

THE DIVINE  
COMEDY:  
PARADISO

By  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

*Translated from Italian by  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

RDMc  
Publishing  
FORT WORTH, TEXAS  
2006

# Contents

<i>Canto I</i> .....	11
<i>Canto II</i> .....	17
<i>Canto III</i> .....	23
<i>Canto IV</i> .....	29
<i>Canto V</i> .....	35
<i>Canto VI</i> .....	41
<i>Canto VII</i> .....	47
<i>Canto VIII</i> .....	53
<i>Canto IX</i> .....	59
<i>Canto X</i> .....	65
<i>Canto XI</i> .....	71
<i>Canto XII</i> .....	77
<i>Canto XIII</i> .....	83
<i>Canto XIV</i> .....	89
<i>Canto XV</i> .....	95
<i>Canto XVI</i> .....	101
<i>Canto XVII</i> .....	108
<i>Canto XVIII</i> .....	114
<i>Canto XIX</i> .....	120
<i>Canto XX</i> .....	126
<i>Canto XXI</i> .....	132
<i>Canto XXII</i> .....	138
<i>Canto XXIII</i> .....	145
<i>Canto XXIV</i> .....	151
<i>Canto XXV</i> .....	158
<i>Canto XXVI</i> .....	164
<i>Canto XXVII</i> .....	170
<i>Canto XXVIII</i> .....	176
<i>Canto XXIX</i> .....	182
<i>Canto XXX</i> .....	188
<i>Canto XXXI</i> .....	194
<i>Canto XXXII</i> .....	200
<i>Canto XXXIII</i> .....	206

## Canto I

The glory of Him who moveth everything  
Doth penetrate the universe, and shine  
In one part more and in another less.

Within that heaven which most his light receives  
Was I, and things beheld which to repeat  
Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends;

Because in drawing near to its desire  
Our intellect ingulphs itself so far,  
That after it the memory cannot go.

Truly whatever of the holy realm  
I had the power to treasure in my mind  
Shall now become the subject of my song.

O good Apollo, for this last emprise  
Make of me such a vessel of thy power  
As giving the beloved laurel asks!

One summit of Parnassus hitherto  
Has been enough for me, but now with both  
I needs must enter the arena left.

Enter into my bosom, thou, and breathe  
As at the time when Marsyas thou didst draw  
Out of the scabbard of those limbs of his.

O power divine, lend'st thou thyself to me  
So that the shadow of the blessed realm  
Stamped in my brain I can make manifest,

Thou'lt see me come unto thy darling tree,  
And crown myself thereafter with those leaves  
Of which the theme and thou shall make me worthy.

So seldom, Father, do we gather them  
For triumph or of Caesar or of Poet,  
(The fault and shame of human inclinations,)

That the Peneian foliage should bring forth  
Joy to the joyous Delphic deity,  
When any one it makes to thirst for it.

A little spark is followed by great flame;  
Perchance with better voices after me  
Shall prayer be made that Cyrrha may respond!

To mortal men by passages diverse  
Uprises the world's lamp; but by that one  
Which circles four uniteth with three crosses,

With better course and with a better star  
Conjoined it issues, and the mundane wax  
Tempers and stamps more after its own fashion.

Almost that passage had made morning there  
And evening here, and there was wholly white  
That hemisphere, and black the other part,

When Beatrice towards the left-hand side  
I saw turned round, and gazing at the sun;  
Never did eagle fasten so upon it!

And even as a second ray is wont  
To issue from the first and reascend,  
Like to a pilgrim who would fain return,

Thus of her action, through the eyes infused  
In my imagination, mine I made,  
And sunward fixed mine eyes beyond our wont.

There much is lawful which is here unlawful  
Unto our powers, by virtue of the place  
Made for the human species as its own.

Not long I bore it, nor so little while  
But I beheld it sparkle round about  
Like iron that comes molten from the fire;

And suddenly it seemed that day to day  
Was added, as if He who has the power  
Had with another sun the heaven adorned.

With eyes upon the everlasting wheels  
Stood Beatrice all intent, and I, on her  
Fixing my vision from above removed,

Such at her aspect inwardly became  
As Glaucus, tasting of the herb that made him  
Peer of the other gods beneath the sea.

To represent transhumanise in words  
Impossible were; the example, then, suffice  
Him for whom Grace the experience reserves.

If I was merely what of me thou newly  
Createdst, Love who governest the heaven,  
Thou knowest, who didst lift me with thy light!

When now the wheel, which thou dost make eternal  
Desiring thee, made me attentive to it  
By harmony thou dost modulate and measure,

Then seemed to me so much of heaven enkindled  
By the sun's flame, that neither rain nor river  
E'er made a lake so widely spread abroad.

The newness of the sound and the great light  
Kindled in me a longing for their cause,  
Never before with such acuteness felt;

Whence she, who saw me as I saw myself,  
To quiet in me my perturbed mind,  
Opened her mouth, ere I did mine to ask,

And she began: "Thou makest thyself so dull  
With false imagining, that thou seest not  
What thou wouldst see if thou hadst shaken it off.

Thou art not upon earth, as thou believest;  
But lightning, fleeing its appropriate site,  
Ne'er ran as thou, who thitherward returnest."

If of my former doubt I was divested  
By these brief little words more smiled than spoken,  
I in a new one was the more ensnared;

And said: "Already did I rest content  
From great amazement; but am now amazed  
In what way I transcend these bodies light."

Whereupon she, after a pitying sigh,  
Her eyes directed tow'rds me with that look  
A mother casts on a delirious child;

And she began: "All things whate'er they be  
Have order among themselves, and this is form,  
That makes the universe resemble God.

Here do the higher creatures see the footprints  
Of the Eternal Power, which is the end  
Whereto is made the law already mentioned.

In the order that I speak of are inclined  
All natures, by their destinies diverse,  
More or less near unto their origin;

Hence they move onward unto ports diverse  
O'er the great sea of being; and each one  
With instinct given it which bears it on.

This bears away the fire towards the moon;  
This is in mortal hearts the motive power  
This binds together and unites the earth.

Nor only the created things that are  
Without intelligence this bow shoots forth,  
But those that have both intellect and love.

The Providence that regulates all this  
Makes with its light the heaven forever quiet,  
Wherein that turns which has the greatest haste.

And thither now, as to a site decreed,  
Bears us away the virtue of that cord  
Which aims its arrows at a joyous mark.

True is it, that as oftentimes the form  
Accords not with the intention of the art,  
Because in answering is matter deaf,

So likewise from this course doth deviate  
Sometimes the creature, who the power possesses,  
Though thus impelled, to swerve some other way,

(In the same wise as one may see the fire  
Fall from a cloud,) if the first impetus  
Earthward is wrested by some false delight.

Thou shouldst not wonder more, if well I judge,  
At thine ascent, than at a rivulet  
From some high mount descending to the lowland.

Marvel it would be in thee, if deprived  
Of hindrance, thou wert seated down below,  
As if on earth the living fire were quiet."

Thereat she heavenward turned again her face.

## Canto II

O Ye, who in some pretty little boat,  
Eager to listen, have been following  
Behind my ship, that singing sails along,

Turn back to look again upon your shores;  
Do not put out to sea, lest peradventure,  
In losing me, you might yourselves be lost.

The sea I sail has never yet been passed;  
Minerva breathes, and pilots me Apollo,  
And Muses nine point out to me the Bears.

Ye other few who have the neck uplifted  
Betimes to th' bread of Angels upon which  
One liveth here and grows not sated by it,

Well may you launch upon the deep salt-sea  
Your vessel, keeping still my wake before you  
Upon the water that grows smooth again.

Those glorious ones who unto Colchos passed  
Were not so wonder-struck as you shall be,  
When Jason they beheld a ploughman made!

The con-created and perpetual thirst  
For the realm deiform did bear us on,  
As swift almost as ye the heavens behold.

Upward gazed Beatrice, and I at her;  
And in such space perchance as strikes a bolt  
And flies, and from the notch unlocks itself,

Arrived I saw me where a wondrous thing  
Drew to itself my sight; and therefore she  
From whom no care of mine could be concealed,

Towards me turning, blithe as beautiful,  
Said unto me: "Fix gratefully thy mind  
On God, who unto the first star has brought us."

It seemed to me a cloud encompassed us,  
Luminous, dense, consolidate and bright  
As adamant on which the sun is striking.

Into itself did the eternal pearl  
Receive us, even as water doth receive  
A ray of light, remaining still unbroken.

If I was body, (and we here conceive not  
How one dimension tolerates another,  
Which needs must be if body enter body,)

More the desire should be enkindled in us  
That essence to behold, wherein is seen  
How God and our own nature were united.

There will be seen what we receive by faith,  
Not demonstrated, but self-evident  
In guise of the first truth that man believes.

I made reply: "Madonna, as devoutly  
As most I can do I give thanks to Him  
Who has removed me from the mortal world.

But tell me what the dusky spots may be  
Upon this body, which below on earth  
Make people tell that fabulous tale of Cain?"

Somewhat she smiled; and then, "If the opinion  
Of mortals be erroneous," she said,  
"Where'er the key of sense doth not unlock,

Certes, the shafts of wonder should not pierce thee  
Now, forasmuch as, following the senses,  
Thou seest that the reason has short wings.

But tell me what thou think'st of it thyself."  
And I: "What seems to us up here diverse,  
Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense."

And she: "Right truly shalt thou see immersed  
In error thy belief, if well thou hearest  
The argument that I shall make against it.

Lights many the eighth sphere displays to you  
Which in their quality and quantity  
May noted be of aspects different.

If this were caused by rare and dense alone,  
One only virtue would there be in all  
Or more or less diffused, or equally.

Virtues diverse must be perforce the fruits  
Of formal principles; and these, save one,  
Of course would by thy reasoning be destroyed.