

THE CHRIST COLLOQUY Andrew Grattan

BOOK I *Commedia*

In Canto XVIII, of the new *Commedia* of 2013 and today, Virgil and Dante, guide Andrew, 'novus', the new poet, through the wood of the suicides, newly composed of monastery choirwoods from every monastery in the world, the colour and condition of each wood (echoing the 'selva oscura' of 1300, and the 'selva opaca' of 2013), reflecting the current intellectual, political and spiritual state of the Roman Catholic Church globally. There, at the very centre of the wood, Dante tells Andrew, that he is to be given the 'Petrine Key' to The Western Canon.

CANTO XVIII 93-112

A voice arose:

'Those who were men, are stumps and shoots,
Because, we were not the vine of Jesus.
The green shoots bleed blood. Do you not

Know, that it is Pier of the bow-vine, who sings,
He whose happy honour was turned to sorrow?'
'He sings 'of the wood,' who sings the *logos*

And deconstructs it'. 'So, you unpick my truest *Commedia*
Heart now – you who were snaffled out the yew?
That darkest wood is for blood maturity, and,

Is red – that Adonai is for white souls,
As English cross-wood, they have had
There and abides for those who still seek and ask.

Pier, did defend himself, and talked, as
Carmelite Foster schooled you to Latinate speak.
And, new shoots grow, as the suspended rectangles

Of those novitiate stairs, did reclimb, out of that white spiral staircase
Within that Institute, to see that lovely Librarian's holy face. I, who hold
Il Convivio table-keys, say see, Library, you are to be given, the Petrine

Key to the Western Canon'.