

THE CHRIST COLLOQUY Andrew Grattan

Book I *Commedia*

CANTO XXIII I-31

My heart leapt, as the Baptist child, had leapt in womb
Of Elizabeth, at cousin Mary's, Hebron month visitation.
'You talk of Florence, Durante, may I now speak,

Of Florence, too?' 'Pax, Andrea. When I saw Bice, once,
On those mud strewn canyon-ways, she mistook my
Ministrations in misintent, meeting, pulling away her

Carriage, among her overseeing, maidenly accompaniment;
I held *eclesia* in my eye, and holy statehood for Firenze,
That I could be, as righteous *rex*, or, wise abbot for that city,

In flat deafness of trecento, one of those six priors;
And so, I became, before *dura et aspera*, a *Monarchy* prior,
Who, in sweetest lassitude, pulls the reins together.

Exiled, from that florin city, Christ Jesus, in his justice scales,
Did set my daughter spiritual, into English embryo, at
Meeting of her courting parents, in their holy wedded union.

And though, at Santa Croce, they did spank out late,
A statue of me, latish, posthumous and in dry, arch
Reconcile, where four Marzocco lions base a pedestal,

To match the four, who recorded the good news, and
Ravenna sculptor, Pazzi, cut the stone, as Ravenna harboured
Me in exile, as I would bid them, and Ragazzini's friars too, to

Cherish again, the new life, of the living poet, *veltro*,
She reigns there now, and untouchable, my daughter Child
April. The city has flounced out fealty, to Beatrice and I,

Coining in sesterccii, but Florence is no more ours, but
Yours and April's, Andrew and April in truest courtly love;
For we, will be stuck out, all records municipal, and archives,

Where people still stroll today, in giddy tourist lines,
To see centre, of our over-ripe romance dilating;
For now, see how, the exiled English monk, *liber-knots*,

With the English librarian, in *The Christ Colloquy*'.