

We to the place have come, where I have told thee
Thou shalt behold the people dolorous
Who have foregone the good of intellect.”

And after he had laid his hand on mine
With joyful mien, whence I was comforted,
He led me in among the secret things.

There sighs, complaints, and ululations loud
Resounded through the air without a star,
Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.
Languages diverse, horrible dialects,
Accents of anger, words of agony,
Even as the flowerets, by nocturnal chill,

Made up a tumult that goes whirling on
For ever in that air for ever black,
Such I became with my exhausted strength,
And such good courage to my heart there courséd,
That I began, like an intrepid person:

"O Master, what is this which now I hear?
And courteous thou, who hast obeyed so soon
The words of truth which she addressed to thee!
Thou Leader, and thou Lord, and Master thou.”
Thus said I to him; and when he had moved,
I entered on the deep and savage way.

Inferno: Canto III

And I: “O Master, what so grievous is
Inferno: Canto III

To these, that maketh them lament so sore?”
He answered: “I will tell thee very briefly.
These have no longer any hope of death;
And this blind life of theirs is so debased,
They envious are of every other fate.

No fame of them the world permits to be;
Misericord and Justice both disdain them.
Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass.”

And I, who looked again, beheld a banner,
Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
All hope abandon, ye who enter in!”

These words in sombre colour I beheld
Written upon the summit of a gate;
Whence I: “Their sense is, Master, hard to me!”

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Misericord and Justice both disdain them.
Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass.”

And I, who looked again, beheld a banner,
Which, whirling round, ran on so rapidly,
That of all pause it seemed to me indignant;

And after it there came so long a train
Of people, that I ne'er would have believed
That ever Death so many had undone.

When some among them I had recognised,
I looked, and I beheld the shade of him
Who made through cowardice the great refusal.
Forthwith I comprehended, and was certain,  
That this the sect was of the caitiff wretches  
Hateful to God and to his enemies.

These miscreants, who never were alive,  
Were naked, and were stung exceedingly  
By gadflies and by hornets that were there.

These did their faces irrigate with blood,  
Which, with their tears commingled, at their feet  
By the disgusting worms was gathered up.

And when to gazing further I betook me.  
People I saw on a great river's bank;  
Whence said I: "Master, now vouchsafe to me,
That I may know who these are, and what law  
Makes them appear so ready to pass over,  
As I discern athwart the dusky light."

And he to me: "These things shall all be known  
To thee, as soon as we our footsteps stay  
Upon the dismal shore of Acheron."

Then with mine eyes ashamed and downward cast,  
Fearing my words might irksome be to him,  
From speech refrained I till we reached the river.

And lo! towards us coming in a boat  
An old man, hoary with the hair of eld,  
Crying: "Woe unto you, ye souls depraved!
Hope nevermore to look upon the heavens;  
I come to lead you to the other shore,  
To the eternal shades in heat and frost.

And thou, that yonder standest, living soul,  
Withdraw thee from these people, who are dead!"  
But when he saw that I did not withdraw,
He said: "By other ways, by other ports  
Thou to the shore shalt come, not here, for passage;  
A lighter vessel needs must carry thee."

And unto him the Guide: "Vex thee not, Charon;  
It is so willed there where is power to do  
That which is willed; and farther question not."

Thereat were quieted the fleecy cheeks  
Of him the ferryman of the livid fen,  
Who round about his eyes had wheels of flame.

But all those souls who weary were and naked  
Their colour changed and gnashed their teeth together,  
As soon as they had heard those cruel words.

God they blasphemed and their progenitors,  
The human race, the place, the time, the seed  
Of their engendering and of their birth!

Thereafter all together they drew back,  
Bitterly weeping, to the accursed shore,  
Which waiteth every man who fears not God.

Charon the demon, with the eyes of glede,  
Beckoning to them, collects them all together,  
Beats with his oar whoever lags behind.

As in the autumn-time the leaves fall off,  
First one and then another, till the branch  
Unto the earth surrenders all its spoils;
In similar wise the evil seed of Adam  
Throw themselves from that margin one by one,  
At signals, as a bird unto its lure.

So they depart across the dusky wave,  
And ere upon the other side they land,  
Again on this side a new troop assembles.

"My son," the courteous Master said to me,  
"All those who perish in the wrath of God  
Here meet together out of every land;
For fear and desire they are and ready are they to pass o'er the river,  
Because celestial Justice spurs them on,  
So that their fear is turned into desire.

This way there never passes a good soul;  
And hence if Charon doth complain of thee,  
Well mayst thou know now what his speech imports."

This being finished, all the dusk champaign  
Trembled so violently, that of that terror  
The recollection bathes me still with sweat.

The land of tears gave forth a blast of wind,  
And fulminated a vermilion light,  
Which overmastered in me every sense,
And as a man whom sleep hath seized I fell.

Inferno: Canto IV

Broke the deep lethargy within my head  
A heavy thunder, so that I upstarted,  
Like to a person who by force is wakened;
And round about I moved my rested eyes,  
Uprisen erect, and steadfastly I gazed,  
To recognise the place wherein I was.

True is it, that upon the verge I found me  
Of the abysmal valley dolorous,  
That gathers thunder of infinite ululations.
Hence he drew forth the shade of the First Parent,
And that of his son Abel, and of Noah,
Of Moses the lawgiver, and the obedient
Abraham, patriarch, and David, king,
Israel with his father and his children,
And Rachel, for whose sake he did so much,
And others many, and he made them blessed;
And thou must know, that earlier than these
Never were any human spirits saved.”
We ceased not to advance because he spake,
But still were passing onward through the forest,
The forest, say I, of thick-crowded ghosts.
Not very far as yet our way had gone
This side the summit, when I saw a fire
That overcame a hemisphere of darkness.
We were a little distant from it still,
But not so far that I in part discerned not
That honourable people held that place.
“O thou who honourest every art and science,
Who may these be, which such great honour have,
That from the fashion of the rest it parts them?”
And he to me: “The honourable name,
That sounds of them above there in thy life,
Wins grace in Heaven, that so advances them.”
In the mean time a voice was heard by me:
“All honour be to the pre-eminent Poet;
His shade returns again, that was departed.”
After the voice had ceased and quiet was,
Four mighty shades I saw approaching us;
Semblance had they nor sorrowful nor glad.
To say to me began my gracious Master:
“Him with that falchion in his hand behold,
Who comes before the three, even as their lord.
That one is Homer, Poet sovereign;
He who comes next is Horace, the satirist;
The third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.
Because to each of these with me applies
The name that solitary voice proclaimed,
They do me honour, and in that do well.”
Thus I beheld assemble the fair school
Of that lord of the song pre-eminent,
Who o’er the others like an eagle soars.
When they together had discoursed somewhat,
They turned to me with signs of salutation,
And on beholding this, my Master smiled;

The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Obscure, profound it was, and nebulous,
So that by fixing on its depths my sight
Nothing whatever I discerned therein.

“Let us descend now into the blind world,”
Began the Poet, pallid utterly;
“I will be first, and thou shalt second be.”

And I, who of his colour was aware,
Said: “How shall I come, if thou art afraid,
Who’rt wont to be a comfort to my fears?”

And he to me: “The anguish of the people
Who are below here in my face depicts
That pity which for terror thou hast taken.

Let us go on, for the long way impels us.”
Thus he went in, and thus he made me enter
The foremost circle that surrounds the abyss.

There, as it seemed to me from listening,
Were lamentations none, but only sighs,
That tremble made the everlasting air.

And this arose from sorrow without torment,
Which the crowds had, that many were and great,
Of infants and of women and of men.

To me the Master good: “Thou dost not ask
What spirits these, which thou beholdest, are?
Now will I have thee know, ere thou go farther,
That they sinned not; and if they merit had,
‘Tis not enough, because they had not baptism
Which is the portal of the Faith thou holdest;

And if they were before Christianity,
In the right manner they adored not God;
And among such as these am I myself.

For such defects, and not for other guilt,
Lost are we and are only so far punished,
That without hope we live on in desire.”

Great grief seized on my heart when this I heard,
Because some people of much worthiness
I knew, who in that Limbo were suspended.

“Tell me, my Master, tell me, thou my Lord,”
Began I, with desire of being certain
Of that Faith which o’ercometh every error,
“Came any one by his own merit hence,
Or by another’s, who was blessed thereafter?”
And he, who understood my covert speech,
Replied: “I was a novice in this state,
When I saw hither come a Mighty One,
With sign of victory incoronate.
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

And more of honour still, much more, they did me,
In that they made me one of their own band;
So that the sixth was I, 'mid so much wit.

Thus we went on as far as to the light,
Things saying 'tis becoming to keep silent,
As was the saying of them where I was.

We came unto a noble castle's foot,
Seven times encompassed with lofty walls,
Defended round by a fair rivulet;

This we passed over even as firm ground;
Through portals seven I entered with these Sages;
We came into a meadow of fresh verdure.

People were there with solemn eyes and slow,
Of great authority in their countenance;
They spake but seldom, and with gentle voices.

Thus we withdrew ourselves upon one side
Into an opening luminous and lofty,
So that they all of them were visible.

There opposite, upon the green enamel,
Were pointed out to me the mighty spirits,
Whom to have seen I feel myself exalted.

I saw Electra with companions many,
'Mongst whom I knew both Hector and Aeneas,
Caesar in armour with gerfalcon eyes;

I saw Camilla and Penthesilea
On the other side, and saw the King Latinus,
Who with Lavinia his daughter sat;

I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin forth,
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia,
And saw alone, apart, the Saladin.

When I had lifted up my brows a little,
The Master I beheld of those who know,
Sit with his philosophic family.

All gaze upon him, and all do him honour.
There I beheld both Socrates and Plato,
Who nearer him before the others stand;

Democritus, who puts the world on chance,
Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales,
Zeno, Empedocles, and Heraclitus;

Of qualities I saw the good collector,
Hight Dioscorides; and Orpheus saw I,
Tully and Livy, and moral Seneca,

Euclid, geometrician, and Ptolemy,
Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna,
Averroes, who the great Comment made.

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I cannot all of them pourtray in full,
Because so drives me onward the long theme,
That many times the word comes short of fact.

The sixfold company in two divides;
Another way my sapient Guide conducts me
Forth from the quiet to the air that trembles;

And to a place I come where nothing shines.

Inferno: Canto V

Thus I descended out of the first circle
Down to the second, that less space begirds,
And so much greater dole, that goads to wailing.

There standeth Minos horribly, and snarls;
Examines the transgressions at the entrance;
Judges, and sends according as he girds him.

I say, that when the spirit evil-born
Cometh before him, wholly it confesses;
And this discriminator of transgressions

Seeth what place in Hell is meet for it;
Girds himself with his tail as many times
As grades he wishes it should be thrust down.

Always before him many of them stand;
They go by turns each one unto the judgment;
They speak, and hear, and then are downward hurled.

“O thou, that to this dolorous hostelry
Comest,” said Minos to me, when he saw me,
Leaving the practice of so great an office,

“Look how thou enterest, and in whom thou trustest;
Let not the portal's amplitude deceive thee.”
And unto him my Guide: “Why criest thou too?

Do not impede his journey fate-ordained;
It is so willed there where is power to do
That which is willed; and ask no further question.”

And now begin the dolesome notes to grow
Audible unto me; now am I come
There where much lamentation strikes upon me.

I came into a place mute of all light,
Which bellows as the sea does in a tempest,
If by opposing winds 't is combated.

The infernal hurricane that never rests
Hurtles the spirits onward in its rapine;
Whirling them round, and smiting, it molests them.

When they arrive before the precipice,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

There are the shrieks, the plaints, and the laments,
There they blaspheme the puissance divine.

My voice uplift I: "O ye weary souls!
Come speak to us, if no one interdicts it."

I understood that unto such a torment
The carnal malefactors were condemned,
Who reason subjugate to appetite.

As turtle-doves, called onward by desire,
With open and steady wings to the sweet nest
Fly through the air by their volition borne,

And as the wings of starlings bear them on
In the cold season in large band and full,
So doth that blast the spirits maledict;

So came they from the band where Dido is,
And as the wings of starlings bear them on
Approaching us athwart the air malign,

The carnal malefactors were condemned,
Fly through the air by their volition borne,
Who reason subjugate to appetite.

It hither, thither, downward, upward, drives them;
No hope doth comfort them for evermore,
Not of repose, but even of lesser pain.

So strong was the affectionate appeal.
If were the King of the Universe our friend,
And as the cranes go chanting forth their lays,
We would pray unto him to give thee peace,
Making in air a long line of themselves,
Since thou hast pity on our woe perverse.

And as the cranes go chanting forth their lays,
Making in air a long line of themselves,
So saw I coming, uttering lamentations,
That will we hear, and we will speak to you,
Whereupon said I: "Master, who are those
While silent is the wind, as it is now.

Shadows borne onward by the aforesaid stress.
Whereupon said I: “Master, who are those
People, whom the black air so castigates?”

Sitteth the city, wherein I was born,
‘The first of those, of whom intelligence
Thou fain wouldst have,” then said he unto me,
“Upon the sea-shore where the Po descends
To rest in peace with all his retinue.

The next is she who killed herself for love,
Seized me with pleasure of this man so strongly,
That, as thou seest, it doth not yet desert me;
To remove the blame to which she had been led.

She is Semiramis, of whom we read
To sensual vices she was so abandoned,
That lustful she made licit in her law,
To remove the blame to which she had been led.

She is Semiramis, of whom we read
That she succeeded Ninus, and was his spouse; She held the land which now the Sultan rules.

The next is she who killed herself for love,
And broke faith with the ashes of Sichaeus; Then Cleopatra the voluptuous."

Helen I saw, for whom so many ruthless
Seasons revolved; and saw the great Achilles,
Who at the last hour combated with Love.

Paris I saw, Tristan; and more than a thousand
Shades did he name and point out with his finger, Whom Love had separated from our life.

Pity prevailed, and I was nigh bewildered.

But tell me, at the time of those sweet sighs,
By what and in what manner Love conceded,
To those two, who go together,
And seem upon the wind to be so light.”

And I began: “O Poet, willingly
Speak would I to those two, who go together, And seem upon the wind to be so light.”

And, he to me: “Thou’lt mark, when they shall be
Nearer to us; and then do thou implore them By love which leadeth them, and they will come.”

Soon as the wind in our direction sways them,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Of love in us thou hast so great desire,
I will do even as he who weeps and speaks.

One day we reading were for our delight
Of Launcelot, how Love did him enthrall.
Alone we were and without any fear.

Full many a time our eyes together drew
That reading, and drove the colour from our faces;
But one point only was it that o’ercame us.

When as we read of the much-longed-for smile
Being by such a noble lover kissed,
This one, who ne’er from me shall be divided,
Kissed me upon the mouth all palpitating.

And fell, even as a dead body falls.

Inferno: Canto VI

At the return of consciousness, that closed
Before the pity of those two relations,
Which utterly with sadness had confused me,

New torments I behold, and new tormented
Around me, whichever way I move,
And whichever way I turn, and gaze.

In the third circle am I of the rain
Eternal, maledict, and cold, and heavy;
Its law and quality are never new.

Huge hail, and water sombre-hued, and snow,
Athwart the tenebrous air pour down amain;
Noisome the earth is, that receiveth this.

Cerberus, monster cruel and uncouth,
With his three gullets like a dog is barking
Over the people that are there submerged.

Red eyes he has, and unctuous beard and black,
And belly large, and armed with claws his hands;
He rends the spirits, flays, and quarters them.

Howl the rain maketh them like unto dogs;
One side they make a shelter for the other;
Oft turn themselves the wretched reprobates.

When Cerberus perceived us, the great worm!
His mouths he opened, and displayed his tusks;

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Not a limb had he that was motionless.

And my Conductor, with his spans extended,
Took of the earth, and with his fists well filled,
He threw it into those rapacious gullets.

Such as that dog is, who by barking craves,
And quiet grows soon as his food he gnaws,
For to devour it he but thinks and struggles,

The like became those muzzles filth-begrimed
Of Cerberus the demon, who so thunders
Over the souls that they would fain be deaf.

We passed across the shadows, which subdues
The heavy rain-storm, and we placed our feet
Upon their vanity that person seems.

They all were lying prone upon the earth,
Excepting one, who sat upright as soon
As he beheld us passing on before him.

“O thou that art conducted through this Hell,”
He said to me, “recall me, if thou canst;
And fell, even as a dead body falls.

But tell me who thou art, that in so doleful
At the return of consciousness, that closed
A place art put, and in such punishment,
Before the pity of those two relations,
If some are greater, none is so displeasing.”

And he to me: “Thy city, which is full
Of envy so that now the sack runs over,
Held me within it in the life serene.

You citizens were wont to call me Ciacco;
For the pernicious sin of gluttony
I, as thou seest, am battered by this rain.

And I, sad soul, am not the only one,
For all these suffer the like penalty
For the like sin;” and word no more spake he.

I answered him: “Ciacco, thy wretchedness
Weighs on me so that it to weep invites me;
But tell me, if thou knowest, to what shall come

The citizens of the divided city;
If any there be just; and the occasion
Tell me why so much discord has assailed it.”

And he to me: “They, after long contention,
Will come to bloodshed; and the rustic party
Will drive the other out with much offence.

Then afterwards behoves it this one fall
Within three suns, and rise again the other
We came unto the point where the descent is;
There we found Plutus the great enemy.

Inferno: Canto VII

"Pape Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppe!"
Thus Plutus with his clucking voice began;
And that benignant Sage, who all things knew,
Said, to encourage me: "Let not thy fear
Harm thee; for any power that he may have
Shall not prevent thy going down this crag."

Then he turned round unto that bloated lip,
And said: "Be silent, thou accursed wolf;
Consume within thyself with thine own rage.

Not causeless is this journey to the abyss;
Thus is it willed on high, where Michael wrought
Vengeance upon the proud adultery."

Even as the sails inflated by the wind
Involved together fall when snaps the mast,
So fell the cruel monster to the earth.

Thus we descended into the fourth chasm,
Gaining still farther on the dolesome shore
Which all the woe of the universe insacks.

Justice of God, ah! who heaps up so many
New toils and sufferings as I beheld?
And why doth our transgression waste us so?

As doth the billow there upon Charybdis,
That breaks itself on that which it encounters,
So here the folk must dance their roundelay.

Here saw I people, more than elsewhere, many,
On one side and the other, with great howls,
Rolling weights forward by main force of chest.

They clashed together, and then at that point
Each one turned backward, rolling retrograde,
Crying, "Why keepest?" and, "Why squanderest thou?"

Thus they returned along the lurid circle
On either hand unto the opposite point,
Shouting their shameful metre evermore.

Then each, when he arrived there, wheeled about
Through his half-circle to another joust;
And I, who had my heart pierced as it were,

Exclaimed: "My Master, now declare to me
What people these are, and if all were clerks,
These shaven crowns upon the left of us."
And he to me: “All of them were asquint
In intellect in the first life, so much
That there with measure they no spending made.

Clearly enough their voices bark it forth,
Whene’er they reach the two points of the circle,
Where sunders them the opposite defect.

Clerks those were who no hairy covering
Have on the head, and Popes and Cardinals,
In whom doth Avarice practise its excess.”

And I: “My Master, among such as these
I ought forsooth to recognise some few,
Who were infected with these maladies.”

And he to me: “Vain thought thou entertainest;
The undiscerning life which made them sordid
Now makes them unto all discernment dim.

Forever shall they come to these two buttings;
These from the sepulchre shall rise again
With the fist closed, and these with tresses shorn.

Ill giving and ill keeping the fair world
Have ta’en from them, and placed them in this scuffle;
Whate’er it be, no words adorn I for it.

Now canst thou, Son, behold the transient farce
Of goods that are committed unto Fortune,
For which the human race each other buffet;

For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or ever has been, of these weary souls
Could never make a single one repose.”

“Master,” I said to him, “now tell me also
What is this Fortune which thou speakest of,
That has the world’s goods so within its clutches?”

And he to me: “O creatures imbecile,
What ignorance is this which doth beset you?
Now will I have thee learn my judgment of her.

He whose omniscience everything transcends
The heavens created, and gave who should guide them,
That every part to every part may shine,

Distributing the light in equal measure;
He in like manner to the mundane splendours
Ordained a general ministrress and guide,

That she might change at times the empty treasures
From race to race, from one blood to another,
Beyond resistance of all human wisdom.

Therefore one people triumphs, and another
Languishes, in pursuance of her judgment,
Which hidden is, as in the grass a serpent.

Your knowledge has no counterstand against her;
She makes provision, judges, and pursues
Her governance, as theirs the other gods.

Her permutations have not any truce;
Necessity makes her precipitate,
So often cometh who his turn obtains.

And this is she who is so crucified
Even by those who ought to give her praise,
Giving her blame amiss, and bad repute.

But she is blissful, and she hears it not;
Among the other primal creatures gladsome
She turns her sphere, and blissful she rejoices.

Let us descend now unto greater woe;
Already sinks each star that was ascending
When I set out, and loitering is forbidden.”

We crossed the circle to the other bank,
Near to a fount that boils, and pours itself
Along a gully that runs out of it.

The water was more sombre far than perse;
And we, in company with the dusky waves,
Made entrance downward by a path uncouth.

A marsh it makes, which has the name of Styx,
This tristful brooklet, when it has descended
Down to the foot of the malign gray shores.

And I, who stood intent upon beholding,
Saw people mud-besprent in that lagoon,
All of them naked and with angry look.

They smote each other not alone with hands,
But with the head and with the breast and feet,
Tearing each other piecemeal with their teeth.

Said the good Master: “Son, thou now beholdest
The souls of those whom anger overcame;
And likewise I would have thee know for certain

Beneath the water people are who sigh
And make this water bubble at the surface,
As the eye tells thee wheresoe’er it turns.

Fixed in the mire they say, ‘We sullen were
In the sweet air, which by the sun is gladdened,
Bearing within ourselves the sluggish reek;

Now we are sullen in this sable mire.’
This hymn do they keep gurgling in their throats,
For with unbroken words they cannot say it.”

Thus we went circling round the filthy fen
A great arc ‘twixt the dry bank and the swamp,
With eyes turned unto those who gorge the mire;
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Then stretched he both his hands unto the boat; Whereat my wary Master thrust him back, Saying, “Away there with the other dogs!”

Thereafter with his arms he clasped my neck; He kissed my face, and said: “Disdainful soul, Blessed be she who bore thee in her bosom.

That was an arrogant person in the world; Goodness is none, that decks his memory; So likewise here his shade is furious.

How many are esteemed great kings up there, Who here shall be like unto swine in mire, Leaving behind them horrible dispraises!”

And I: “My Master, much should I be pleased, And, to the sea of all discernment turned, If I could see him soused into this broth, I said: “What sayeth this, and what respondeth Before we issue forth out of the lake.”

And he to me: “Ere unto thee the shore And he to me: “Across the turbid waves What is expected thou canst now discern, If reek of the morass conceal it not.”

Cord never shot an arrow from itself That sped away athwart the air so swift, As I beheld a very little boat

Come o’er the water tow’rds us at that moment, Under the guidance of a single pilot, Who shouted, “Now art thou arrived, fell soul?”

“Phlegyas, Phlegyas, thoucriest out in vain For this once,” said my Lord; “thou shalt not have us Longer than in the passing of the slough.”

As he who listens to some great deceit That has been done to him, and then resents it, Such became Phlegyas, in his gathered wrath.

My Guide descended down into the boat, And then he made me enter after him, And only when I entered seemed it laden.

Soon as the Guide and I were in the boat, The antique prow goes on its way, dividing More of the water than ‘tis wont with others.

While we were running through the dead canal, Uprose in front of me one full of mire, And said, “Who ‘rt thou that comest ere the hour?”

And I to him: “Although I come, I stay not; But who art thou that hast become so squalid?” “Thou seest that I am one who weeps,” he answered.

And I to him: “With weeping and with wailing, Thou spirit maledict, do thou remain; For thee I know, though thou art all defiled.”

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Unto the foot of a tower we came at last.

Inferno: Canto VIII

I say, continuing, that long before We to the foot of that high tower had come, Our eyes went upward to the summit of it,

By reason of two flamelets we saw placed there, And from afar another answer them, So far, that hardly could the eye attain it.

And, to the sea of all discernment turned, I said: “What sayeth this, and what respondeth That other fire? and who are they that made it?”

And he to me: “Across the turbid waves What is expected thou canst now discern, If reek of the morass conceal it not.”

A little after that, I saw such havoc Made of him by the people of the mire, That still I praise and thank my God for it.

They all were shouting, “At Philippo Argenti!” And that exasperate spirit Florentine Turned round upon himself with his own teeth.

We left him there, and more of him I tell not; But on mine ears there smote a lamentation, Whence forward I intent unbar mine eyes.

And the good Master said: “Even now, my Son, As he who listens to some great deceit The city draweth near whose name is Dis, That has been done to him, and then resents it, With the grave citizens, with the great throng.”

And I: “Its mosques already, Master, clearly Within there in the valley I discern Vermilion, as if issuing from the fire

They were.” And he to me: “The fire eternal That kindles them within makes them look red, As thou beholdest in this nether Hell.”

Then we arrived within the moats profound, That circumvallate that disconsolate city; The walls appeared to me to be of iron.

Not without making first a circuit wide, We came unto a place where loud the pilot Cried out to us, “Debark, here is the entrance.”

More than a thousand at the gates I saw Out of the Heavens rained down, who angrily Were saying, “Who is this that without death
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

One by whose means the city shall be opened.

Inferno: Canto IX

That hue which cowardice brought out on me,
Beholding my Conductor backward turn,
Sooner repressed within him his new colour.

He stopped attentive, like a man who listens,
Because the eye could not conduct him far
Through the black air, and through the heavy fog.

"Still it behoveth us to win the fight,"
Began he; "Else... Such offered us herself... O how I long that some one here arrive!"

Well I perceived, as soon as the beginning
He covered up with what came afterward,
That they were words quite different from the first;

But none the less his saying gave me fear,
Because I carried out the broken phrase,
Perhaps to a worse meaning than he had.

"Into this bottom of the doleful conch
Doth any e'er descend from the first grade,
Which for its pain has only hope cut off?"

This question put I; and he answered me:
"Seldom it comes to pass that one of us
Maketh the journey upon which I go.

True is it, once before I here below
Was conjured by that pitiless Erictho,
Who summoned back the shades unto their bodies.

Naked of me short while the flesh had been,
Before within that wall she made me enter,
To bring a spirit from the circle of Judas;

That is the lowest region and the darkest,
And farthest from the heaven which circles all.
Well know I the way; therefore be reassured.

This fen, which a prodigious stench exhales,
Encompasses about the city dolent,
Where now we cannot enter without anger."

And more he said, but not in mind I have it;
Because mine eye had altogether drawn me
tow'rd's the high tower with the red-flaming summit,

Where in a moment saw I swift uprisen
The three infernal Furies stained with blood,
Who had the limbs of women and their mien,
And with the greenest hydras were begirt;
And to the Master turned; and he made sign
That I should quiet stand, and bow before him.

Ah! how disdainful he appeared to me!
He reached the gate, and with a little rod
He opened it, for there was no resistance.

“O banished out of Heaven, people despised!”
Thus he began upon the horrid threshold;
“Whence is this arrogance within you couched?

Wherefore recalcitrate against that will,
From which the end can never be cut off,
And which has many times increased your pain?

What helpeth it to butt against the fates?
Your Cerberus, if you remember well,
For that still bears his chin and gullet peeled.”

Then he returned along the miry road,
And spake no word to us, but had the look
Of one whom other care constrains and goads

Than that of him who in his presence is;
And we our feet directed tow’rds the city,
After those holy words all confident.

Within we entered without any contest;
And I, who inclination had to see
What the condition such a fortress holds,

Soon as I was within, cast round mine eye,
And see on every hand an ample plain,
Full of distress and torment terrible.

Even as at Arles, where stagnant grows the Rhone,
Even as at Pola near to the Quarnaro,
That shuts in Italy and bathes its borders,

The sepulchres make all the place uneven;
So likewise did they there on every side,
Saving that there the manner was more bitter;

For flames between the sepulchres were scattered,
By which they so intensely heated were,
That iron more so asks not any art.

All of their coverings uplifted were,
And from them issued forth such dire laments,
Sooth seemed they of the wretched and tormented.

And I: “My Master, what are all those people
Who, having sepulture within those tombs,
Make themselves audible by doleful sighs?”

And he to me: “Here are the Heresiarchs,
With their disciples of all sects, and much
More than thou thinkest laden are the tombs.

Here like together with its like is buried;
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Exclaiming, “Let thy words explicit be.”

And more and less the monuments are heated.”
And when he to the right had turned, we passed
Between the torments and high parapets.

Inferno: Canto X

As soon as I was at the foot of his tomb
Somewhat he eyed me, and, as if disdainful,
Then asked of me, “Who were thine ancestors?”

I, who desirous of obeying was,
Concealed it not, but all revealed to him;
Whereat he raised his brows a little upward.

Then said he; “Fiercely adverse have they been
To me, and to my fathers, and my party;
So that two several times I scattered them.”

Then there uprose upon the sight, uncovered
Down to the chin, a shadow at his side;
I think that he had risen on his knees.

Round me he gazed, as if solicititude
He had to see if some one else were with me,
When from Jehoshaphat they shall return
Here with the bodies they have left above.

Their cemetery have upon this side
With Epicurus all his followers,
Who with the body mortal make the soul;

But in the question thou dost put to me,
Within here shalt thou soon be satisfied,
And likewise in the wish thou keepest silent.”

And I: “Good Leader, I but keep concealed
From thee my heart, that I may speak the less,
Nor only now hast thou thereto disposed me.”

“O Tuscan, thou who through the city of fire
Goest alive, thus speaking modestly,
Be pleased to stay thy footsteps in this place.

Thy mode of speaking makes thee manifest
A native of that noble fatherland,
To which perhaps I too molestful was.”

Upon a sudden issued forth this sound
From out one of the tombs; wherefore I pressed,
Fearing, a little nearer to my Leader.

And unto me he said: “Turn thee; what dost thou?
Behold there Farinata who has risen;
From the waist upwards wholly shalt thou see him.”

I had already fixed mine eyes on his,
And he uprose erect with breast and front
E’en as if Hell he had in great despite.

And with courageous hands and prompt my Leader
Thrust me between the sepulchres towards him,
"And now attend here;" and he raised his finger.

"When thou shalt be before the radiance sweet
Of her whose beauteous eyes all things behold,
From her thou'lt know the journey of thy life."

Unto the left hand then he turned his feet;
We left the wall, and went towards the middle,
Along a path that strikes into a valley,
Which even up there unpleasant made its stench.

Inferno: Canto XI

Upon the margin of a lofty bank
Which great rocks broken in a circle made,
We came upon a still more cruel throng;
And there, by reason of the horrible
Excess of stench the deep abyss throws out,
We drew ourselves aside behind the cover

Of a great tomb, whereon I saw a writing,
Which said: "Pope Anastasius I hold,
Whom out of the right way Photinus drew."

"Slow it behoveth our descent to be,
So that the sense be first a little used
To the sad blast, and then we shall not heed it."
The portal of the future shall be closed."

The Master thus; and unto him I said,
"Some compensation find, that the time pass not
Idly;" and he: "Thou seest I think of that.
That still his son is with the living joined.
My son, upon the inside of these rocks,"
And if just now, in answering, I was dumb,
Tell him I did it because I was thinking
Already of the error you have solved me."

And now my Master was recalling me,
Wherefore more eagerly I prayed the spirit
That he would tell me who was with him there.

He said: "With more than a thousand here I lie;
Within here is the second Frederick,
And the Cardinal, and of the rest I speak not."

Thereon he hid himself; and I towards
The ancient poet turned my steps, reflecting
Upon that saying, which seemed hostile to me.

He moved along; and afterward thus going,
He said to me, "Why art thou so bewildered?"
And I in his inquiry satisfied him.

"Let memory preserve what thou hast heard
Against thyself," that Sage commanded me,
"Against my race in each one of its laws?"
Hast thou no recollection of those words
With which thine Ethics thoroughly discusses
The dispositions three, that Heaven abides not,—
Incontinence, and Malice, and insane
Bestiality? and how Incontinence
Less God offendeth, and less blame attracts?

If thou regardest this conclusion well,
And to thy mind recallest who they are
That up outside are undergoing penance,
Clearly wilt thou perceive why from these felons
They separated are, and why less wroth
Justice divine doth smite them with its hammer.”

“O Sun, that healest all distempered vision,
Violence can be done the Deity,
Thou dost content me so, when thou resolvest,
In heart denying and blaspheming Him,
That doubting pleases me no less than knowing!
And by disdaining Nature and her bounty.

And for this reason doth the smallest round
Seal with its signet Sodom and Cahors,
And who, disdaining God, speaks from the heart.
Fraud, wherewithal is every conscience stung,
A man may practise upon him who trusts,
And him who doth no confidence imburse.
This latter mode, it would appear, dissevers
Only the bond of love which Nature makes;
Wherefore within the second circle nestle
Hypocrisy, flattery, and who deals in magic,
Falsification, theft, and simony,
Panders, and barrators, and the like filth.
By the other mode, forgotten is that love
Which Nature makes, and what is after added,
From which there is a special faith engendered.

Hence in the smallest circle, where the point is
Of the Universe, upon which Dis is seated,
Whoe’er betrays for what is shun.

And I: “My Master, clear enough proceeds
Thy reasoning, and full well distinguishes
This cavern and the people who possess it.
But tell me, those within the fat lagoon,
Whom the wind drives, and whom the rain doth beat,
And who encounter with such bitter tongues,
Wherefore are they inside of the red city
Not punished, if God has them in his wrath,
And if he has not, wherefore in such fashion?”

And unto me he said: “Why wanders so
Thine intellect from that which it is wont?
Or, sooth, thy mind where is it elsewhere looking?

The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A death by violence, and painful wounds,
Are to our neighbour given; and in his substance
Ruin, and arson, and injurious levies;
Whence homicides, and he who smites unjustly,
Marauders, and freebooters, the first round
Tormenteth all in companies diverse.
Man may lay violent hands upon himself
And his own goods; and therefore in the second
Round must persevere without avail repent
Whoever of your world deprives himself,
Who games, and dissipates his property,
And wipeth there, where he should jocund be.
Violence can be done the Deity,
In heart denying and blaspheming Him,
And by disdaining Nature and her bounty.
And for this reason doth the smallest round
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And unto me he said: “Why wanders so
Thine intellect from that which it is wont?
Or, sooth, thy mind where is it elsewhere looking?
Such as that ruin is which in the flank
Smote, on this side of Trent, the Adige,
Either by earthquake or by falling stay,

For from the mountain's top, from which it moved,
Unto the plain the cliff is shattered so,
Some path 'twould give to him who was above;

Even such was the descent of that ravine,
And on the border of the broken chasm
The infancy of Crete was stretched along,

Who was conceived in the fictitious cow;
And when he us beheld, he bit himself,
Even as one whom anger racks within.

My Sage towards him shouted: "Peradventure
Thou think'st that here may be the Duke of Athens,
Who in the world above brought death to thee?

Get thee gone, beast, for this one cometh not
Instructed by thy sister, but he comes
In order to behold your punishments."

As is that bull who breaks loose at the moment
In which he has received the mortal blow,
Who cannot walk, but staggers here and there,

The Minotaur beheld I do the like;
And he, the wary, cried: "Run to the passage;
While he wroth, 'tis well thou shouldst descend."

Thus down we took our way o'er that discharge
Of stones, which oftentimes did move themselves
Beneath my feet, from the unwonted burden.

Thoughtful I went; and he said: "Thou art thinking
Perhaps upon this ruin, which is guarded
By that brute anger which just now I quenched.

Now will I have thee know, the other time
I here descended to the nether Hell,
This precipice had not yet fallen down.

But truly, if I well discern, a little
Before His coming who the mighty spoil
Bore off from Dis, in the supernal circle,

Upon all sides the deep and loathsome valley
Trembled so, that I thought the Universe
Was thrilled with love, by which there are who think

The world ofttimes converted into chaos;
And at that moment this primeval crag
Both here and elsewhere made such overthrow.

But fix thine eyes below; for draweth near
The river of blood, within which boiling is
Whoe'er by violence doth injure others."

O blind cupidity, O wrath insane,
That spurs us onward so in our short life,
And in the eternal then so badly steeps us!

I saw an ample moat bent like a bow,
As one which all the plain encompasses,
Conformable to what my Guide had said.

And between this and the embankment's foot
Centaurs in file were running, armed with arrows,
As in the world they used the chase to follow.

Beholding us descend, each one stood still,
And from the squadron three detached themselves,
With bows and arrows in advance selected;

And from afar one cried: "Unto what torment
My Sage towards him shouted: "Peradventure
Come ye, who down the hillside are descending?
Thou think'st that here may be the Duke of Athens,
Who in the world above brought death to thee?

Get thee gone, beast, for this one cometh not
Instructed by thy sister, but he comes
In order to behold your punishments."

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But fix thine eyes below; for draweth near
The river of blood, within which boiling is
Whoe'er by violence doth injure others."
Then back he turned, and passed again the ford.

Inferno: Canto XIII

Not yet had Nessus reached the other side,
When we had put ourselves within a wood,
That was not marked by any path whatever.

Not foliage green, but of a dusky colour,
Not branches smooth, but gnarled and intertangled,
Not apple-trees were there, but thorns with poison.

Such tangled thickets have not, nor so dense,
The savage wild beasts, that in hatred hold
'Twixt Cecina and Corneto the tilled places.

There do the hideous Harpies make their nests,
Who chased the Trojans from the Strophades,
With sad announcement of impending doom;

Broad wings have they, and necks and faces human,
And feet with claws, and their great bellies fledged;
They make laments upon the wondrous trees.

And the good Master: “Ere thou enter farther,
Know that thou art within the second round,”

Above a folk, who far down as the throat
Seemed from that boiling stream to issue forth.

Thou comest out upon the horrible sand;
A shade he showed us on one side alone,
Saying: “He cleft asunder in God’s bosom
The heart that still upon the Thames is honoured.”

I heard on all sides lamentations uttered,
Then people saw I, who from out the river
Lifted their heads and also all the chest;
And many among these I recognised.

Thus ever more and more grew shallower
That blood, so that the feet alone it covered;
And there across the moat our passage was.

“Even as thou here upon this side beholdest
The boiling stream, that aye diminishes,”
The Centaur said, “I wish thee to believe
That on this other more and more declines
Its bed, until it reunites itself
Where it behoveth tyranny to groan.

Justice divine, upon this side, is goading
That Attila, who was a scourge on earth,
And Pyrrhus, and Sextus; and for ever milks

The tears which with the boiling it unseals
In Rinier da Corneto and Rinier Pazzo,
Who made upon the highways so much war.”

As out of a green brand, that is on fire
At one of the ends, and from the other drips
And hisses with the wind that is escaping;

So from that splinter issued forth together
Both words and blood; whereat I let the tip
Fall, and stood like a man who is afraid.

“Had he been able sooner to believe,"
My Sage made answer, “O thou wounded soul,
What only in my verses he has seen,
Not upon thee had he stretched forth his hand;
Whereas the thing incredible has caused me
To put him to an act which grieveth me.

But tell him who thou wast, so that by way
Of some amends thy fame he may refresh
Up in the world, to which he can return.”

And the trunk said: “So thy sweet words allure me,
I cannot silent be; and you be vexed not,
That I a little to discourse am tempted.

I am the one who both keys had in keeping
Of Frederick’s heart, and turned them to and fro
So softly in unlocking and in locking,
That from his secrets most men I withheld;
Fidelity I bore the glorious office
So great, I lost thereby my sleep and pulses.

The courtesan who never from the dwelling
Of Caesar turned aside her strumpet eyes,
Death universal and the vice of courts,
Inflamed against me all the others mind;
And they, inflamed, did so inflame Augustus,
That my glad honours turned to dismal mournings.

My spirit, in disdainful exultation,
Thinking by dying to escape disdain,
Made me unjust against myself, the just.

I, by the roots unwonted of this wood,
Do swear to you that never broke I faith
Unto my lord, who was so worthy of honour;
And to the world if one of you return,
Let him my memory comfort, which is lying
Still prostrate from the blow that envy dealt it.”

Waited awhile, and then: “Since he is silent,”
The Poet said to me, “lose not the time,
But speak, and question him, if more may please thee.”

Whence I to him: “Do thou again inquire
Concerning what thou thinks’t will satisfy me;
For I cannot, such pity is in my heart.”

Therefore he recommenced: “So may the man
And led me to the bush, that all in vain
Was weeping from its bloody lacerations.

"O Jacopo," it said, "of Sant' Andrea,
What helped it thee of me to make a screen?
What blame have I in thy nefarious life?"

When near him had the Master stayed his steps,
He said: "Who wast thou, that through wounds so many
Art blowing out with blood thy dolorous speech?"

And he to us: "O souls, that hither come
To look upon the shameful massacre
That has so rent away from me my leaves,

Gather them up beneath the dismal bush;
I of that city was which to the Baptist
Changed its first patron, wherefore he for this

Forever with his art will make it sad.
And were it not that on the pass of Arno
Some glimpses of him are remaining still,

Those citizens, who afterwards rebuilt it
Upon the ashes left by Attila,
In vain had caused their labour to be done.

Of my own house I made myself a gibbet."

Inferno: Canto XIV

Because the charity of my native place
Constrained me, gathered I the scattered leaves,
And gave them back to him, who now was hoarse.

Then came we to the confine, where parted
The second round is from the third, and where
A horrible form of Justice is beheld.

Clearly to manifest these novel things,
I say that we arrived upon a plain,
Which from its bed rejecteth every plant;

The dolorous forest is a garland to it
All round about, as the sad moat to that;
There close upon the edge we stayed our feet.

The soil was of an arid and thick sand,
Not of another fashion made than that
Which by the feet of Cato once was pressed.

Vengeance of God, O how much oughtest thou
By each one to be dreaded, who doth read
That which was manifest unto mine eyes!

Of naked souls beheld I many herds,
Who all were weeping very miserably,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Would be unto thy fury pain complete."

And more he stands on that than on the other.

Then he turned round to me with better lip,

Each part, except the gold, is by a fissure

Saying: “One of the Seven Kings was he

Asunder cleft, that dripping is with tears,

Who Thebes besieged, and held, and seems to hold

Which gathered together perforate that cavern.

God in disdain, and little seems to prize him;

From rock to rock they fall into this valley;

But, as I said to him, his own despites

Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon they form;

Are for his breast the fittest ornaments.

Then downward go along this narrow sluice

Unto that point where is no more descending.

Now follow me, and mind thou do not place

They form Cocytus; what that pool may be

As yet thy feet upon the burning sand,

They shall behold, so here 'tis not narrated.

Thou shalt not yet through all the circle turned.

And I to him: "If so the present runnel

The bottom of it, and both sloping banks,

Doth take its rise in this way from our world,

Were made of stone, and the margins at the side;

Forth from the wood a little rivulet,

Whence I perceived that there the passage was.

Other who is Crete,

And he to me: “Thou knowest the place is round,

And notwithstanding thou hast journeyed far,

As from the Bulicame springs the brooklet,

Still to the left descending to the bottom,

The sinful women later share among them,

So downward through the sand it went its way.

And I again: “Master, where shall be found

The wood; take heed that thou come after me;

Thou hast not yet through all the circle turned.

The bottom there is round,

The wood; for of one thou'rt silent,

Thence I prayed him

Since we have entered in within the gate

And sayest the other of this rain is made?"

That he would give me largess of desire.

These words were of my Leader; whence I prayed him

Nothing has been discovered by thine eyes

In all thy questions truly thou dost please me,

So notable as is the present river,

Replied he; “but the boiling of the red

Whose threshold unto no one is denied,

So redness makes my hair still stand on end.

Whose name is Crete,

Nothing has been discovered by thine eyes

In all thy questions truly thou dost please me,

That he would give me largess of the food,

Replied he; “but the boiling of the red

Whose redness makes my hair still stand on end.

For which he had given me largess of desire.

In all the rest which I have shown to thee

In the mid-sea there sits a wasted land,”

Since we have entered in within the gate

Said he thereafterward, “whose name is Crete,

Now 'tis deserted, as a thing worn out.

Under whose king the world of old was chaste.

There is a mountain there, that once was glad

Inferno: Canto XV

With waters and with leaves, which was called Ida;

Now bears us onward one of the hard margins,

Now 'tis deserted, as a thing worn out.

Still to the left descending to the bottom,

Though sin repented of has been removed.”

Thou shalt see Lethe, but outside this moat,

Then said he: “It is time now to abandon

There where the souls repair to lave themselves,

The wood; take heed that thou come after me;

When sin repented of has been removed.”

A way the margins make that are not burning,

A way the margins make that are not burning,

And over them all vapours are extinguished.”

And over them all vapours are extinguished.”

Inferno: Canto XV

And of pure silver are the arms and breast;

Even as the Flemings, 'twixt Cadsand and Bruges,

Then he is brass as far down as the fork.

Their bulwarks build to put the sea to flight;

And as the Paduans along the Brenta,

And of pure silver are the arms and breast;

To guard their villas and their villages,

Then he is brass as far down as the fork.

Or ever Chiarentana feel the heat;
In such similitude had those been made,
Albeit not so lofty nor so thick,
Whoever he might be, the master made them.

Now we were from the forest so remote,
I could not have discovered where it was,
Even if backward I had turned myself,

When we a company of souls encountered,
Who came beside the dike, and every one
Gazed at us, as at evening we were wont

To eye each other under a new moon,
And so towards us sharpened they their brows
As an old tailor at the needle’s eye.

Thus scrutinised by such a family,
By some one I was recognised, who seized
My garment’s hem, and cried out, “What a marvel!”

And I, when he stretched forth his arm to me,
On his baked aspect fastened so mine eyes
That the scorched countenance prevented not

His recognition by my intellect;
And bowing down my face unto his own,
I made reply, “Are you here, Ser Brunetto?”

And he: “May’t not displease thee, O my son,
If a brief space with thee Brunetto Latini
Backward return and let the trail go on.”

I said to him: “With all my power I ask it;
And if you wish me to sit down with you,
I will, if he please, for I go with him.”

“O son,” he said, “whoever of this herd
A moment stops, lies then a hundred years,
Nor fans himself when smiteth him the fire.

Therefore go on; I at thy skirts will come,
And afterward will I rejoin my band,
Which goes lamenting its eternal doom.”

I did not dare to go down from the road
Level to walk with him; but my head bowed
I held as one who goeth reverently.

And he began: “What fortune or what fate
Before the last day leadeth thee down here?
And who is this that showeth thee the way?”

“Up there above us in the life serene,”
I answered him, “I lost me in a valley,
Or ever yet my age had been completed.

But yesternight I turned my back upon it;
This one appeared to me, returning thither,
And homeward leadeth me along this road.”

And he to me: “If thou thy star do follow,
Thou canst not fail thee of a glorious port,
If well I judged in the life beautiful.

And if I had not died so prematurely,
Seeing Heaven thus benignant unto thee,
I would have given thee comfort in the work.

But that ungrateful and malignant people,
Which of old time from Fesole descended,
And smacks still of the mountain and the granite,

Will make itself, for thy good deeds, thy foe;
And it is right; for among crabbed sorbs
It ill befits the sweet fig to bear fruit.

Old rumour in the world proclaims them blind;
A people avaricious, envious, proud;
Take heed that of their customs thou do cleanse thee.

 Thy fortune so much honour doth reserve thee,
One party and the other shall be hungry
For thee; but far from goat shall be the grass.

Their litter let the beasts of Fesole
Make of themselves, nor let them touch the plant,
If any still upon their dunghill rise,

In which may yet revive the consecrated
Seed of those Romans, who remained there when
The nest of such great malice it became.”

“If my entreaty wholly were fulfilled,”
Replied I to him, “not yet would you be
In banishment from human nature placed;

For in my mind is fixed, and touches now
My heart the dear and good paternal image
Of you, when in the world from hour to hour

You taught me how a man becomes eternal;
And how much I am grateful, while I live
Behoves that in my language be discerned.

What you narrate of my career I write,
And keep it to be glossed with other text
By a Lady who can do it, if I reach her.

This much will I have manifest to you;
Provided that my conscience do not chide me,
For whatsoever Fortune I am ready.

Such handsel is not new unto mine ears;
Therefore let Fortune turn her wheel around
As it may please her, and the churl his mattock.”

My Master thereupon on his right cheek
Did backward turn himself, and looked at me;
Then said: “He listeneth well who noteth it.”
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

And if it were not for the fire that darts
The nature of this region, I should say
That haste were more becoming thee than them.”

As soon as we stood still, they recommenced
The old refrain, and when they overtook us,
Formed of themselves a wheel, all three of them.

As champions stripped and oiled are wont to do,
Watching for their advantage and their hold,
Before they come to blows and thrusts between them,

Thus, wheeling round, did every one his visage
Direct to me, so that in opposite wise
His neck and feet continual journey made.

And, “If the misery of this soft place
Bring in disdain ourselves and our entreaties,”
Began one, “and our aspect black and blistered,

Let the renown of us thy mind incline
To tell us who thou art, who thus securely
Thy living feet dost move along through Hell.

He in whose footprints thou dost see me treading,
Naked and skinless though he now may go,
A people comes with whom I may not be;
Was of a greater rank than thou dost think;
Commended unto thee be my Tesoro,
In which I still live, and no more I ask.”

He was the grandson of the good Gualdrada;
His name was Guidoguerra, and in life
Much did he with his wisdom and his sword.

The other, who close by me treads the sand,
Tegghiaio Aldobrandi is, whose fame
Above there in the world should welcome be.

And I, who with them on the cross am placed,
Jacopo Rusticucci was; and truly
My savage wife, more than aught else, doth harm me.”

Now was I where was heard the reverberation
Of water falling into the next round,
Like to that humming which the beehives make,

When shadows three together started forth,
Running, from out a company that passed
Beneath the rain of the sharp martyrdom.

Towards us came they, and each one cried out:
“Stop, thou; for by thy garb to us thou seemest
To be some one of our depraved city.”

Ah me! what wounds I saw upon their limbs,
Recent and ancient by the flames burnt in!
It pains me still but to remember it.

Unto their cries my Teacher paused attentive;
He turned his face towards me, and “Now wait,”
He said; “to these we should be courteous.

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
I leave the gall, and go for the sweet fruits
Promised to me by the veracious Leader;
But to the centre first I needs must plunge.”

“So may the soul for a long while conduct
Those limbs of thine,” did he make answer then,
“And so may thy renown shine after thee,
Valour and courtesy, say if they dwell
Within our city, as they used to do,
Or if they wholly have gone out of it;

For Guglielmo Borsier, who is in torment
With us of late, and goes there with his comrades,
Doth greatly mortify us with his words.”

“The new inhabitants and the sudden gains,
Pride and extravagance have in thee engendered,
Florence, so that thou weep’st thereat already!”

In this wise I exclaimed with face uplifted;
And the three, taking that for my reply,
Looked at each other, as one looks at truth.

“If other times so little it doth cost thee,”
Replied they all, “to satisfy another,
Happy art thou, thus speaking at thy will!

Therefore, if thou escape from these dark places,
And come to rebehold the beauteous stars,
When it shall pleasure thee to say, ‘I was’,

See that thou speak of us unto the people.”
Then they broke up the wheel, and in their flight
It seemed as if their agile legs were wings.

Not an Amen could possibly be said
So rapidly as they had disappeared;
Wherefore the Master deemed best to depart.

I followed him, and little had we gone,
Before the sound of water was so near us,
That speaking we should hardly have been heard.

Even as that stream which holdeth its own course
The first from Monte Veso towards the East,
Upon the left-hand slope of Apennine,

Which is above called Acquacheta, ere
It down descendeth into its low bed,
And at Forli is vacant of that name,

Reverberates there above San Benedetto
From Alps, by falling at a single leap,
Where for a thousand there were room enough;

Thus downward from a bank precipitate,
We found resounding that dark-tinted water,
So that it soon the ear would have offended.

Inferno: Canto XVII

“Behold the monster with the pointed tail,
Who cleaves the hills, and breaketh walls and weapons,
Behold him who infecteth all the world.”

Thus unto me my Guide began to say,
And beckoned him that he should come to shore,
Near to the confine of the trodden marble;

And that uncleanly image of deceit
Came up and thrust ashore its head and bust,
But on the border did not drag its tail.

The face was as the face of a just man,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Its semblance outwardly was so benign,
And of a serpent all the trunk beside.

Two paws it had, hairy unto the armpits;
The back, and breast, and both the sides it had
Depicted o’er with nooses and with shields.

With colours more, groundwork or broderie
Never in cloth did Tartars make nor Turks,
Nor were such tissues by Arachne laid.

As sometimes wherries lie upon the shore,
That part are in the water, part on land;
And as among the guzzling Germans there,
Two paws it had, hairy unto the armpits;

The beaver plants himself to wage his war;
So that vile monster lay upon the border,
Which is of stone, and shutteth in the sand.

His tail was wholly quivering in the void,
Contorting upwards the envenomed fork,
That in the guise of scorpion armed its point.

The Guide said: “Now perforce must turn aside
Our way a little, even to that beast
Malevolent, that yonder coucheth him.”

We therefore on the right side descended,
And made ten steps upon the outer verge,
Compleatly to avoid the sand and flame;

And after we are come to him, I see
A little farther off upon the sand
A people sitting near the hollow place.

Then said to me the Master: “So that full
Experience of this round thou bear away,
Now go and see what their condition is.

There let thy conversation be concise;
Till thou returnest I will speak with him,
That he concede to us his stalwart shoulders.”

Thus farther still upon the outermost
Head of that seventh circle all alone
I went, where sat the melancholy folk.

Out of their eyes was gushing forth their woe;
This way, that way, they helped them with their hands
Now from the flames and now from the hot soil.

Not otherwise in summer do the dogs,
Now with the foot, now with the muzzle, when
By fleas, or flies, or gadflies, they are bitten.

When I had turned mine eyes upon the faces
Of some, on whom the dolorous fire is falling,
Not one of them I knew; but I perceived
That from the neck of each there hung a pouch,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Of which its place the structure will recount.

Backward, still backward, so he thence withdrew;
And when he wholly felt himself afloat,

There where his breast had been he turned his tail,
And that extended like an eel he moved,
And with his paws drew to himself the air.

A greater fear I do not think there was
What time abandoned Phaeton the reins,
Whereby the heavens, as still appears, were scorched;

Nor when the wretched Icarus his flanks
Felt stripped of feathers by the melting wax,
His father crying, “An ill way thou takest!”

Than was my own, when I perceived myself
On all sides in the air, and saw extinguished
The sight of everything but of the monster.

Onward he goeth, swimming slowly, slowly;
Wheels and descends, but I perceive it only
By wind upon my face and from below.

I heard already on the right the whirlpool
Making a horrible crashing under us;
Whence I thrust out my head with eyes cast downward.

Then was I still more fearful of the abyss;
Because I fires beheld, and heard laments,
Whereat I, trembling, all the closer cling.

I saw then, for before I had not seen it,
The turning and descending, by great horrors
That were approaching upon divers sides.

As falcon who has long been on the wing,
Who, without seeing either lure or bird,
Maketh the falconer say, “Ah me, thou stoopest,”

Descendeth weary, whence he started swiftly,
Thorough a hundred circles, and alights
Far from his master, sullen and disdainful;

Even thus did Geryon place us on the bottom,
Close to the bases of the rough-hewn rock,
And being disencumbered of our persons,

He sped away as arrow from the string.

Inferno: Canto XVIII

There is a place in Hell called Malebolge,
Wholly of stone and of an iron colour;
As is the circle that around it turns.

Right in the middle of the field malign
There yawns a well exceeding wide and deep,

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Of which its place the structure will recount.

Round, then, is that enclosure which remains
Between the well and foot of the high, hard bank,
And has distinct in valleys ten its bottom.

As where for the protection of the walls
Many and many moats surround the castles,
The part in which they are a figure forms,

Just such an image those presented there;
And as about such strongholds from their gates
Unto the outer bank are little bridges,

So from the precipice’s base did crags
Project, which intersected dikes and moats,
Unto the well that truncates and collects them.

Within this place, down shaken from the back
Of Geryon, we found us; and the Poet
Held to the left, and I moved on behind.

Upon my right hand I beheld new anguish,
New torments, and new wielders of the lash,
Wherewith the foremost Bolgia was replete.

Down at the bottom were the sinners naked;
This side the middle came they facing us,
Beyond it, with us, but with greater steps;

Even as the Romans, for the mighty host,
The year of Jubilee, upon the bridge,
I saw then, for before I had not seen it,

For all upon one side towards the Castle
Their faces have, and go unto St. Peter’s;
On the other side they go towards the Mountain.

This side and that, along the livid stone
Beheld I horned demons with great scourges,
Who cruelly were beating them behind.

Ah me! how they did make them lift their legs
At the first blows! and sooth not any one
The second waited for, nor for the third.

While I was going on, mine eyes by one
Encountered were; and straight I said: “Already
With sight of this one I am not unfed.”

Therefore I stayed my feet to make him out,
And with me the sweet Guide came to a stand,
And to my going somewhat back assented;

And he, the scourged one, thought to hide himself,
Lowering his face, but little it availed him;
For said I: “Thou that castest down thine eyes,

If false are not the features which thou bearest,
Thou art Venedico Caccianimico;
And he to me: "Unwillingly I tell it; But forces me thine utterance distinct, Which makes me recall the ancient world.

I was the one who the fair Ghisola Induced to grant the wishes of the Marquis, Hoe' er the shameless story may be told.

Not the sole Bolognese am I who weeps here; Nay, rather is this place so full of them, That not so many tongues to-day are taught

"Twixt Reno and Savena to say 'sipa;' And if thereof thou wishest pledge or proof, Bring to thy mind our avaricious heart."

While speaking in this manner, with his scourge A demon smote him, and said: "Get thee gone Pander, there are no women here for coin."

I joined myself again unto mine Escort; Thereafter with footsteps few we came To where a crag projected from the bank.

This very easily did we ascend, And turning to the right along its ridge, From those eternal circles we departed.

When we were there, where it is hollowed out Beneath, to give a passage to the scourged, The Guide said: "Wait, and see that on thee strike

The vision of those others evil-born, Of whom thou hast not yet beheld the faces, Because together with us they have gone."

From the old bridge we looked upon the train Which tow'rs us came upon the other border, And which the scourges in like manner smite.

And the good Master, without my inquiring, Said to me: "See that tall one who is coming, And for his pain seems not to shed a tear;

Still what a royal aspect he retains! That Jason is, who by his heart and cunning The Colchians of the Ram made destitute.

He by the isle of Lemnos passed along After the daring women pitiless Had unto death devoted all their males.

There with his tokens and with ornate words Did he deceive Hypsipyle, the maiden Who first, herself, had all the rest deceived.

There did he leave her pregnant and forlorn; Such sin unto such punishment condemns him, Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

And also for Medea is vengeance done.

With him go those who in such wise deceive; And this sufficient be of the first valley To know, and those that in its jaws it holds."

We were already where the narrow path Crosses athwart the second dike, and forms Of that a buttress for another arch.

Thence we heard people, who are making moan In the next Bolgia, snorting with their muzzles, And with their palms beating upon themselves

The margins were incrusted with a mould By exhalation from below, that sticks there, And with the eyes and nostrils wages war.

The bottom is so deep, no place suffices To give us sight of it, without ascending The arch's back, where most the crag impends.

Thither we came, and thence down in the moat I saw a people smothered in a filth That out of human privies seemed to flow;

And whilst below there with mine eye I search, I saw one with his head so foul with ordure, It was not clear if he were clerk or layman.

He screamed to me: "Wherefore art thou so eager To look at me more than the other foul ones?" And I to him: "Because, if I remember,

I have already seen thee with dry hair, And thou'rt Alessio Interminei of Lucca; Therefore I eye thee more than all the others."

And he thereon, belabouring his pumpkin: "The flatteries have submerged me here below, Wherewith my tongue was never surfeited."

Then said to me the Guide: "See that thou thrust Thy visage somewhat farther in advance, That with thine eyes thou well the face attain

Of that uncleanly and dishevelled drab, Who there doth scratch herself with filthy nails, And crouches now, and now on foot is standing;

Thais the harlot is it, who replied Unto her paramour, when he said, 'Have I Great gratitude from thee?'—'Nay, marvellous;

And herewith let our sight be satisfied."
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Inferno: Canto XIX

O Simon Magus, O forlorn disciples,  
Ye who the things of God, which ought to be  
The brides of holiness, rapaciously

For silver and for gold do prostitute,  
Now it behoves for you the trumpet sound,  
Because in this third Bolgia ye abide.

We had already on the following tomb  
Ascended to that portion of the crag  
Which o’er the middle of the moat hangs plumb.

Wisdom supreme, O how great art thou showest  
In heaven, in earth, and in the evil world,  
And with what justice doth thy power distribute!

I saw upon the sides and on the bottom  
The livid stone with perforations filled,  
All of one size, and every one was round.

To me less ample seemed they not, nor greater  
Than those that in my beautiful Saint John  
Are fashioned for the place of the baptisers,

And one of which, not many years ago,  
I broke for some one, who was drowning in it;  
Be this a seal all men to undeceive.

Out of the mouth of each one there protruded  
The feet of a transgressor, and the legs  
Up to the calf, the rest within remained.

In all of them the soles were both on fire;  
Wherefore the joints so violently quivered,  
They would have snapped asunder withes and bands.

Even as the flame of unctuous things is wont  
To move upon the outer surface only,  
So likewise was it there from heel to point.

“Master, who is that one who writhes himself,  
More than his other comrades quivering,”  
I said, “and whom a redder flame is sucking?”

And he to me: “If thou wilt have me bear thee  
Down there along that bank which lowest lies,  
From him thou’lt know his errors and himself.”

And I: “What pleases thee, to me is pleasing;  
Thou art my Lord, and knowest that I depart not  
From thy desire, and knowest what is not spoken.”

Straightway upon the fourth dike we arrived;  
We turned, and on the left-hand side descended  
Down to the bottom full of holes and narrow.

And the good Master yet from off his haunch

Transcribed by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Deposed me not, till to the hole he brought me  
Of him who so lamented with his shanks.

“Whoe’er thou art, that standest upside down,  
O doleful soul, implanted like a stake,”  
To say began I, “if thou canst, speak out.”

I stood even as the friar who is confessing  
The false assassin, who, when he is fixed,  
Recalls him, so that death may be delayed.

And he cried out: “Dost thou stand there already,  
Dost thou stand there already, Boniface?  
By many years the record lied to me.

Art thou so early satiate with that wealth,  
For which thou didst not fear to take by fraud  
The beautiful Lady, and then work her woe?”

Such I became, as people are who stand,  
Not comprehending what is answered them,  
As if bemocked, and know not how to answer.

Then said Virgilius: “Say to him straightway,  
‘I am not he, I am not he thou thinkest.’”  
And I replied as was imposed on me.

Whereat the spirit writhed with both his feet,  
Then, sighing, with a voice of lamentation  
Said to me: “Then what wantest thou of me?”

If who I am thou carest so much to know,  
That thou on that account hast crossed the bank,  
Know that I vested was with the great mantle;

And truly was I son of the She-bear,  
So eager to advance the cubs, that wealth  
Above, and here myself, I pocketed.

Beneath my head the others are dragged down  
Who have preceded me in simony,  
Flattened along the fissure of the rock.

Below there I shall likewise fall, whenever  
That one shall come who I believed thou wast,  
What time the sudden question I proposed.

But longer I my feet already toast,  
And here have been in this way upside down,  
Than he will planted stay with reddened feet;

For after him shall come of fouler deed  
From tow’rds the west a Pastor without law,  
Such as befits to cover him and me.

New Jason will he be, of whom we read  
In Maccabees; and as his king was pliant,  
So he who governs France shall be to this one.”

I do not know if I were here too bold,
That him I answered only in this metre:
"I pray thee tell me now how great a treasure
Our Lord demanded of Saint Peter first,
Before he put the keys into his keeping?
Truly he nothing asked but 'Follow me.'

Nor Peter nor the rest asked of Matthias
Silver or gold, when he by lot was chosen
Unto the place the guilty soul had lost.

Therefore stay here, for thou art justly punished,
And keep safe guard o'er the ill-gotten money,
Which caused thee to be valiant against Charles.

And were it not that still forbids it me
The reverence for the keys superlative
Thou hadst in keeping in the gladsome life,
I would make use of words more grievous still;
Because your avarice afflicts the world,
Trampling the good and lifting the depraved.

The Evangelist you Pastors had in mind,
When she who sitteth upon many waters
To fornicate with kings by him was seen;
The same who with the seven heads was born,
And power and strength from the ten horns received,
So long as virtue to her spouse was pleasing.

Ye have made yourselves a god of gold and silver;
And from the idolater how differ ye,
Save that he one, and ye a hundred worship?

Ah, Constantine! of how much ill was mother,
Not thy conversion, but that marriage dower
Which the first wealthy Father took from thee!

And while I sang to him such notes as these,
Either that anger or that conscience stung him,
He struggled violently with both his feet.

I think in sooth that it my Leader pleased,
With such contented lip he listened ever
Unto the sound of the true words expressed.

Therefore with both his arms he took me up,
And when he had me all upon his breast,
Remounted by the way where he descended.

Nor did he tire to have me clasped to him;
But bore me to the summit of the arch
Which from the fourth dike to the fifth is passage.

There tenderly he laid his burden down,
Tenderly on the crag uneven and steep,
That would have been hard passage for the goats:
Thence was unveiled to me another valley.
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

His members being all of them transformed;

And afterwards was forced to strike once more
The two entangled serpents with his rod,
Ere he could have again his manly plumes.

That Aruns is, who backs the other's belly,
Who in the hills of Luni, there where grubs
The Carrarese who houses underneath,

Among the marbles white a cavern had
For his abode; whence to behold the stars
And sea, the view was not cut off from him.

And she there, who is covering up her breasts,
Which thou beholdest not, with loosened tresses,
And on that side has all the hairy skin,

Was Manto, who made quest through many lands,
Afterwards tarried there where I was born;
Whereof I would thou list to me a little.

After her father had from life departed,
And the city of Bacchus had become enslaved,
She a long season wandered through the world.

Above in beauteous Italy lies a lake
At the Alp's foot that shuts in Germany
Over Tyrol, and has the name Benaco.

By a thousand springs, I think, and more, is bathed,
'Twixt Garda and Val Camonica, Pennino,
With water that grows stagnant in that lake.

Midway a place is where the Trentine Pastor,
And he of Brescia, and the Veronese
Might give his blessing, if he passed that way.

Sitteth Peschiera, fortress fair and strong,
To front the Brescians and the Bergamasks,
Where round about the bank descendeth lowest.

There of necessity must fall whatever
In bosom of Benaco cannot stay,
And grows a river down through verdant pastures.

Soon as the water doth begin to run,
No more Benaco is it called, but Mincio,
Far as Governo, where it falls in Po.

Not far it runs before it finds a plain
In which it spreads itself, and makes it marshy,
And oft 'tis wont in summer to be sickly.

Passing that way the virgin pitiless
Land in the middle of the fen descried,
Untilled and naked of inhabitants;

There to escape all human intercourse,
She with her servants stayed, her arts to practise

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

And lived, and left her empty body there.

The men, thereafter, who were scattered round,
Collected in that place, which was made strong
By the lagoon it had on every side;

They built their city over those dead bones,
And, after her who first the place selected,
Mantua named it, without other omen.

Its people once within more crowded were,
Ere the stupidity of Casalodi
From Pinamonte had received deceit.

Therefore I caution thee, if e'er thou hearest
Originate my city otherwise,
No falsehood may the verity defraud."

And I: "My Master, thy discourses are
To me so certain, and so take my faith,
That unto me the rest would be spent coals.

But tell me of the people who are passing,
If any one note-worthy thou beholdest,
For only unto that my mind reverts."

Then said he to me: "He who from the cheek
Thrusts out his beard upon his swarthy shoulders
Was, at the time when Greece was void of males,

So that there scarce remained one in the cradle,
An augur, and with Calchas gave the moment,
In Aulis, when to sever the first cable.

Eryphylus his name was, and so sings
My lofty Tragedy in some part or other;
That knowest thou well, who knowest the whole of it.

The next, who is so slender in the flanks,
Was Michael Scott, who of a verity
Of magical illusions knew the game.

Behold Guido Bonatti, behold Asdente,
Who now unto his leather and his thread
Would fain have stuck, but he too late repents.

Behold the wretched ones, who left the needle,
The spool and rock, and made them fortune-tellers;
They wrought their magic spells with herb and image.

But come now, for already holds the confines
Of both the hemispheres, and under Seville
Touches the ocean-wave, Cain and the thorns,

And yesternight the moon was round already;
Thou shouldst remember well it did not harm thee
From time to time within the forest deep."

Thus spake he to me, and we walked the while.
Inferno: Canto XXI

From bridge to bridge thus, speaking other things
Of which my Comedy cares not to sing,
We came along, and held the summit, when

We halted to behold another fissure
Of Malebolge and other vain laments;
And I beheld it marvellously dark.

As in the Arsenal of the Venetians
Boils in the winter the tenacious pitch
To smear their unsound vessels o’er again,

For sail they cannot; and instead thereof
One makes his vessel new, and one recaulks
The ribs of that which many a voyage has made;

One hammers at the prow, one at the stern,
This one makes oars, and that one cordage twists,
Another mends the mainsail and the mizzen;

Thus, not by fire, but by the art divine,
Was boiling down below there a dense pitch
Which upon every side the bank belimed.

I saw it, but I did not see within it
Aught but the bubbles that the boiling raised,
And all swell up and resubside compressed.

The while below there fixedly I gazed,
My Leader, crying out: “Beware, beware!”
Drew me unto himself from where I stood.

Then I turned round, as one who is impatient
To see what it behoves him to escape,
And whom a sudden terror doth unman,

Who, while he looks, delays not his departure;
And I beheld behind us a black devil,
Running along upon the crag, approach.

Ah, how ferocious was he in his aspect!
And how he seemed to me in action ruthless,
With open wings and light upon his feet!

His shoulders, which sharp-pointed were and high,
A sinner did encumber with both haunches,
And he held clutched the sinews of the feet.

From off our bridge, he said: “O Malebranche,
Behold one of the elders of Saint Zita;
Plunge him beneath, for I return for others

Unto that town, which is well furnished with them.
All there are barrators, except Bonturo;
No into Yes for money there is changed.”

He hurled him down, and over the hard crag
Turned round, and never was a mastiff loosened
In so much hurry to pursue a thief.

The other sank, and rose again face downward;
But the demons, under cover of the bridge,
Cried: “Here the Santo Volto has no place!

Here swims one otherwise than in the Serchio;
Therefore, if for our gaffs thou wishest not,
Do not uplift thyself above the pitch.”

They seized him then with more than a hundred rakes;
They said: “It here behoves thee to dance covered,
That, if thou canst, thou secretly mayest pilfer.”

Not otherwise the cooks their scullions make
Immerse into the middle of the caldron
The meat with hooks, so that it may not float.

Said the good Master to me: “That it be not
Apparent thou art here, crouch thyself down
Behind a jag, that thou mayest have some screen;

And for no outrage that is done to me
Be thou afraid, because these things I know,
For once before was I in such a scuffle.”

Then he passed on beyond the bridge’s head,
And as upon the sixth bank he arrived,
Need was for him to have a steadfast front.

With the same fury, and the same uproar,
As dogs leap out upon a mendicant,
Who on a sudden begs, where’er he stops,

They issued from beneath the little bridge,
And turned against him all their grappling-irons;
But he cried out: “Be none of you malignant!

Before those hooks of yours lay hold of me,
Let one of you step forward, who may hear me,
And then take counsel as to grappling me.”

They all cried out: “Let Malacoda go;”
Whereat one started, and the rest stood still,
And he came to him, saying: “What avails it?”

“Thinkest thou, Malacoda, to behold me
Advanced into this place,” my Master said,
“Safe hitherto from all your skill of fence,

Without the will divine, and fate auspicious?
Let me go on, for it in Heaven is willed
That I another show this savage road.”

Then was his arrogance so humbled in him,
That he let fall his grapnel at his feet,
And to the others said: “Now strike him not.”
And unto me my Guide: “O thou, who sittest
Among the splinters of the bridge crouched down,
Securely now return to me again.”

Wherefore I started and came swiftly to him;
And all the devils forward thrust themselves,
So that I feared they would not keep their compact.

And thus beheld I once afraid the soldiers
Who issued under safeguard from Caprona,
Seeing themselves among so many foes.

Close did I press myself with all my person
Beside my Leader, and turned not mine eyes
From off their countenance, which was not good.

They lowered their rakes, and “Wilt thou have me hit
him,”
They said to one another, “on the rump?”
And answered: “Yes; see that thou nick him with it.”

But the same demon who was holding parley
With my Conductor turned him very quickly,
And said: “Be quiet, be quiet, Scarmiglione;”

Then said to us: “You can no farther go
Forward upon this crag, because is lying
All shattered, at the bottom, the sixth arch.

And if it still doth please you to go onward,
Pursue your way along upon this rock;
Near is another crag that yields a path.

Yesterday, five hours later than this hour,
One thousand and two hundred sixty-six
Years were complete, that here the way was broken.

I send in that direction some of mine
To see if any one doth air himself;
Go ye with them; for they will not be vicious.

Step forward, Alichino and Calcabrina,"
Began he to cry out, “and thou, Cagnazzo;
And Barbariccia, do thou guide the ten.

Come forward, Libicocco and Draghignazzo,
And tusked Ciriatto and Graffiacane,
And Farfarello and mad Rubicante;

Search ye all round about the boiling pitch;
Let these be safe as far as the next crag,
That all unbroken passes o’er the dens.”

“O me! what is it, Master, that I see?
Pray let us go,” I said, “without an escort,
If thou knowest how, since for myself I ask none.

If thou art as observant as thy wont is,
Dost thou not see that they do gnash their teeth,

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
And with their brows are threatening woe to us?”

And he to me: “I will not have thee fear;
Let them gnash on, according to their fancy,
Because they do it for those boiling wretches.”

Along the left-hand dike they wheeled about;
But first had each one thrust his tongue between
His teeth towards their leader for a signal;

And he had made a trumpet of his rump.

Inferno: Canto XXII

I have erewhile seen horsemen moving camp,
Begin the storming, and their muster make,
And sometimes starting off for their escape;

Vaunt-couriers have I seen upon your land,
O Aretines, and foragers go forth,
Tournaments stricken, and the joustings run,

Sometimes with trumpets and sometimes with bells,
With kettle-drums, and signals of the castles,
And with our own, and with outlandish things,

But never yet with bagpipe so uncouth
Did I see horsemen move, nor infantry,
Nor ship by any sign of land or star.

We went upon our way with the ten demons;
Ah, savage company! but in the church
With saints, and in the tavern with the gluttons!

Ever upon the pitch was my intent,
To see the whole condition of that Bolgia,
And of the people who therein were burned.

Even as the dolphins, when they make a sign
To mariners by arching of the back,
That they should counsel take to save their vessel,

Thus sometimes, to alleviate his pain,
One of the sinners would display his back,
And in less time conceal it than it lightens.

As on the brink of water in a ditch
The frogs stand only with their muzzles out,
So that they hide their feet and other bulk,

Search ye all round about the boiling pitch;
The frogs stand only with their muzzles out,
So that they hide their feet and other bulk,

So upon every side the sinners stood;
But ever as Barbariccia near them came,
Thus underneath the boiling they withdrew.

I saw, and still my heart doth shudder at it,
One waiting thus, even as it comes to pass
One frog remains, and down another dives;
And Graffiacan, who most confronted him,  
Grappled him by his tresses smeared with pitch,  
And drew him up, so that he seemed an otter.

I knew, before, the names of all of them,  
So had I noted them when they were chosen,  
And when they called each other, listened how.

"O Rubicante, see that thou do lay  
Thy claws upon him, so that thou mayst slay him,"  
Cried all together the accursed ones.

And I: "My Master, see to it, if thou canst,  
That thou mayst know who is the luckless wight,  
Thus come into his adversaries' hands."

Near to the side of him my Leader drew,  
Asked of him whence he was; and he replied:  "I in the kingdom of Navarre was born;
My mother placed me servant to a lord,  
For she had borne me to a ribald knave,  
Destroyer of himself and of his things.

Then I domestic was of good King Thibault;  
I set me there to practise barratry,  
For which I pay the reckoning in this heat."

And Ciriatto, from whose mouth projected,  
On either side, a tusk, as in a boar,  
Caused him to feel how one of them could rip.

Among malicious cats the mouse had come;  
But Barbariccia clasped him in his arms,  
And said: "Stand ye aside, while I enfork him."

And to my Master he turned round his head;  
"Ask him again," he said, "if more thou wish  
To know from him, before some one destroy him."

The Guide: "Now tell then of the other culprits;  
Knowest thou any one who is a Latian,  
Under the pitch?" And he: "I separated

Lately from one who was a neighbour to it;  
Would that I still were covered up with him,  
For I should fear not either claw nor hook!"

And Libicocco: "We have borne too much;"  
And with his grapnel seized him by the arm,  
So that, by rending, he tore off a tendon.

Eke Draghignazzo wished to pounce upon him  
Down at the legs; whence their Decurion  
Turned round and round about with evil look.

When they again somewhat were pacified,  
Of him, who still was looking at his wound,  
Demanded my Conductor without stay:

"Who was that one, from whom a luckless parting  
Thou sayest thou hast made, to come ashore?"  
And he replied: "It was the Friar Gomita,

He of Gallura, vessel of all fraud,  
Who had the enemies of his Lord in hand,  
And dealt so with them each exults thereat;

Money he took, and let them smoothly off,  
As he says; and in other offices  
A barrator was he, not mean but sovereign.

Foregatheres with him one Don Michael Zanche  
Of Logodoro; and of Sardinia  
To gossip never do their tongues feel tired.

O me! see that one, how he grinds his teeth;  
Near to the side of him my Leader drew,  
Still farther would I speak, but am afraid

"Ask him again," he said, "if more thou wish  
To know from him, before some one destroy him."

Whence he, who snares in great abundance had,  
The terror-stricken recommenced thereon,  
"Tuscans or Lombards, I will make them come.

But let the Malebranche cease a little,  
So that these may not their revenges fear,  
And I, down sitting in this very place,

For one that I am will make seven come,  
When I shall whistle, as our custom is  
To do whenever one of us comes out."

Cagnazzo at these words his muzzle lifted,  
Shaking his head, and said: "Just hear the trick  
Which he has thought of, down to throw himself!"

Whence he, who snares in great abundance had,  
Responded: "I by far too cunning am,  
When I procure for mine a greater sadness."

Alichin held not in, but running counter  
Unto the rest, said to him: "If thou dive,  
I will not follow thee upon the gallop,

But I will beat my wings above the pitch;  
The height be left, and be the bank a shield  
To see if thou alone dost countervail us."

O thou who readest, thou shalt hear new sport!  
Each to the other side his eyes averted;  
He first, who most reluctant was to do it.

The Navarrese selected well his time;  
Planted his feet on land, and in a moment  
Leaped, and released himself from their design.
Whereat each one was suddenly stung with shame,
But he most who was cause of the defeat;
Therefore he moved, and cried: “Thou art o’ertakern.”

But little it availed, for wings could not
Outstrip the fear; the other one went under,
And, flying, upward he his breast directed;

Not otherwise the duck upon a sudden
Dives under, when the falcon is approaching,
And upward he returneth cross and weary.

Infuriate at the mockery, Calcabrina
Flying behind him followed close, desirous
The other should escape, to have a quarrel.

And when the barrator had disappeared,
He turned his talons upon his companion,
And grappled with him right above the moat.

But sooth the other was a doughty sparhawk
To clapperclaw him well; and both of them
Fell in the middle of the boiling pond.

A sudden intercessor was the heat;
But ne’ertheless of rising there was naught,
To such degree they had their wings belimed.

Lamenting with the others, Barbariccia
Made four of them fly to the other side
With all their gaffs, and very speedily

This side and that they to their posts descended;
They stretched their hooks towards the pitch-ensnared,
Who were already baked within the crust,

And in this manner busied did we leave them.

Inferno: Canto XXIII

Silent, alone, and without company
We went, the one in front, the other after,
As go the Minor Friars along their way.

Upon the fable of Aesop was directed
My thought, by reason of the present quarrel,
Where he has spoken of the frog and mouse;

For ’mo’ and ’issa’ are not more alike
Than this one is to that, if well we couple
End and beginning with a steadfast mind.

And even as one thought from another springs,
So afterward from that was born another,
Which the first fear within me double made.

Thus did I ponder: “These on our account

Are laughed to scorn, with injury and scoff
So great, that much I think it must annoy them.

If anger be engrafted on ill-will,
They will come after us more merciless
Than dog upon the leveret which he seizes.”

I felt my hair stand all on end already
With terror, and stood backwardly intent,
When said I: “Master, if thou hidest not

Thyself and me forthwith, of Malebranche
I am in dread; we have them now behind us;
I so imagine them, I already feel them.”

And he: “If I were made of leaded glass,
Thine outward image I should not attract
Sooner to me than I imprint the inner.

Just now thy thoughts came in among my own,
With similar attitude and similar face,
So that of both one counsel sole I made.

If peradventure the right bank so slope
That we to the next Bolgia can descend,
We shall escape from the imagined chase.”

Not yet he finished rendering such opinion,
When I beheld them come with outstretched wings,
Not far remote, with will to seize upon us.

Lamenting with the others, Barbariccia
Made four of them fly to the other side
My Leader on a sudden seized me up,
With all their gaffs, and very speedily

Even as one thought from another springs,
End and beginning with a steadfast mind.

For the high Providence, which had ordained
To place them ministers of the fifth moat,
The power of thence departing took from all.

A painted people there below we found,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Who went about with footsteps very slow,
Weeping and in their semblance tired and vanquished.

They had on mantles with the hoods low down
Before their eyes, and fashioned of the cut
That in Cologne they for the monks are made.

Without, they gilded are so that it dazzles;
But inwardly all leaden and so heavy
That Frederick used to put them on of straw.

O eternally fatiguing mantle!
Again we turned us, still to the left hand
Along with them, intent on their sad plaint;

But owing to the weight, that weary folk
Came on so tardily, that we were new
In company at each motion of the haunch.

Whence I unto my Leader: “See thou find
Some one who may by deed or name be known,
And thus in going move thine eye about.”

And one, who understood the Tuscan speech,
Cried to us from behind: “Stay ye your feet,
Ye, who so run athwart the dusky air!

Perhaps thou’lt have from me what thou demandest.”
Whereat the Leader turned him, and said: “Wait,
And then according to his pace proceed.”

I stopped, and two beheld I show great haste
Of spirit, in their faces, to be with me;
But the burden and the narrow way delayed them.

When they came up, long with an eye askance
They scanned me without uttering a word.
Then to each other turned, and said together:

“He by the action of his throat seems living;
And if they dead are, by what privilege
Go they uncovered by the heavy stole?”

Then said to me: “Tuscan, who to the college
Of miserable hypocrites art come,
Do not disdain to tell us who thou art.”

And I to them: “Born was I, and grew up
In the great town on the fair river of Arno,
And with the body am I’ve always had.

But who are ye, in whom there trickles down
Along your cheeks such grief as I behold?
And what pain is upon you, that so sparkles?”

And one replied to me: “These orange cloaks
Are made of lead so heavy, that the weights
Cause in this way their balances to creak.

Frati Gaudenti were we, and Bolognese;

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I Catalano, and he Loderingo
Named, and together taken by thy city,

As the wont is to take one man alone,
For maintenance of its peace; and we were such
That still it is apparent round Gardingno.”

“O Friars,” began I, “your iniquitous...”
But said no more; for to mine eyes there rushed
One crucified with three stakes on the ground.

When me he saw, he writhed himself all over,
Blowing into his beard with suspirations;
And the Friar Catalan, who noticed this,

Said to me: “This transfixed one, whom thou seest,
Counselled the Pharisees that it was meet
To put one man to torture for the people.

Crosswise and naked is he on the path,
As thou perceivest; and he needs must feel,
Whoever passes, first how much he weighs;

And in like mode his father-in-law is punished
Within this moat, and the others of the council,
Which for the Jews was a malignant seed.”

And thereupon I saw Virgilius marvel
O’er him who was extended on the cross
So vilely in eternal banishment.

Then he directed to the Friar this voice:
“Be not displeased, if granted thee, to tell us
If to the right hand any pass slope down
By which we two may issue forth from here,
Without constraining some of the black angels
To come and extricate us from this deep.”

Then he made answer: “Nearer than thou hopest
There is a rock, that forth from the great circle
Proceeds, and crosses all the cruel valleys,
Save that at this ’tis broken, and does not bridge it;
You will be able to mount up the ruin,
That sidelong slopes and at the bottom rises.”

The Leader stood awhile with head bowed down;
Then said: “The business badly he recounted
Who grapples with his hook the sinners yonder.”

And the Friar: “Many of the Devil’s vices
Once heard I at Bologna, and among them,
That he’s a liar and the father of lies.”

Thereat my Leader with great strides went on,
Somewhat disturbed with anger in his looks;
Whence from the heavy-laden I departed

After the prints of his beloved feet.
Inferno: Canto XXIV

In that part of the youthful year wherein
The Sun his locks beneath Aquarius tempers,
And now the nights draw near to half the day,
What time the hoar-frost copies on the ground
The outward semblance of her sister white,
But little lasts the temper of her pen,
The husbandman, whose forage faileth him,
Rises, and looks, and seeth the champaign
All gleaming white, whereat he beats his flank,
Returns in doors, and up and down laments,
Like a poor wretch, who knows not what to do;
Then he returns and hope revives again,
Seeing the world has changed its countenance
In little time, and takes his shepherd’s crook,
And forth the little lambs to pasture drives.
Thus did the Master fill me with alarm,
When I beheld his forehead so disturbed,
And to the ailment came as soon the plaster.
For as we came unto the ruined bridge,
The Leader turned to me with that sweet look
Which at the mountain’s foot I first beheld.
His arms he opened, after some advisement
Within himself elected, looking first
Well at the ruin, and laid hold of me.
And even as he who acts and meditates,
For aye it seems that he provides beforehand,
So upward lifting me towards the summit
Of a huge rock, he scanned another crag,
Saying: “To that one grapple afterwards,
But try first if ’tis such that it will hold thee.”
This was no way for one clothed with a cloak;
For hardly we, he light, and I pushed upward,
Were able to ascend from jag to jag.
And had it not been, that upon that precinct
Shorter was the ascent than on the other,
He I know not, but I had been dead beat.
But because Malebolge tow’rds the mouth
Of the profoundest well is all inclining,
The structure of each valley doth import
That one bank rises and the other sinks.
Still we arrived at length upon the point

Wherefrom the last stone breaks itself asunder.
The breath was from my lungs so milked away,
When I was up, that I could go no farther,
Nay, I sat down upon my first arrival.

“There it behoves thee thus to put off sloth,"
My Master said; “for sitting upon down,
Or under quilt, one cometh not to fame,
Withouten which whoso his life consumes
Such vestige leaveth of himself on earth,
As smoke in air or in the water foam.
And therefore raise thee up, o’ercome the anguish
With spirit that o’ercometh every battle,
If with its heavy body it sink not.
A longer stairway it behoves thee mount;
’Tis not enough from these to have departed;
Let it avail thee, if thou understand me.”

Then he returns and hope revives again,
Then I uprose, showing myself provided
Seeing the world has changed its countenance
Better with breath than I did feel myself,
In little time, and takes his shepherd’s crook,
And said: “Go on, for I am strong and bold.”
Upward we took our way along the crag,
Which jagged was, and narrow, and difficult,
And more precipitous far than that before.
Speaking I went, not to appear exhausted;
Whereat a voice from the next moat came forth,
Not well adapted to articulate words.
I know not what it said, though o’er the back
I now was of the arch that passes there;
But he seemed moved to anger who was speaking.
I was bent downward, but my living eyes
Could not attain the bottom, for the dark;
Wherefore I: “Master, see that thou arrive
At the next round, and let us descend the wall;
For as from hence I hear and understand not,
So I look down and nothing I distinguish.”

“Other response,” he said, “I make thee not, Except the doing; for the modest asking Ought to be followed by the deed in silence.”

We from the bridge descended at its head,
Where it connects itself with the eighth bank,
And then was manifest to me the Bolgia;
And I beheld therein a terrible throng
Of serpents, and of such a monstrous kind,
That the remembrance still congeals my blood

Let Libya boast no longer with her sand;
For if Chelydri, Jaculi, and Phareae
She breeds, with Cenchri and with Amphisbaena,  

And with a melancholy shame was painted. 

Neither so many plagues nor so malignant  
E’er showed she with all Ethiopia,  
Nor with whatever on the Red Sea is!  

Then said: “It pains me more that thou hast caught me  
Neither so many plagues nor so malignant  
Amid this misery where thou seest me,  
E’er showed she with all Ethiopia,  
Nor with whatever on the Red Sea is!  
Than when I from the other life was taken. 

What thou demandest I cannot deny;  
So low am I put down because I robbed  
The sacristy of the fair ornaments,  
And falsely once ’twas laid upon another;  
But that thou mayst not such a sight enjoy,  
If thou shalt e’er be out of the dark places,  
Thine ears to my announcement ope and hear:  
Pistoia first of Neri groweth meagre;  
Then Florence doth renew her men and manners;  
Mars draws a vapour up from Val di Magra,  
Which is with turbid clouds enveloped round,  
And with impetuous and bitter tempest 
Over Campo Picen shall be the battle;  
When it shall suddenly rend the mist asunder,  
So that each Bianco shall thereby be smitten.  

And this I’ve said that it may give thee pain.”

Inferno: Canto XXV

At the conclusion of his words, the thief  
Lifted his hands aloft with both the figs,  
Crying: “Take that, God, for at thee I aim them.”

From that time forth the serpents were my friends;  
For one entwined itself about his neck  
As if it said: “I will not thou speak more;”  
And round his arms another, and rebound him,  
Clinching itself together so in front,  
That with them he could not a motion make. 

Pistoia, ah, Pistoia! why resolve not  
To burn thyself to ashes and so perish,  
Since in ill-doing thou thy seed excellest?  
Through all the sombre circles of this Hell,  
Spirit I saw not against God so proud,  
Not he who fell at Thebes down from the walls!

He fled away, and spake no further word;  
And I beheld a Centaur full of rage  
Come crying out: “Where is, where is the scoffer?”

I do not think Maremma has so many  
Serpents as he had all along his back,  
As far as where our countenance begins.
Upon the shoulders, just behind the nape,
With wings wide open was a dragon lying,
And he sets fire to all that he encounters.

My Master said: “That one is Cacus, who
Beneath the rock upon Mount Aventine
Created oftentimes a lake of blood.

He goes not on the same road with his brothers,
By reason of the fraudulent theft he made
Of the great herd, which he had near to him;

Whereat his tortuous actions ceased beneath
The mace of Hercules, who peradventure
Gave him a hundred, and he felt not ten."

While he was speaking thus, he had passed by,
And spirits three had underneath us come,
Of which nor I aware was, nor my Leader,

Until what time they shouted: “Who are you?”
On which account our story made a halt,
And then we were intent on them alone.

I did not know them; but it came to pass,
As it is wont to happen by some chance,
That one to name the other was compelled,

Exclaiming: “Where can Cianfa have remained?”
Whence I, so that the Leader might attend,
Upward from chin to nose my finger laid.

If thou art, Reader, slow now to believe
What I shall say, it will no marvel be,
For I who saw it hardly can admit it.

As I was holding raised on them my brows,
Behold! a serpent with six feet darts forth
In front of one, and fastens wholly on him.

With middle feet it bound him round the paunch,
And with the forward ones his arms it seized;
Then thrust its teeth through one cheek and the other;

The hindermost it stretched upon his thighs,
And put its tail through in between the two,
And up behind along the reins outspread it.

Ivy was never fastened by its barbs
Unto a tree so, as this horrible reptile
Upon the other’s limbs entwined its own.

Then they stuck close, as if of heated wax
They had been made, and intermixed their colour;
Nor one nor other seemed now what he was;

E’en as proceedeth on before the flame
Upward along the paper a brown colour,
Which is not black as yet, and the white dies.
Rejoice, O Florence, since thou art so great,  
That over sea and land thou beatest thy wings,  
And throughout Hell thy name is spread abroad!

Among the thieves five citizens of thine  
Like these I found, whence shame comes unto me,  
And thou thereby to no great honour risest.

But if when morn is near our dreams are true,  
Feel shalt thou in a little time from now  
What Prato, if none other, craves for thee.

And if it now were, it were not too soon;  
Would that it were, seeing it needs must be,  
For ‘twill aggrieve me more the more I age.

We went our way, and up along the stairs  
The bourns had made us to descend before,  
Remounted my Conductor and drew me.

And following the solitary path  
Among the rocks and ridges of the crag,  
The foot without the hand sped not at all.

Then sorrowed I, and sorrow now again,  
When I direct my mind to what I saw,  
And more my genius curb than I am wont,

That it may run not unless virtue guide it;  
So that if some good star, or better thing,  
Have given me good, I may myself not grudge it.

As many as the hind (who on the hill  
Rests at the time when he who lights the world  
His countenance keeps least concealed from us,

While as the fly gives place unto the gnat)  
Seeth the glow-worms down along the valley,  
Perchance there where he ploughs and makes his vintage;

With flames as manifold resplendent all  
Was the eighth Bolgia, as I grew aware  
As soon as I was where the depth appeared.

And such as he who with the bears avenged him  
Beheld Elijah’s chariot at departing,  
What time the steeds to heaven erect uprose,

For with his eye he could not follow it  
So as to see aught else than flame alone,  
Even as a little cloud ascending upward,

Thus each along the gorge of the intrenchment  
Was moving; for not one reveals the theft,  
And every flame a sinner steals away.

I stood upon the bridge uprisen to see,  
So that, if I had seized not on a rock,  
Down had I fallen without being pushed.

Inferno: Canto XXVI

The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri  
Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I saw the arms draw inward at the armpits,  
And both feet of the reptile, that were short,  
Lengthen as much as those contracted were.

Thereafter the hind feet, together twisted,  
Became the member that a man conceals,  
And of his own the wretch had two created.

While both of them the exhalation veils  
With a new colour, and engenders hair  
On one of them and depilates the other,

The one uprose and down the other fell,  
Though turning not away their impious lamps,  
Underneath which each one his muzzle changed.

He who was standing drew it tow’rs the temples,  
And from excess of matter, which came thither,  
Issued the ears from out the hollow cheeks;

What did not backward run and was retained  
Of that excess made to the face a nose,  
And the lips thickened far as was befitting.

He who lay prostrate thrusts his muzzle forward,  
And backward draws the ears into his head,  
In the same manner as the snail its horns;

And so the tongue, which was entire and apt  
For speech before, is cleft, and the bi-forked  
In the other closes up, and the smoke ceases.

The soul, which to a reptile had been changed,  
Along the valley hissing takes to flight,  
And after him the other speaking sputters.

Then did he turn upon him his new shoulders,  
And said to the other: “I’ll have Buoso run,  
Crawling as I have done, along this road.”

In this way I beheld the seventh ballast  
Shift and reshift, and here be my excuse  
The novelty, if aught my pen transgress.

And notwithstanding that mine eyes might be  
Somewhat bewildered, and my mind dismayed,  
They could not flee away so secretly

But that I plainly saw Puccio Sciancato;  
And he it was who sole of three companions,  
Which came in the beginning, was not changed;

The other was he whom thou, Gaville, weepest.

Inferno: Canto XXVI
And the Leader, who beheld me so attent,
Exclaimed: “Within the fires the spirits are;
Each swathes himself with that wherewith he burns.”

“My Master,” I replied, “by hearing thee
I am more sure; but I surmised already
It might be so, and already wished to ask thee

Who is within that fire, which comes so cleft
At top, it seems uprising from the pyre
Where was Eteocles with his brother placed.”

He answered me: “Within there are tormented
Ulysses and Diomed, and thus together
They unto vengeance run as unto wrath.

And there within their flame do they lament
The ambush of the horse, which made the door
Whence issued forth the Romans' gentle seed;

Therein is wept the craft, for which being dead
Deidamia still deplores Achilles,
And pain for the Palladium there is borne.”

“If they within those sparks possess the power
To speak,” I said, “thee, Master, much I pray,
And re-pray, that the prayer be worth a thousand,

That thou make no denial of awaiting
Until the horned flame shall hither come;
Thou seest that with desire I lean towards it.”

And he to me: “Worthy is thy entreaty
Of much applause, and therefore I accept it;
But take heed that thy tongue restrain itself.

Leave me to speak, because I have conceived
That which thou wishest; for they might disdain
Perchance, since they were Greeks, discourse of thine.”

When now the flame had come unto that point,
Where to my Leader it seemed time and place,
After this fashion did I hear him speak:

“O ye, who are twofold within one fire,
If I deserved of you, while I was living,
If I deserved of you or much or little

When in the world I wrote the lofty verses,
Do not move on, but one of you declare
Whither, being lost, he went away to die.”

Then of the antique flame the greater horn,
Murmuring, began to wave itself about
Even as a flame doth which the wind fatigues.

Thereafterward, the summit to and fro
Moving as if it were the tongue that spake,
It uttered forth a voice, and said: “When I

From Circe had departed, who concealed me
More than a year there near unto Gaeta,
Or ever yet Aeneas named it so,

Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence
For my old father, nor the due affection
Which joyous should have made Penelope,

Could overcome within me the desire
I had to be experienced of the world,
And of the vice and virtue of mankind;

But I put forth on the high open sea
With one sole ship, and that small company
By which I never had deserted been.

Both of the shores I saw as far as Spain,
Far as Morocco, and the isle of Sardes,
And the others which that sea bathes round about.

I and my company were old and slow
When at that narrow passage we arrived
Where Hercules his landmarks set as signals,

That man no farther onward should adventure.
On the right hand behind me left I Seville,
And on the other already had left Ceuta.

‘O brothers, who amid a hundred thousand
Perils,’ I said, ‘have come unto the West,
To this so inconsiderable vigil

Which is remaining of your senses still
Be ye unwilling to deny the knowledge,
Following the sun, of the unpeopled world.

Consider ye the seed from which ye sprang:
Ye were not made to live like unto brutes,
But for pursuit of virtue and of knowledge.’

So eager did I render my companions,
With this brief exhortation, for the voyage,
That then I hardly could have held them back.

And having turned our stern unto the morning,
We of the oars made wings for our mad flight,
Evermore gaining on the larboard side.

Already all the stars of the other pole
The night beheld, and ours so very low
It did not rise above the ocean floor.

Five times rekindled and as many quenched
Had been the splendour underneath the moon,
Since we had entered into the deep pass,

When there appeared to us a mountain, dim
From distance, and it seemed to me so high
As I had never any one beheld.
Joyful were we, and soon it turned to weeping;  
For out of the new land a whirlwind rose,  
And smote upon the fore part of the ship.

Three times it made her whirl with all the waters,  
At the fourth time it made the stern uplift,  
And the prow downward go, as pleased Another,

Until the sea above us closed again.”

Inferno: Canto XXVII

Already was the flame erect and quiet,  
To speak no more, and now departed from us  
With the permission of the gentle Poet;

When yet another, which behind it came,  
Caused us to turn our eyes upon its top  
By a confused sound that issued from it.

As the Sicilian bull (that bellowed first  
With the lament of him, and that was right,  
Who with his file had modulated it)

Bellowed so with the voice of the afflicted,  
That, notwithstanding it was made of brass,  
Still it appeared with agony transfixed;

Thus, by not having any way or issue  
At first from out the fire, to its own language  
Converted were the melancholy words.

But afterwards, when they had gathered way  
Up through the point, giving it that vibration  
The tongue had given them in their passage out,

We heard it said: “O thou, at whom I aim  
My voice, and who but now wast speaking Lombard,  
Saying, ‘Now go thy way, no more I urge thee,’

Because I come perchance a little late,  
To stay and speak with me let it not irk thee;  
Thou seest it irks not me, and I am burning.

If thou but lately into this blind world  
Hast fallen down from that sweet Latian land,  
Wherefrom I bring the whole of my transgression,

Say, if the Romagnuols have peace or war,  
For I was from the mountains there between  
Urbino and the yoke whence Tiber bursts.”

I still was downward bent and listening,  
When my Conductor touched me on the side,  
Saying: “Speak thou: this one a Latian is.”

And I, who had beforehand my reply  
In readiness, forthwith began to speak:  
“O soul, that down below there art concealed,

Romagna thine is not and never has been  
Without war in the bosom of its tyrants;  
But open war I none have left there now.

Ravenna stands as it long years has stood;  
The Eagle of Polenta there is brooding,  
So that she covers Cervia with her vans.

The city which once made the long resistance,  
And of the French a sanguinary heap,  
Beneath the Green Paws finds itself again;

Verrucchio’s ancient Mastiff and the new,  
Who made such bad disposal of Montagna,  
Where they are wont make wimbles of their teeth.

The cities of Lamone and Santerno  
Governs the Lioncel of the white lair,  
Who changes sides ‘twixt summer-time and winter;

And that of which the Savio bathes the flank,  
Even as it lies between the plain and mountain,  
Lives between tyranny and a free state.

Now I entreat thee tell us who thou art;  
Be not more stubborn than the rest have been,  
So may thy name hold front there in the world.”

After the fire a little more had roared  
In its own fashion, the sharp point it moved  
This way and that, and then gave forth such breath:

“If I believed that my reply were made  
To one who to the world would e’er return,  
This flame without more flickering would stand still;

But inasmuch as never from this depth  
Did any one return, if I hear true,  
Without the fear of infamy I answer,

I was a man of arms, then Cordelier,  
Believing thus begirt to make amends;  
And truly my belief had been fulfilled

But for the High Priest, whom may ill betide,  
Who put me back into my former sins;  
And how and wherefore I will have thee hear.

While I was still the form of bone and pulp  
My mother gave to me, the deeds I did  
Were not those of a lion, but a fox.

The machinations and the covert ways  
I knew them all, and practised so their craft,  
That to the ends of earth the sound went forth.
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

He bore me unto Minos, who entwined
Eight times his tail about his stubborn back,
And after he had bitten it in great rage,

Said: ‘Of the thievish fire a culprit this;’
Wherefore, here where thou seest, am I lost,
And vested thus in going I bemoan me.”

When it had thus completed its recital,
The flame departed uttering lamentations,
Writhing and flapping its sharp-pointed horn.

Onward we passed, both I and my Conductor,
Up o’er the crag above another arch,
Which the moat covers, where is paid the fee

By those who, sowing discord, win their burden.

Inferno: Canto XXVIII

Who ever could, e’en with untrammelled words,
Tell of the blood and of the wounds in full
Which now I saw, by many times narrating?

Each tongue would for a certainty fall short
By reason of our speech and memory,
That have small room to comprehend so much.

If were again assembled all the people
Which formerly upon the fateful land
Of Puglia were lamenting for their blood

Shed by the Romans and the lingering war
That of the rings made such illustrious spoils,
As Livy has recorded, who errs not,

With those who felt the agony of blows
By making counterstand to Robert Guiscard,
And all the rest, whose bones are gathered still

At Ceperano, where a renegade
Was each Apulian, and at Tagliacozzo,
Where without arms the old Alardo conquered,

And one his limb transpierced, and one lopped off,
Should show, it would be nothing to compare
With the disgusting mode of the ninth Bolgia.

A cask by losing centre-piece or cant
Was never shattered so, as I saw one
Rent from the chin to where one breaketh wind.

Between his legs were hanging down his entrails;
His heart was visible, and the dismal sack
That maketh excrement of what is eaten.

While I was all absorbed in seeing him,
Call to remembrance Pier da Medicina,
He looked at me, and opened with his hands
If e'er thou see again the lovely plain
His bosom, saying: “See now how I rend me;
That from Vercelli slopes to Marcabo,
E'er thou see again the lovely plain
How mutilated, see, is Mahomet;
In front of me doth Ali weeping go,
And make it known to the best two of Fano,
Cleft in the face from forelock unto chin;
To Messer Guido and Angiolello likewise,
That if foreseeing here be not in vain,
While living were, and therefore are cleft thus.
And all the others whom thou here beholdest,
Disseminators of scandal and of schism
To Messer Guido and Angiolello likewise,
While living were, and therefore are cleft thus.
A devil is behind here, who doth cleave us
Thus cruelly, unto the falchion's edge
Me, who am dead, behoves it to conduct him
Putting again each one of all this ream,
Of one of his companions, and his mouth
When we have gone around the doleful road;
Down here through Hell, from circle unto circle;
By reason that our wounds are closed again
That traitor, who sees only with one eye,
And holds the land, which some one here with me
Perchance to postpone going to the pain
Who is this person of the bitter vision.
Would fain be fasting from the vision of,
That traitor, who sees only with one eye,
But who art thou, that musest on the crag,
By reason that our wounds are closed again
When we have gone around the doleful road;
Perchance to postpone going to the pain
Ere any one in front of him repass.
That traitor, who sees only with one eye,
With tongue asunder in his windpipe slit,
Who is this person of the bitter vision.
And one, who both his hands dissevered had,
And holds the land, which some one here with me
Curio, who in speaking was so bold!
So with provisions, that no stress of snow
Who said, alas! 'A thing done has an end!'
The stumps uplifting through the murky air,
Whence he, accumulating woe on woe,
Who is this person of the bitter vision.
And one, who both his hands dissevered had,
The stumps uplifting through the murky air,
Which was an ill seed for the Tuscan people.
That traitor, who sees only with one eye,
And holds the land, which some one here with me
Who is this person of the bitter vision.
Cried out: “Thou shalt remember Mosca also,
Who said, alas! 'A thing done has an end!'
Which was an ill seed for the Tuscan people.”
And death unto thy race,” thereto I added;
And one, who both his hands dissevered had,
Whence he, accumulating woe on woe,
That traitor, who sees only with one eye,
Who is this person of the bitter vision.
But I remained to look upon the crowd;
And saw a thing which I should be afraid,
And saw a thing which I should be afraid,
And saw a thing which I should be afraid,
If it were not that conscience reassures me,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

I truly saw, and still I seem to see it,
A trunk without a head walk in like manner
As walked the others of the mournful herd.

And by the hair it held the head dissevered,
Hung from the hand in fashion of a lantern,
And that upon us gazed and said: "O me!"

It of itself made to itself a lamp,
And they were two in one, and one in two;
How that can be, He knows who so ordains it.

When it was come close to the bridge's foot,
It lifted high its arm with all the head,
To bring more closely unto us its words,

Which were: "Behold now the sore penalty,
Thou, who dost breathing go the dead beholding;
Behold if any be as great as this.

And so that thou may carry news of me,
Know that Bertram de Born am I, the same
Who gave to the Young King the evil comfort.

I made the father and the son rebellious;
Achitophel not more with Absalom
And David did with his accursed goadings.

Because I parted persons so united,
Parted do I now bear my brain, alas!
From its beginning, which is in this trunk.

Thus is observed in me the counterpoise."

Inferno: Canto XXIX

The many people and the divers wounds
These eyes of mine had so inebriated,
That they were wishful to stand still and weep;

But said Virgilius: "What dost thou still gaze at?
Why is thy sight still riveted down there
Among the mournful, mutilated shades?

Thou hast not done so at the other Bolge;
Consider, if to count them thou believest,
That two-and-twenty miles the valley winds,

And now the moon is underneath our feet;
Henceforth the time allotted us is brief,
And more is to be seen than what thou seest."

"If thou hadst," I made answer thereupon,
"Attended to the cause for which I looked,
Perhaps a longer stay thou wouldst have pardoned."

Meanwhile my Guide departed, and behind him

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I went, already making my reply,
And superadding: "In that cavern where

I held mine eyes with such attention fixed,
I think a spirit of my blood laments
The sin which down below there costs so much."

Then said the Master: "Be no longer broken
Thy thought from this time forward upon him;
Attend elsewhere, and there let him remain;

For him I saw below the little bridge,
Pointing at thee, and threatening with his finger
Fiercely, and heard him called Geri del Bello.

So wholly at that time wast thou impeded
By him who formerly held Altaforte,
Thou didst not look that way; so he departed."

"O my Conductor, his own violent death,
Which is not yet avenged for him," I said,
"By any who is sharer in the shame,
Made him disdainful; whence he went away,
As I imagine, without speaking to me,
And thereby made me pity him the more."

Thus did we speak as far as the first place
Upon the crag, which the next valley shows
Down to the bottom, if there were more light.

When we were now right over the last cloister
Of Malebolge, so that its lay-brothers
Could manifest themselves unto our sight,

Divers lamentings pierced me through and through,
Which with compassion had their arrows barbed,
Whereat mine ears I covered with my hands.

What pain would be, if from the hospitals
Of Valdichiana, 'twixt July and September,
And of Maremma and Sardinia
All the diseases in one moat were gathered,
Such was it here, and such a stench came from it
As from putrescent limbs is wont to issue.

We had descended on the furthest bank
From the long crag, upon the left hand still,
And then more vivid was my power of sight

Down tow'rd's the bottom, where the ministrress
Of the high Lord, Justice infallible,
Punishes forgers, which she here records.

I do not think a sadder sight to see
Was in Aegina the whole people sick,
(When was the air so full of pestilence,

The animals, down to the little worm,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Let not your foul and loathsome punishment
Make you afraid to show yourselves to me."

“I of Arezzo was,” one made reply,
“And Albert of Siena had me burned;
But what I died for does not bring me here.

‘Tis true I said to him, speaking in jest,
That I could rise by flight into the air,
And he who had conceit, but little wit,

Would have me show to him the art; and only
Because no Daedalus I made him, made me
Be burned by one who held him as his son.

But unto the last Bolgia of the ten,
For alchemy, which in the world I practised,
Minos, who cannot err, has me condemned.”

And to the Poet said I: “Now was ever
So vain a people as the Sienese?
Not for a certainty the French by far.”

Whereat the other leper, who had heard me,
Replied unto my speech: “Taking out Stricca,
Who knew the art of moderate expenses,

And Niccolo, who the luxurious use
Of cloves discovered earliest of all
Within that garden where such seed takes root;

And taking out the band, among whom squandered
Caccia d’Ascian his vineyards and vast woods,
And where his wit the Abbagliato proffered!

But, that thou know who thus doth second thee
Against the Sienese, make sharp thine eye
Tow’rds me, so that my face well answer thee,

And thou shalt see I am Capocchio’s shade,
Who metals falsified by alchemy;
Thou must remember, if I well descry thee,

How I a skilful ape of nature was.”

Inferno: Canto XXX

’Twas at the time when Juno was enraged,
For Semele, against the Theban blood,
As she already more than once had shown,

So reft of reason Athamas became,
That, seeing his own wife with children twain
Walking encumbered upon either hand,

He cried: “Spread out the nets, that I may take
The lioness and her whelps upon the passage;”

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And then extended his unpitying claws,

Seizing the first, who had the name Learchus,
And whirled him round, and dashed him on a rock;
And she, with the other burthen, drowned herself;—

And at the time when fortune downward hurled
The Trojan’s arrogance, that all things dared,
So that the king was with his kingdom crushed,

Hecuba sad, disconsolate, and captive,
When lifeless she beheld Polyxena,
And of her Polydorus on the shore

Of ocean was the dolorous one aware,
Out of her senses like a dog she barked,
So much the anguish had her mind distorted;

But not of Thebes the furies nor the Trojan
Were ever seen in any one so cruel
In goading beasts, and much more human members,

As I beheld two shadows pale and naked,
Who, biting, in the manner ran along
That a boar does, when from the sty turned loose.

One to Capocchio came, and by the nape
Seized with its teeth his neck, so that in dragging
It made his belly grate the solid bottom.

And the Aretine, who trembling had remained,
Said to me: “That mad sprite is Gianni Schicchi,
And raving goes thus harrying other people.”

“O,” said I to him, “so may not the other
Set teeth on thee, let it not weary thee
To tell us who it is, ere it dart hence.”

And he to me: “That is the ancient ghost
Of the nefarious Myrrha, who became
Beyond all rightful love her father’s lover.

She came to sin with him after this manner,
By counterfeiting of another’s form;
As he who goeth yonder undertook,

That he might gain the lady of the herd,
To counterfeit in himself Buoso Donati,
Making a will and giving it due form.”

And after the two maniacs had passed
On whom I held mine eye, I turned it back
To look upon the other evil-born.

I saw one made in fashion of a lute,
If he had only had the groin cut off
Just at the point at which a man is forked.

The heavy dropsy, that so disproportions
The limbs with humours, which it ill concocts,
Therefore thyself disburden of all sadness,
And make account that I am aye beside thee,
If e'er it come to pass that fortune bring thee
Where there are people in a like dispute;

For a base wish it is to wish to hear it.”

Inferno: Canto XXXI

One and the selfsame tongue first wounded me,
So that it tinged the one cheek and the other,
And then held out to me the medicine;

Thus do I hear that once Achilles’ spear,
His and his father’s, used to be the cause
First of a sad and then a gracious boon.

We turned our backs upon the wretched valley,
Upon the bank that girds it round about,
Going across it without any speech.

There it was less than night, and less than day,
So that my sight went little in advance;
But I could hear the blare of a loud horn,

“Rueful to thee the thirst be wherewith cracks
Which, counter to it following its way,
Thy tongue,” the Greek said, “and the putrid water
Mine eyes directed wholly to one place.”

Then the false-coiner: “So is gaping wide
Thy mouth for speaking evil, as ’tis wont;
Because if I have thirst, and humour stuff me

Thou hast the burning and the head that aches,
And to lick up the mirror of Narcissus
Thou wouldst not want words many to invite thee.”

In listening to them was I wholly fixed,
When said the Master to me: “Now just look,
For little wants it that I quarrel with thee.”

When him I heard in anger speak to me,
I turned me round towards him with such shame
That still it eddies through my memory.

And as he is who dreams of his own harm,
Who dreaming wishes it may be a dream,
So that he craves what is, as if it were not;

Such I became, not having power to speak,
For to excuse myself I wished, and still
Excused myself, and did not think I did it.

“Less shame doth wash away a greater fault,”
The Master said, “than this of thine has been;

Less strange, know that these are not towers, but giants,
And they are in the well, around the bank,
From navel downward, one and all of them.”

As, when the fog is vanishing away,
Little by little doth the sight refigure
Whate’er the mist that crowds the air conceals,
Therefore a longer journey did we make,  
Turned to the left, and a crossbow-shot oft
We found another far more fierce and large.

In binding him, who might the master be
I cannot say; but he had pinioned close
Behind the right arm, and in front the other,

With chains, that held him so begirt about
From the neck down, that on the part uncovered
It wound itself as far as the fifth gyre.

“This proud one wished to make experiment
Of his own power against the Supreme Jove,”
My Leader said, “whence he has such a guerdon.

Ephialtes is his name; he showed great prowess.
What time the giants terrified the gods;
The arms he wielded never more he moves."

And I to him: “If possible, I should wish
That of the measureless Briareus
These eyes of mine might have experience.”

Whence he replied: “Thou shalt behold Antaeus
Close by here, who can speak and is unbound,
Who at the bottom of all crime shall place us.

Much farther yon is he whom thou wouldst see,
And he is bound, and fashioned like to this one,
As Ephialtes suddenly shook himself.

Then was I more afraid of death than ever,
For nothing more was needful than the fear,
If I had not beheld the manacles.

Then we proceeded farther in advance,
And to Antaeus came, who, full five ells
Without the head, forth issued from the cavern.

“O thou, who in the valley fortunate,
Which Scipio the heir of glory made,
When Hannibal turned back with all his hosts,

Once brought’st a thousand lions for thy prey,
And who, hadst thou been at the mighty war
Among thy brothers, some it seems still think

The sons of Earth the victory would have gained:
Place us below, nor be disdainful of it,
There where the cold doth lock Cocytus up.

Make us not go to Tityus nor Typhoeus;
This one can give of that which here is longed for;
Therefore stoop down, and do not curl thy lip.
Still in the world can he restore thy fame;  
Because he lives, and still expects long life,  
If to itself Grace call him not untimely."

So said the Master; and in haste the other  
His hands extended and took up my Guide,—  
Hands whose great pressure Hercules once felt.

Virgil, when he felt himself embraced,  
Said unto me: “Draw nigh, that I may take thee;”  
Then of himself and me one bundle made.

As seems the Carisenda, to behold  
Beneath the leaning side, when goes a cloud  
Above it so that opposite it hangs;

Such did Antaeus seem to me, who stood  
Watching to see him stoop, and then it was  
I could have wished to go some other way.

But lightly in the abyss, which swallows up  
Judas with Lucifer, he put us down;  
Nor thus bowed downward made he there delay,

But, as a mast does in a ship, uprose.

Inferno: Canto XXXII

If I had rhymes both rough and stridulous,  
As were appropriate to the dismal hole  
Down upon which thrust all the other rocks,

I would press out the juice of my conception  
More fully; but because I have them not,  
Not without fear I bring myself to speak;

For ‘tis no enterprise to take in jest,  
To sketch the bottom of all the universe,  
Nor for a tongue that cries Mamma and Babbo.

But may those Ladies help this verse of mine,  
Who helped Amphion in enclosing Thebes,  
That from the fact the word be not diverse.

O rabble ill-begotten above all,  
Who’re in the place to speak of which is hard,  
’Twere better ye had here been sheep or goats!

When we were down within the darksome well,  
Beneath the giant’s feet, but lower far,  
And I was scanning still the lofty wall,

I heard it said to me: “Look how thou steppest!  
Take heed thou do not trample with thy feet  
The heads of the tired, miserable brothers!”

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Whereat I turned me round, and saw before me  
And underfoot a lake, that from the frost  
The semblance had of glass, and not of water.

So thick a veil ne’er made upon its current  
In winter-time Danube in Austria,  
Nor there beneath the frigid sky the Don,

As there was here; so that if Tambernich  
Had fallen upon it, or Pietrapana,  
E’en at the edge ’twould not have given a creak.

And as to croak the frog doth place himself  
With muzzle out of water,—when is dreaming  
Of gleaning oftentimes the peasant-girl,—

Livid, as far down as where shame appears,  
Were the disconsolate shades within the ice,  
Setting their teeth unto the note of storks.

Each one his countenance held downward bent;  
From mouth the cold, from eyes the doleful heart  
Among them witness of itself procures.

When round about me somewhat I had looked,  
I downward turned me, and saw two so close,  
The hair upon their heads together mingled.

“Ye who so strain your breasts together, tell me,”  
I said, “who are you;” and they bent their necks,  
And when to me their faces they had lifted,

Their eyes, which first were only moist within,  
Gushed o’er the eyelids, and the frost congealed  
The tears between, and locked them up again.

Clamp never bound together wood with wood  
So strongly; whereat they, like two he-goats,  
Butted together, so much wrath o’ercame them.

And one, who had by reason of the cold  
Lost both his ears, still with his visage downward,  
Said: “Why dost thou so mirror thyself in us?

If thou desire to know who these two are,  
The valley whence Bisenzio descends  
Belonged to them and to their father Albert.

They from one body came, and all Caina  
Thou shalt search through, and shalt not find a shade  
More worthy to be fixed in gelatine;

Not he in whom were broken breast and shadow  
At one and the same blow by Arthur’s hand;  
Focaccia not; not he who me encumbers

So with his head I see no farther forward,  
And bore the name of Sassol Mascheroni;  
Well knowest thou who he was, if thou art Tuscan.
And that thou put me not to further speech,
Know that I Camicion de’ Pazzi was,
And wait Carlino to exonerate me.”

Then I beheld a thousand faces, made
Purple with cold; whence o’er me comes a shudder,
And evermore will come, at frozen ponds.

And while we were advancing tow’rds the middle,
Where everything of weight unites together,
And I was shivering in the eternal shade,

Whether ‘twere will, or destiny, or chance,
I know not; but in walking ‘mong the heads
I struck my foot hard in the face of one.

Weeping he growled: “Why dost thou trample me?
Unless thou comest to increase the vengeance
Of Montaperti, why dost thou molest me?”

And I: “My Master, now wait here for me,
That I through him may issue from a doubt;
Then thou mayst hurry me, as thou shalt wish.”

The Leader stopped; and to that one I said
Who was blaspheming vehemently still:
“Who art thou, that thus reprehendest others?”

“My Master, now wait here for me,
That I through him may issue from a doubt;
Then thou mayst hurry me, as thou shalt wish.”

And I: “My Master, now wait here for me,
That I through him may issue from a doubt;
Then thou mayst hurry me, as thou shalt wish.”

The Leader stopped; and to that one I said
Who was blaspheming vehemently still:
“Who art thou, that thus reprehendest others?”

“Now who art thou, that goest through Antenora
Smiting,” replied he, “other people’s cheeks,
So that, if thou wert living, ‘twere too much?”

“Living I am, and dear to thee it may be,”
Was my response, “if thou demandest fame,
That ‘mid the other notes thy name I place.”

And he to me: “For the reverse I long;
Take thyself hence, and give me no more trouble;
For ill thou knowest to flatter in this hollow.”

Then by the scalp behind I seized upon him,
And said: “It must needs be thou name thyself,
Or not a hair remain upon thee here.”

Whence he to me: “Though thou strip off my hair,
I will not tell thee who I am, nor show thee,
If on my head a thousand times thou fall.”

I had his hair in hand already twisted,
And more than one shock of it had pulled out,
He barking, with his eyes held firmly down,

When cried another: “What doth all thee, Bocca?
Is’t not enough to clatter with thy jaws,
But thou must bark? what devil touches thee?”

“And that thou put me not to further speech,
Know that I Camicion de’ Pazzi was,
And wait Carlino to exonerate me.”

“Begone,” replied he, “and tell what thou wilt,
But be not silent, if thou issue hence,
Of him who had just now his tongue so prompt;

He weepeth here the silver of the French;
‘I saw,’ thus canst thou phrase it, ‘him of Duera
There where the sinners stand out in the cold.’

If thou shouldst questioned be who else was there,
Thou hast beside thee him of Beccaria,
Of whom the gorget Florence slit asunder;

Gianni del Soldanier, I think, may be
Yonder with Ganellon, and Tebaldello
Who oped Faenza when the people slep.”

Already we had gone away from him,
When I beheld two frozen in one hole,
So that one head a hood was to the other;

And even as bread through hunger is devoured,
The uppermost on the other set his teeth,
There where the brain is to the nape united.

Not in another fashion Tydeus gnawed
The temples of Menalippus in disdain,
Than that one did the skull and the other things.

“O thou, who showest by such bestial sign
Thy hatred against him whom thou art eating,
Tell me the wherefore,” said I, “with this compact,

That if thou rightfully of him complain,
In knowing who ye are, and his transgression,
I in the world above repay thee for it,

If that wherewith I speak be not dried up.”

Inferno: Canto XXXIII

His mouth uplifted from his grim repast,
That sinner, wiping it upon the hair
Of the same head that he behind had wasted.

Then he began: “Thou wilt that I renew
The desperate grief, which wrings my heart already
To think of only, ere I speak of it;

But if my words be seed that may bear fruit
Of infamy to the traitor whom I gnaw,
Speaking and weeping shalt thou see together.

I know not who thou art, nor by what mode
Thou hast come down here; but a Florentine
Thou seemest to me truly, when I hear thee.

Thou hast to know I was Count Ugolino,
And this was Ruggieri the Archbishop;
Now I will tell thee why I am such a neighbour.

That, by effect of his malicious thoughts,
Trusting in him I was made prisoner,
And after put to death, I need not say;

But ne’ertheless what thou canst not have heard,
That is to say, how cruel was my death,
Hear shalt thou, and shalt know if he has wronged me.

A narrow perforation in the mew,
Which bears because of me the title of Famine,
And in which others still must be locked up,

Had shown me through its opening many moons
Already, when I dreamed the evil dream
Which of the future rent for me the veil.

This one appeared to me as lord and master,
Hunting the wolf and whelps upon the mountain
For which the Pisans cannot Lucca see.

With sleuth-hounds gaunt, and eager, and well trained,
Gualandi with Sismondi and Lanfianchi
He had sent out before him to the front.

After brief course seemed unto me forespent
The father and the sons, and with sharp tushes
It seemed to me I saw their flanks ripped open.

When I before the morrow was awake,
Moaning amid their sleep I heard my sons
Who with me were, and asking after bread.

Cruel indeed art thou, if yet thou grieve not,
Thinking of what my heart foreboded me,
And weep’st thou not, what art thou wont to weep at?

They were awake now, and the hour drew nigh
At which our food used to be brought to us,
And through his dream was each one apprehensive;

And I heard locking up the under door
Of the horrible tower; whereat without a word
I gazed into the faces of my sons.

I wept not, I within so turned to stone;
They wept; and darling little Anselm mine
Said: ‘Thou dost gaze so, father, what doth ail thee?’

Still not a tear I shed, nor answer made
All of that day, nor yet the night thereafter,
Until another sun rose on the world.

As now a little glimmer made its way
Into the dolorous prison, and I saw
Upon four faces my own very aspect,

Both of my hands in agony I bit;
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Whence I: “My Master, who sets this in motion?
Is not below here every vapour quenched?”

Whence he to me: “Full soon shalt thou be where
Thine eye shall answer make to thee of this,
Seeing the cause which raineth down the blast.”

And one of the wretches of the frozen crust
Cried out to us: “O souls so merciless
That the last post is given unto you,
And still above in body seems alive!

Lift from mine eyes the rigid veils, that I
May vent the sorrow which impregnns my heart
A little, e’er the weeping recongeal.”

Whence to him: “If thou wouldst have me help thee
Say who thou wast; and if I free thee not,
May I go to the bottom of the ice.”

Then he replied: “I am Friar Alberigo;
He am I of the fruit of the bad garden,
Who here a date am getting for my fig.”

“O,” said I to him, “now art thou, too, dead?”
And he to me: “How may my body fare
Up in the world, no knowledge I possess.

Such an advantage has this Ptolomaea,
That oftentimes the soul descendeth here
Sooner than Atropos in motion sets it.

And, that thou mayest more willingly remove
From off my countenance these glassy tears,
Know that as soon as any soul betrays
As I have done, his body by a demon
Is taken from him, who thereafter rules it,
Until his time has wholly been revolved.

Itself down rushes into such a cistern;
And still perchance above appears the body
Of yonder shade, that winters here behind me.

This thou shouldst know, if thou hast just come down;
It is Ser Branca d’ Oria, and many years
Have passed away since he was thus locked up.”

“My think,” said I to him, “thou dost deceive me;
For Branca d’ Oria is not dead as yet,
And eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and puts on clothes.”

“In moat above,” said he, “of Malebranche,
There where is boiling the tenacious pitch,
As yet had Michel Zanche not arrived,

When this one left a devil in his stead
In his own body and one near of kin,
Who made together with him the betrayal.

But hitherward stretch out thy hand forthwith,

Inferno: Canto XXXIV

“Vexilla Regis prodeunt Inferni’
Towards us; therefore look in front of thee,”
My Master said, “if thou discernest him.”

As, when there breathes a heavy fog, or when
Our hemisphere is darkening into night,
Appears far off a mill the wind is turning,

Methought that such a building then I saw;
And, for the wind, I drew myself behind
My Guide, because there was no other shelter.

Now was I, and with fear in verse I put it,
There where the shades were wholly covered up,
And glimmered through like unto straws in glass.

Some prone are lying, others stand erect,
This with the head, and that one with the soles;
Another, bow-like, face to feet inverts.

When in advance so far we had proceeded,
That it my Master pleased to show to me
The creature who once had the beauteous semblance,

He from before me moved and made me stop,
Saying: “Behold Dis, and behold the place
Where thou with fortitude must arm thyself.”

How frozen I became and powerless then,
Ask it not, Reader, for I write it not,
Because all language would be insufficient.

I did not die, and I alive remained not;
Think for thyself now, hast thou aught of wit,
What I became, being of both deprived.

The Emperor of the kingdom dolorous
From his mid-breast forth issued from the ice;
And better with a giant I compare

Than do the giants with those arms of his;
Consider now how great must be that whole,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Which unto such a part conforms itself.

Were he as fair once, as he now is foul,
And lifted up his brow against his Maker,
Well may proceed from him all tribulation.

O, what a marvel it appeared to me,
When I beheld three faces on his head!
The one in front, and that vermilion was;

Two were the others, that were joined with this
Above the middle part of either shoulder,
And they were joined together at the crest;

And the right-hand one seemed 'twixt white and yellow;
The left was such to look upon as those
Who come from where the Nile falls valley-ward.

Underneath each came forth two mighty wings,
Such as befitting were so great a bird;
Sails of the sea I never saw so large.

No feathers had they, but as of a bat
Their fashion was; and he was waving them,
So that three winds proceeded forth therefrom.

Thereby Cocytus wholly was congealed.
With six eyes did he weep, and down three chins
Trickled the tear-drops and the bloody drivel.

At every mouth he with his teeth was crunching
A sinner, in the manner of a brake,
So that he three of them tormented thus.

To him in front the biting was as naught
Unto the clawing, for sometimes the spine
Utterly stripped of all the skin remained.

“That soul up there which has the greatest pain,”
The Master said, “is Judas Iscariot;
With head inside, he plies his legs without.

Of the two others, who head downward are,
The one who hangs from the black jowl is Brutus;
See how he writhes himself, and speaks no word.

And the other, who so stalwart seems, is Cassius.
But night is reascending, and ‘tis time
That we depart, for we have seen the whole.”

As seemed him good, I clasped him round the neck,
And he the vantage seized of time and place,
And when the wings were opened wide apart,

He laid fast hold upon the shaggy sides;
From fell to fell descended downward then
Between the thick hair and the frozen crust.

When we were come to where the thigh revolves
Exactly on the thickness of the haunch,
The Inferno from The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

For fear of him made of the sea a veil,

With course that winds about and slightly falls.

And came to our hemisphere; and peradventure
To flee from him, what on this side appears
Left the place vacant here, and back recoiled."

The Guide and I into that hidden road
Now entered, to return to the bright world;
And without care of having any rest

We mounted up, he first and I the second,
Till I beheld through a round aperture
Some of the beauteous things that Heaven doth bear;
Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars.

A place there is below, from Beelzebub
As far receding as the tomb extends,
Which not by sight is known, but by the sound

Of a small rivulet, that there descendeth
Through chasm within the stone, which it has gnawed

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