

THE CHRIST COLLOQUY Andrew Grattan

Book I *Commedia*

CANTO VII I-76

And, wilted and dropped then, in utter, divine abandonment
Of sorrow, the fractured heart of the Dantean; and,
Glancing at me, then, he said, 'Look at me, you who

Are the fragility of the *fractum*, - the broken *Missa* host
- I share some of the Crucified too, that I asked to
Reundertake this terrible journey, that not even

The presence of Beatrice, can make less bitter
In my mouth, the green herb of humility that
I must ingest, to see my own work desecrated, by your

Tantalising *novus*; and I hear something of a love for my love
Does sustain, -the fruit unconcupiscenced – spiritual,
Creating-birth of a holy heavenly essence, - my eldest?'

And Dante sighed to Virgil, 'Must the journey really
Be replicated, and must the self-same souls be re-
Encountered?' 'Yes, for it is the will of the Christ;

For two continue in the holy monastery, though he was there first,
A white-faced babe and a pure one, and blank in holy awe, before
Holy God, before the holy choir-benches, in the holy monastery'.

'But, this Englishman does not even accept me as his master, Publius,
His master, is some seventeenth century poet, who
Penned 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso', so far, from

'The New Life', as I will call it plainly, in his dialect'.
'Yes, but he has had no master for a decalogue
Of years, and has suffered so much, no art he thought

To be out of him, so crushed has been he – but, a sacred
Visage has prompted him to his pen solemn, and the
Sacred visits two to that place, where he was tormented

Again – he sued for monastery-entry, but was too wounded
By the cuts and sores, he bears from the white wood
That he loved so much, for the valley, of Hume Yorkshire

Sacredness'. 'But, my 'Comedy' is my best half, Virgil,
Where we screwed down to the left, tightening down, to
The polar pits?' 'He is 'of the wood', Durante, and for his

Wounds, - for right'. 'So', Dante said, and glancing back
At me with his chin thrust out, beckoned, 'Come,
'Of the wood', a holy love for the Crucifix, is all that sustains

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Me, as I stand before that grave, unholy message again:
'Through me you go into the city of weeping.
Through me you go into eternal pain. Through me,

You go among lost souls. Justice inspired
My exalted Creator. I am a creature of the holiest
Power, of highest Wisdom, and of primal Love;

Before me, there was nothing
That was created, except
Eternal things, - I am eternal. So,

Abandon hope, all you who enter here'.
Had, brazen signed the entrance to that grim doorway,
Before which our trinity of purposing now

Sought further purpose, but before that ban
Of memory, Dante assuming some guidance, with
The unquick Virgil, secondary as of a *senex*

To illumine any of a wronging proscription,
His glance, the willing of canto compress,
And my unfamiliar thirding of follow. And,

As if reading the shadowing doubts within my
Enlarging presence, Virgil looked smart back
At me: 'Be not alarmed, that he may place you

Among the rank weak and pusillanimous,
Or uncommitted, though wretched foolish
Your desires, fierce free in your fro-oscillations,

Or, in the 'Why, my Church?' Should speed your soul
To the supple of unfallen, original surrender, as an
Untainted of the newborn christened, for, as you know,

Here lies those who have lost the benefit of the intellect;
Neither infamy nor praise here, and the lost angels;
Yours was to be too over-burdened, ever imagining

Yourself to be the inchime of that Irish spirit
Who babbled up to Heaven, the hell of his 'Finnegans Wake'.
Your once pure, chrysalis of soul, is now, delicate in-

Carve of the Holy Spirit, jumble-tumble of language,
Deformity of speech, is the preserve of those who do not
Inbreathe the *logos*, - that is why the Crucified God

Has incardinated you to '*logos* lover', of the Word of God
Your entire life, and now its most blessed canon guardian –
Hoc testamentum tuum est – 'Confessio

Amantis', verbum Dei'.