

# THE DIVINE COMEDY

OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY

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## **Inferno - Canto 1 - Shaw**

In the midtime of life I found myself  
Within a dusky wood my way was lost.  
And it is hard to tell how wild that wood  
And rough, and hostile was, for in my thought  
A deep-engendered fear renews itself,  
Which, but a little bitterer, were death.  
Yet still, to dwell upon the good I found,  
I must tell now what other things I saw.  
I can give no account how I came there;  
Such slumber weighed upon me at the point  
Whereat I must have left the rightful path.  
Ere long, before a mountain's foot I stood  
Where the low fearful valley which had sent  
Dread through my heart, was ended, and I looked  
On high, and saw his mighty shoulder clad  
Already in that sunlight which leads forth  
The steps of man on every road of man.  
Then was the fear a little quieted  
Which had lain deep within my heart all night,  
Making me spend the hours in grief and care.  
And as a man whose strife from out the flood  
Has brought him to the bank, turns thereupon  
With labouring breath, to see the hungry water,  
So turned my spirit, still in mood of flight,  
To look again upon that pass of awe  
Which no man yet hath left behind and lives.  
My weary body being now reposed,  
I urged my steps against the barren steep,  
Staying my weight on either hindmost foot  
When, the ascent but scarce begun, outsprang  
A panther light, and lithe, with spotted hide,  
Nor fled before my gaze, but rather seemed  
To threaten hindrance of my further course  
So constantly, I well-nigh turned again.  
But it was early morning, and the sun  
Moved up the sky with the companion stars  
Allotted him when Divine Love at first  
Sent forth those splendours: I had cause for hope  
In the fresh dawn and the fair season, eyeing  
Also the tawny spots of the sleek beast.

Yet this could not prevent another fear  
 When straight against me came a haughty lion  
 With head aloft, and hunger in his eyes,  
 Making the air to shake: and a she-wolf  
 Crept low behind him, who, in leanness full  
 Of deadly craving, had already caused  
 Much folk to live in greedy misery.  
 The sight of her oppressed me with such dread,  
 I lost all hope of conquering the height.  
 As is a man who, having won his wealth,  
 Now meets the time that melts it all away,  
 And mourns in every thought and sadly moves,  
 The beast made me; destroying all my peace  
 Little by little; driving me all day  
 Back, and toward the silent set of sun.  
 Worn out, I came to a low place and there  
 Was offered to my eyes a form which seemed  
 Silenced by length of silence; and I cried  
 Through the great desert to him:  
 "Pity me, O man, O spirit, whatsoe'er thou art!"  
 He answered me: "No man: I once was man,  
 And Lombards were my parents, Mantuans both.  
 To Julius' rule belonged my birth, though late;  
 I lived in Rome beneath Augustus; good,  
 Although his time owned false and fancied gods."  
 "Oh! art thou Virgil, and that fount which yields  
 So full a stream of melody in speech?"  
 Shame-faced I said: "The honour and the light  
 Of other poets? Wilt thou count it aught  
 That I have studied long, and longer loved  
 To seek, thy volumes? Master mine thou art;  
 My author too, from whom alone I learned  
 To weave the words that, woven, bring me honour.  
 Thou seest the wolf who forced me down the hill,  
 O let thy wisdom save me from her jaws;  
 She makes me tremble through each pulse and vein."  
 He saw I wept, and said: "Another way  
 Will be appointed thine if thou dost wish  
 To flee this gloomy place; because the beast  
 Who caused thy cry lets no one pass her path,  
 But worries him with terror till she kills.  
 Her nature is so savage, and so vile,

That she can never get her fill of blood,  
But finds fresh hunger as she finds fresh prey  
And to strange sires she drops strange brood, and more  
Will bring, until Can Grande comes, that hound  
Of strength to worry her. His life shall be  
Neither for fruits of earth, nor force of iron,  
But for the sake of wisdom, love and truth.  
From Feltro unto Feltro shall he rule,  
And safety give to lowly Italy,  
For whom Camilla, virgin, died; and Turnus  
Euryalus, and Nisus, of their wounds.  
The wolf from every city shall he chase  
Until he drive her back into the hell  
Whence Envy called her forth. But now I think  
For thee, perceiving thou must follow me  
And I will be thy guide and lead thee hence  
Through an eternal space where thou wilt hear  
A hopeless wail, and see the sorrowing spirits  
Of long-past ages mourn their second death.  
Then thou shalt see those sufferers content,  
Although in flame, because they hope to come  
When it may be so, to the blessed folk.  
But if to these thou wouldest rise, thou must  
Be led by spirit worthier far than I  
With her I leave thee when I part from thee.  
For He Who reigns above, and governs there,  
Since I was not a follower of His laws  
Allows me not to guide into His city.  
He rules o'er all, and there He reigns in bliss;  
There is His citadel and lofty throne;  
And happy they He chooses to be there."  
Then I to him: "O Poet, I beseech thee  
By that All-gracious One thou didst not know,  
So that I flee this ill and worse beside,  
Lead me as thou hast said, where I may see  
St. Peter's gate, and those whose sorrows thou  
Dost speak of." Then he moved, I followed him.

## Inferno - Canto 2 - Shaw

The day was going: twilight's shadowy air  
Withdrew the many creatures upon earth  
From their fatigues, and I alone addressed  
Myself to bear the struggle of the road,  
And with it, that of sorrow; which my mind  
Shall trace again with due exactitude.  
Now aid me, lofty spirit of the Muses  
O mind, when thou hast written what I saw,  
Thy noble temper shall appear therein.  
I took the word: "O poet-guide, look well  
Whether my virtue has sufficient strength,  
Ere thou dost trust me on this lofty pass.  
Thou said'st that Silvius' father, yet unfreed  
From law of death, to the immortal world  
Went, and was there with all his faculties.  
So, if the Mighty Enemy of ill,  
Foreknowing all the lofty consequence  
That was to spring through him, and who, and what,  
Was thus divinely courteous; man must needs,  
Having a mind, applaud the high design.  
Aeneas was of alma Roma, chosen  
By Heaven itself to nurse her, and to rule,  
That she and her great empire should stand fast  
To be the holy seat of Peter's sons;  
And in his journey that thou tell'st us of  
He learned great things which truly brought about  
His victories: and the Papal robes for them.  
God's chosen vessel also on that journey  
Went, to bring back a strengthening of the faith  
Which is the first step on salvation's way.  
But I, how should I go? Who yield me passage?  
Aeneas I am not, nor am I Paul;  
Nor I, nor other could adjudge me worthy;  
And if I fail to attempt the way, it is  
Because I fear it might prove folly to me;  
Thou, wise, canst understand ere I can reason."  
As he who will not now what once he would,  
Changing his purpose when the new thoughts come,  
Breaks from his first beginning, and turns back,  
I made myself upon that dark hillside;

Since in my thought I ceased from undertaking  
 What with such haste I had begun to do.  
 "If I have heard thy words aright," then said  
 That shadowy form which wrapped the mighty mind,  
 Some harmful sloth must hang upon thy spirit,  
 Such as has many times beset a man  
 Making him turn from honoured enterprise  
 Like a scared horse that sees wrong in the dark.  
 I will tell now, to free thee from this fear,  
 What first I heard to make me pity thee,  
 And why I came. I was among the spirits  
 Who lie becalmed, and cannot steer for heaven,  
 Though safe from blasts of hell; and I was called  
 By one so blest and beautiful I begged her  
 Straight to command me; and her eyes were shining  
 More than the sun, and she began to say,  
 After her manner, in an angel voice  
 So full and sweet: "O Mantuan spirit kind,  
 Whose fame lasts, and will last upon the earth  
 Long as she rolls through many a distant age;  
 A friend of mine, good luck was not his friend,  
 Is stayed in a wild desert, and his path  
 Obstructed, and he turns him back, and I,  
 By that which I heard say of him in Heaven,  
 Fear he is so disheartened that too late  
 I may have risen to help him. Wilt thou go  
 And with thine eloquence, and aught thou canst,  
 Assist him in a safe escape, that so  
 I may be comforted for him? for I  
 Am Beatrice who am sending thee.  
 Fain will I get me back from whence I came,  
 But it was love who sent, and made me speak.  
 And when I stand before my Lord and King  
 I'll praise, and praise thee in His gracious ear."  
 So she left speaking, and I answered her:  
 'Lady, in thine own person only 'tis,  
 Mankind surpasses all beneath the moon.  
 Obeying thee delights me; and fulfilled  
 Were thy behest, 'twould seem I had delayed.  
 No more need'st tell me of thy wish, but say  
 The cause why thou wert not retained above,  
 But couldst come down to this restricted spot,

From that full space to which thy glowing heart  
 Pants to return.' "Briefly," she said, "I will  
 Grant thee thy deep request; it was because  
 I had no fear of entering this place.  
 One only ought to fear ill powers that hurt,  
 And nothing else: what else can cause a fear?  
 I am so made by grace of God that flame  
 Of burning cannot seize, nor pain approach me.  
 There is a lady in the Heavens, Clemenza,  
 Who mourns that hindrance to remove the which  
 I send thee; and her gentle strength is such  
 She can prevail o'er judgment's very self.  
 And she called Lucia having right to call,  
 And said : 'Thy faithful servant is in need  
 Of thee, and I commend him to thee now.'  
 Lucia, the foe of every cruel thing  
 Then came to me who sat by Rachel saying:  
 'O Beatrice, thou true praise of God,  
 Why does not thou help him who loved thee so?  
 And rose above all common men for thee?  
 Dost thou not hear his pitiful complaint?  
 Dost thou not see him struggling in a flood  
 Severer than the ocean?' Never a man  
 Fled swifter before ill, nor ran to good,  
 Than I forsook my seat of bliss, and came  
 Trusting in thee, and thy persuasive word  
 Which honours thee, and all who hear it too.'  
 When she had reasoned with me thus she turned  
 Her brilliant tearful eyes upon me, so  
 To make me come more quickly to thy side.  
 I came to thee; I kept thee from the beast  
 Which blocked thee all the passage of the hill.  
 Now, what thy mind? Why, why dost linger here  
 Why harbour cowardice within thy heart?  
 Why not be bold, and act courageously,  
 Since three such Maids of Heaven have cared for thee  
 And all my words are promising thee good?"  
 As flowers, to the frosty night air closed,  
 And bowed; when now the sun breaks out upon them  
 Rise on their stalks and open, so my strength  
 Rose from its failure, and so good a courage  
 Flowed to my heart, that I spoke out at once

Like a free man: "Oh! she is Pity's soul  
To succour me, and thou vast kind to come  
So quickly, answering her words of truth  
Thou hast disposed my heart with firm desire  
To entertain anew its first resolve.  
Go on: one will alone is in us two,  
Thou leader mine, thou Master and thou lord,"  
I said, and as he moved I followed him,  
And entered on a high and wooded track.

### **Inferno - Canto 3 - Shaw**

“Through me is passage to the city of grief  
Passage through me to everlasting sorrow;  
Passage among the people sunk in sin.  
The rule of justice measured my foundation;  
The power of God, high Wisdom, Love primaeval  
Made me. Before me no created thing  
Was made, save things eternal: and I stand  
For ever. Let go hope, who enter here.”  
I saw these words writ dark above a gate,  
And said: “O Master, this is hard to read.”  
He answered me as speaks a prudent man:  
“Every suspicion must be smothered here;  
And cowardice flung off as a thing dead.  
We now are at the place I told thee of  
Where thou wilt see the suffering folk who are  
Lost to the good, which is the goal of spirits.”  
And since he put his hand on mine, and since  
His face was calm, I felt his strength; he led  
Me on within these secret things of God.  
Now, sighs and weeping, wailing and deep groans  
Filled all the starless air with mournful echo;  
And, entering, I shed tears for all this woe.  
Strange words and phrases, both of grief and wrath,  
And hands struck in lamenting, made a tumult  
Which seemed to whirl within the timeless dusk,  
As sand is whirled within a circling wind.  
And I, my mind yet girt in ignorance,  
Asked: “Master, what is all this that I hear?  
“Who are these people vanquished thus by pain?”  
He said: “This misery holds those who lived  
Neither for good nor bad, for praise nor blame,  
And they are mingled with those faithless angels  
Who were not true to God, nor dared rebel,  
But merely lived to satisfy themselves.  
Heaven will not have these; they would dim her light.  
Hell will not have them; they would bring no credit,  
Too lukewarm to aspire to pride of ill.”  
I said: “But, Master, what can weigh so hard  
Upon them that they mourn so grievously?”  
He answered: “I will tell thee very shortly.

These have no longer any hope of death  
And their blind life is so exceeding base  
All other life seems enviable to them.  
The world will never mention them again;  
Mercy and justice both alike disdain them.  
Speak no more of them; look, and pass them by."  
And as I looked a banner fled on,  
Whirling upon itself, and seemed to scorn  
A pause: and following it were countless folk.  
I dreamed not death could muster such a train;  
And when I could distinguish them a little  
I recognised the shadowy form of him  
Who made in cowardice the great refusal.  
And then I understood, and I was sure  
These were the tribes of worthless who could please  
Nor God nor Satan, nor, we count, they lived,  
Their life being such: and as they passed it seemed  
That they were naked, and that flies and wasps  
Pricked them, and stung them, streaked their face with blood,  
Which mingled with their tears, and running down,  
Was seized by worms which writhed among their feet.  
Then, gazing still, I saw a mighty river;  
His banks were thick with crowds: "O Master! grant  
Knowledge of these," I said; "and why they swarm  
In haste to cross the river, as I see  
They do, through the dim light." And he replied  
"This shall be told thee when we stay our steps  
Upon the banks of great dark Acheron."  
I was abashed, and cast my eyes down, fearing  
My words had troubled him, and did not speak  
Till we had reached the river, and beheld  
Approach us in a boat a grey old man.  
"Woe to you," cried he, "spirits sunk in sin!  
Ye have no hope of ever seeing Heaven  
I come to take you to the further bank,  
To everlasting darkness, frost or fire.  
And thou, live soul of man, what doest here?  
Out from among these dead!" But when he saw  
I did not go, he added, "Thou canst land  
By other passage, and a lighter boat  
May suit to carry thee." My leader to him:  
"Vex not thyself, O Charon; He allows

This, with whom will and power are linked in one.  
Ask thou no further." Then a silence fell  
Upon the hardened face of the old boatman  
Of the dark ghastly flood; around whose eyes  
Flames, as of bale-fire, flickered ceaselessly.  
But when they heard his ruthless speech to them  
The weary naked spirits paler grew,  
Gnashing their teeth, and crying out in curses  
Upon their God, their kind, their race, their parents,  
And time, and circumstance of ruined life;  
With heavy weeping they drew close together  
Nearing that goal of all who fear not God.  
The demon Charon with his glance of flame  
Commands them, and collects them; with his oar  
Striking, if any miserable hang back.  
As in the autumn thickly drop the leaves  
When every branch gives up her spoil to earth,  
So the bad seed of Adam, one by one,  
Drops down the bank like birds to the decoy;  
And thus they vanish on the dreary flood  
Yet, ere they land, another troop is waiting.  
"My son," said the kind Master then to me;  
Who die in wrath of God must all meet here;  
And divine Justice spurs the guilty mind,  
That they both dread and long to cross the river.  
But no good spirit can be called this way,  
And Charon therefore carped at thee; but now  
Thou canst perceive the bearing of his words."  
With this the gloomy country trembled so  
That terror covered me with sweat, and o'er  
The coasts of woe a wind of darkness blew;  
One ray of scarlet light flashed out: I fell,  
My mind o'ercome as if by sleep of doom.

## **Inferno - Canto 4 - Shaw**

Loud thunder broke the sleep within my brain;  
I found my consciousness like one awaked  
With violence, and standing up, I turned  
My eyes refreshed, around, and looking hard  
Strove to find out what place I could be in.  
And it was true; I was upon the edge  
Of that deep valley, and abyss of dolour,  
In which an endless woe makes ghostly thunder.  
So deep, and dark, and cloudy was the valley  
Nothing could I discern within it, though  
I sought with a fixed gaze. "Lo, the blind world  
To which we shall descend;" the Poet said,  
Paler than was his wont: "I will go first,  
Thou second." I who saw his face was wan:  
"How shall I come, if thou go first in fear,  
Thou, who dost always strengthen me who faint?"  
He said: "'Tis the affliction of the people  
Down in the depth, that scores my face with pity  
Which thou erroneously dost take for fear.  
Hasten, for the long road brooks no delay."  
He set his face to go, and made me enter  
Within the first great circle that girds round  
The abyss, and here for all that I could hearken  
There was no weeping, but a vast soft sighing,  
Which was returned by all the trembling air  
Eternal. Painless sorrow was the cause,  
Embracing mighty crowds of men and women,  
Children and babes. Then the good master said:  
"Thou askest not of whom these spirits be,  
But thou must learn ere thou goest further; these  
Have done no sin, yet the good works they did  
Could not suffice; for being unbaptized  
They came not through the gate of the true faith  
And as they lived before the Christian days  
They could not worship God the way they ought.  
And I myself belong to this great flock;  
And for such failing, not for any crime,  
We are lost now, but no-wise made to suffer,  
Save that we ever live in hopeless yearning."  
My heart was seized with sorrow hearing him,

Because I knew the excellence of many  
 Who thus must live for neither bliss nor bale.  
 "Tell me, my master, tell me, O my lord,"  
 Eagerly said I, wishing to make sure  
 What says that faith which conquers every error;  
 "Came forth from hence by his own merit none,  
 Or through some other merit, to be blessed?"  
 And he, who understood my hinted thought,  
 Answered: "I had but newly reached this place,  
 When, as a victor downed, in His own time  
 There came a Person strong to save, who took  
 Adam, and Abel; Noah; Moses, giver  
 Of law; and Abraham obedient to it;  
 `Israel his son; and Israel's sons again;  
 And Rachel, to win whom he worked so hard;  
 David the king of Israel; - many more  
 He blessed, and took away; but thou shalt know  
 Before these were no human spirits saved."  
 We walked, while he was speaking, all the time  
 Within a wood; - a wood, I say, of spirits.  
 Our path was drawing to the first descent  
 When I beheld a light, which overcame  
 The hemisphere of darkness. I discerned,  
 Though yet it lay a little distance off,  
 That folk of much esteem possessed this place.  
 "Thou who respectest every science and art,  
 Who are these, held in honour thus, and kept  
 Apart from others we have seen?" And he  
 To me: "Their honourable fame on earth  
 Finds grace with Heaven, which has sent them there."  
 Then I heard voices: "Hail our highest poet,  
 Whose spirit went away, and is come back!"  
 And when the shout fell silent, four grand forms  
 Came stately to us, and their face serene  
 Held neither joy nor sorrow. Then began  
 The master kind to tell me: "Look at him  
 With sword in hand, like leader of the rest;  
 He is the mighty poet: Homer; now  
 Comes Horace of the satires; Ovid next;  
 Lucan the last; and I too share with them  
 That fair name of the shout which echoes still;  
 They honour me, and it is just they do."

So now there were assembled in my sight  
The followers of the lord of loftiest song,  
Who, like an eagle, flies above them all.  
And when they had a little talked together,  
They turned to me with sign of salutation,  
Which pleased my master, and he smiled on me  
And yet more honour they accorded me  
Giving me place in their fraternal band;  
Sixth was I in that company of skill.  
Then we went on together towards the light,  
Speaking of many things, but silence now  
Is good, as then to speak, there where I was.  
We camp beneath a great and noble castle,  
Seven times surrounded with a lofty wall;  
Outside the whole, a gently rippling river;  
We passed as on a path, and with the wise  
I entered through the seven gates: we came  
To fresh green meadows pleasant to the foot,  
And there were folk of grave and serious face;  
Authority was throned upon their brows  
But their scant speech was yet melodious.  
We drew aside as if to a recess,  
An open place, and luminous and high,  
Where every one was clearly to be seen.  
There on the soft green lawns they showed me straight  
Spirits unnumbered and magnanimous,  
Whom but to see exalted all my mind.  
I saw Electra with much company;  
Among them I knew Hector, and Aeneas:  
Caesar the falcon-eyed with warrior gaze;  
And then Penthesilea; and Camilla;  
And in another place the Latin king  
Was sitting with Lavinia; and I saw  
Brutus who chased the Tarquins; and Lucretia;  
Julia; Cornelia; Marcia; and alone  
As unaccustomed, the great Saladin.  
And lifting up my brows a little higher,  
I saw the master of the men who know  
In the wide circle of philosophers  
All honoured, all admired him alike.  
There saw I Socrates; and with him Plato  
Next Aristotle's self: Democritus

Who found a cause for the world; Diogenes;  
Thales star-wise; and Anaxagoras;  
Zeno; Empedocles; and Heraclitus.  
I saw that worthy Dioscorides  
Who searched the secret properties of nature;  
Cicero; Livy; sweet-toned Orpheus;  
And Seneca who traced out moral truth.  
And Euclid the geometer, and Ptolemy  
Who knew to foster Alexandria;  
Hippocrates, and Avicenna, both;  
Averroes the Arab, who explained  
The lore of Aristotle; Galieno; -  
I cannot speak of every one in full,  
My subject is so vast it drives me on  
And speech must many times fall short of fact.  
Into two parts the group of six divides;  
My wise conductor leads another way;  
And out of quiet into troubled air  
I come, into a place where is no light.

## Inferno - Canto 5 - Shaw

The first one passed, I reached the second circle,  
Which girds a smaller space, and greater sorrow,  
Compelling cries; Minos is stationed there,  
Growling and horrible, to hear, and search  
The faults of all who come; he judges, sends  
Them each one hence, as he entwines himself.  
I say, that when the false-bred soul before him  
Stands, it confesses; and he, knowing sin,  
Sees to what place in Hell he ought to send it,  
And wraps his serpent tail about himself  
As many times as grades it must go down.  
And there are many always stand before him  
Going in turn to wrath; they tell, they hear,  
And then they all are gone. Minos to me,  
Stopping a moment in his acts of office;  
"O thou who comest to this dismal inn!  
'Ware how thou enterest, and whom thou trustest,  
Let not the passage amply wide deceive thee."  
My leader unto him: "Why criest thou thus?  
Hinder him not upon his fatal road.  
His entrance here is ordered by that will  
Which weds with power: thou need'st ask no more."  
Now in my ears the notes of sorrow fresh  
Began to wail; I came where was much weeping;  
I came into a lightless place which roared  
Deep like the sea in wrathful tempest raised,  
When from all quarters meet the winds in battle.  
The whirlwinds of Gehenna, never resting,  
Gather the spirits in their circling sweep,  
Striking, and rolling them within the vortex.  
When these draw near its fury they lament,  
Groaning, and cursing 'gainst the power of God.  
You understand that to this penalty  
All are consigned who sinned against their bodies,  
Yielding their reason to the call of flesh.  
As upon starlings in the winter winging  
In crowded flights, so strikes the wind these spirits,  
And here, and there, and up, and down, it sends them.  
And as the cranes come, making dismal music,  
In lengthened strings along a dreary sky,

So saw I come lamenting sore, the spirits  
In doleful troop; and then I said: "My master,  
What folk are these the tempests punish thus?"  
"The first of these whose story thou dost ask,"  
He said, "was a great Empress of great learning,  
But given to all vice, and made it legal  
To sanction her own sin: Semiramis  
The wife of Ninus ; who succeeded him,  
And held the land the Sultan now restrains.  
This other broke her faith to Sicheus' ashes,  
And killed herself for love; this, Cleopatra,  
Sank in her luxury." Then I saw Helen  
For whom such guilt so long broke forth on earth;  
Paris; and Tristan ; and a thousand more  
He showed, and named them, pointing with his finger;  
And all their lives had been cut off for love.  
And after I had heard my teacher name  
Ladies and knights of former days, I felt  
Almost despair, so pity conquered me.  
But I began: "O Poet, I would gladly  
Speak with those two who go together close,  
So light upon the wind." And he to me:  
Watch when they come the nearest; pray them then  
By their own love, and they will come." At once  
As the wind bears them near, I lift my voice:  
"O troubled spirits, come to us and speak  
If none deny you." And as doves to call  
Of kindness, with wide steady wings come gliding  
Through the air, wishful for the quiet nest;  
So these from out the troop where Dido was,  
Came through the dusky and malignant air  
Urged by the strength of kindness in my cry.  
"O gracious and benign and living body  
Coming to visit us through all this dark;  
We, who left bloody stains behind us, would  
If the great King of Heaven were friendly to us,  
Pray Him to give thee always peace, because  
Thou hast had pity on our pains perverse.  
Of what thou wouldest hear and wouldest speak  
We too will hear, and speak, while as the wind  
Remains a little hushed. Where Po comes down  
With all his streams to quiet in the sea,

There lies my native place, there lies Ravenna.  
Love, in a gentle heart that lights so quick  
Was kindled there by beauty of the body  
That was snatched from me; and it hurts me still  
That it was taken with such cruelty.  
Love, who lets off no loved one from re-loving,  
Bid me; who pleased the lover so, thou seest  
He leaves me not. Love led us to one death.  
But Caina waits for him who spilt our life."  
After this manner came the words to me;  
And, when I understood those wounded spirits,  
I bowed my face, and held it low so long,  
At last the Poet said: "What thinkest thou?"  
When I could answer I began: "Oh, anguish-  
How much desire, how many sweetest thoughts  
Have brought the spirits to this dolorous pass!  
I turned again towards them, and I spoke  
And said: "Francesca, thy great sufferings  
Fill me with grief, and pity unto tears;  
But tell me, how in course of such sweet sighs,  
And in what way did Love concede that thou  
Didst recognise these longings perilous?"  
She said: "There is no deeper source of pain  
Than to remember in the days of woe  
Our happy times; thy teacher knows it well.  
But if thy sympathy is set to learn  
The first deep root of love in us, I weep,  
But I will tell thee. We were pleased one day  
Reading of Lancelot, him, the thrall of love;  
We were alone, but yet we thought no harm;  
We looked, and we changed colour, in the reading  
Broken for many breaths; but at one moment  
Read of the queen's smile so desired, and kissed  
By such a love-thrilled lover, - then did he,  
Who never more from me can be divided,  
Tremble, and kiss me on the lips. The book  
And writer were as Galeotto to us;  
But yet that day we read no more in it."  
Now while one spirit said these words to me  
The other wept such deadly grief that I  
Fainted and failed as if about to die,  
And fell like a dead body on the ground.



## Inferno - Canto 6 - Shaw

When I recovered my bewildered sense,  
Which, through the griefs of these two, man, and wife  
Of his own brother-had been closed in sadness,  
New torments, new tormented, did I see  
Around me when I moved and turned, and watched.  
In the third circle am I; that of rain  
Eternal, cold, and heavy, and accursed;  
Changeless, monotonous; great hail and snow,  
Dark waters, blinding sleet come pouring down,  
Thickening the gloomy dimness of the air;  
And the earth stinks that has to drink it all.  
Cerberus, cruel beast and strange, three-throated,  
Barks houndlike at the people soaked in wet;  
Red eyes he has, foul faces, form unwieldy  
With piercing claws that seize and rend the spirits,  
Who shriek as wounded dogs do 'neath the tempest,  
Seeking from side to side a hopeless shelter,  
And turning, turning, in their misery.  
Cerberus saw us, opened his three mouths,  
Baring his fangs, yet stood as if he trembled:  
And then my teacher, stretching to his utmost,  
Filled both his hands with earth, and hurled it down  
Those raging throats, and as an angry dog  
Suddenly ceases threatening for a moment  
To catch the meat he hastens to devour,  
So did those beastly heads of Cerberus,  
Which stun the spirits longing to be deaf.  
We passed upon the spirits, beaten down  
By the thick rain, and put our feet upon  
Their nothingness; and yet they seemed as persons;  
So thick they lay upon the ground; but one  
Who saw us coming onward, quickly raised  
Himself, and sat and spoke to me: "O thou  
Who art led here, look if thou dost not know me!  
Thou roast grown up before I died." I answered:  
Perhaps the pain thou feelest makes thee look  
Thus unfamiliar, for I cannot think  
I ever saw thee. Tell me who thou art,  
Put in so sad a place, and punished so  
That sharper pain might yet be less offensive."

"I led a pleasant life in thine own city  
Whose envy overflows its measure now,"  
He said: "and men were wont to call me Ciacco.  
And for the prejudicial fault of greed  
They break me in this tempest, as thou seest  
Sad life, not lonely: we all fare alike."  
Seeing he would not make more words about it  
"Ciacco," I said, "thy trouble weighs on me  
So heavily it calls for shedding tears.  
But, if thou knowest, tell me what will happen  
Among the townsmen of divided Florence  
If any there be just; and what the cause  
Why disagreement has assailed her folk?"  
He said: "After long quarrel they will come  
To blood, and the wild White will chase the Black  
With grievous injury; but they will fall,  
Fifty, within three years, and Black will rise  
By strength of Charles, who now plays common friend.  
Long will he keep their heads high, holding White  
Down weeping, and subdued beneath great burdens.  
Two just men are there, recognised of none.  
Envy, and pride, and avarice are the three  
Sparks that have set on fire the heart of Florence."  
Here ceased his lamentable prophecy.  
But I said further: "Thou canst tell me more.  
Do me such grace, tell me of Farinata,  
And of Tegghaio, who were both so worthy;  
Jacopo Rusticucci, and Arigo,  
And all who set their minds to do aright.  
Tell me, where are they? Let me know it all.  
For great desire presses me to know.  
Does Heaven pleasure them? Or Hell torment them?"  
He said: "They are among the darker spirits;  
And diverse faults have dragged them to the depth  
Where if thou goest, there thou mayest find them.  
But when thou shalt be back in the sweet world  
I pray, remember me to all my friends.  
I do not answer more, I do not speak."  
He turned his eyes away, then looked again  
At me a little, bowed his head, and fell  
Among those blind ones who had scorned the light.  
My leader said to me: "They stir no more

From here, till sounds the angel's trumpet; then  
They will behold the Power they made their foe,  
And each perforce will seek his wretched grave  
To take his flesh, and his own face, again,  
And to hear judgment echoing abroad."  
We passed through the grim mingling of that storm  
And all the spirits; walking sad and slow;  
And spoke a little of the future life,  
Because I said: "Master, the judgment passed,  
Will all these suffer in the same, or greater,  
Or less degree?" He said: "Turn to thy knowledge;  
The more a thing is perfected, the more  
It feels, both good, and bad; and though this folk,  
Wretched, can ne'er be perfect, yet they grow  
In faculty, and so must grow in pain."  
We walked the curving road, and spoke much more  
Than I repeat, and came to the descent  
Where we found Pluto the great enemy.

## **Inferno - Canto 7 - Shaw**

Pluto called loud and hoarse on Satan's name;  
The kind sage, who knew all, said, comforting me:  
"Let not thy fear gain hold on thee: his power  
Cannot prevent thy going down the rock."  
He turned again to front that face enraged,  
And said: "Be silent, thou accursed wolf!  
Consume, and be consumed with thine own wrath;  
Not without cause do we descend this depth,  
Nor warrant from on high, where Michael's sword  
Took vengeance on the rebel angel's troops."  
As the full sails fall flat when breaks the mast,  
So with his terror Pluto fell to earth.  
Then we descended to the fourth great bank,  
Discovering more of the sad precipice  
That guards the evil of the universe.  
Ay! Justice of the Lord! How dost thou heap  
New toils, new pains, so many as I see!  
Why do we sin to bring this ruin on us?  
As a wave rushing o'er Charybdis meets  
And breaks upon its fellow; so it seemed  
That here the folk, as in a turning dance,  
Rushed to confront each other. From all points  
I saw them come, and more than elsewhere,  
Too many! Rolling up great stones, their chests  
Pressed hard against them, groaning, from each side  
They toiled, till the stones met and clashed together.  
"Why dost thou hold it?" "Why not let it go?"  
They cried insulting, as each turned again,  
Only to make the course once more. They went  
Over and over through the gloomy circle  
Half way, to the collision, and then back,  
Screaming a shocking chorus all the time.  
Pricked at the heart with this, I said: "My master,  
Show me what folk this is, and whether all  
At our left hand, and shaven, were once priests?"  
And he to me: "These folk were so perverse,  
In life they would not spend their wealth by rule  
Of just allotment. This their very voices  
Declare, as they return each to his point,  
Shouting the faults discrepant which divide them.

And these, whose heads are hairless on the crown,  
 Were Popes, ecclesiastics, Cardinals,  
 Over whom avarice reigned implacably."  
 "Master," I said, "I should know some of these  
 Taint with that ill." And he said: "Vain the thought:  
 The thankless life which then bemired them  
 Blackens them now beyond all recognition;  
 And when they rise again from out the grave,  
 These of clenched fist, and those of shaven head,  
 For ever they shall meet, for ever clash.  
 Bad grasp, bad gift, of this fair world's good things,  
 Has held, and brings them to this senseless strife.  
 Son, thou canst see how short the gusts do blow  
 Of all the good entrusted unto Fortune,  
 For which men entertain such gusty strife.  
 Not all the gold that lies beneath the moon,  
 Nor all these wearied spirits owned among them,  
 Could give repose to one of them." I said  
 "Master, tell more; this Fortune of thy speech,  
 What is it that it has within its grasp  
 The good things of this world?" "O foolish creatures,"  
 He said; "what harmful ignorance is yours!  
 I would my speaking might instruct you all.  
 He, whose transcendent knowledge has no bounds  
 Making the heavens, gave to them a leader,  
 So that one part to other part might shine,  
 In equal distribution of the light.  
 And so for earthly splendours he ordained  
 Such minister and leader as was fit,  
 To shift, when time fall due, the good that passes  
 From folk to folk, and from one blood to other;  
 To whom no human wits could offer hindrance;  
 That one race govern, and another languish,  
 According to the judgment of this power  
 Who hides the while like snake in meadow-grass.  
 Your wit cannot make head 'gainst hers, for she  
 Foresees, and judges, and pursues her rule  
 Like other powers commissioned from on high.  
 No truce to permutations; for she needs  
 Be quick, so quick come all to court her changes.  
 Yet this is she so often crucified  
 By those same men who ought to give her praise,

Not blame her wrongfully with evil voice.  
But she is blessed, and she heeds them not;  
Like other primal creatures she is glad,  
And turns her wheel, rejoicing as it turns.  
Son, now is time we must descend to woe  
Yet deeper. Every star is set which rose  
As we came down: to tarry is forbidden.”  
We crossed the circle to the other bank,  
Above a boiling source, which poured itself  
Through a long cut; its water was obscure,  
But not deep-coloured; we in company  
Of the grey waves, entered a dreadful way.  
This sad stream forms a marsh, which is called Styx,  
Down at the foot of the malign grey hills  
And I, who stood intent to see, beheld  
People half smothered in the grievous bog,  
Naked, with faces full of injury  
And each was fighting other, not with hands  
Alone, but head and body, feet and teeth,  
Tearing and tearing; the good master said  
“Son, these are souls of men whom anger conquered;  
And thou must learn a further truth; below  
This water there are folk in crowds who sigh,  
And make the water bubble to the top;  
As thine eye shows thee wheresoever it turns.  
Held by the mud, they say: ‘We once were sad  
In the sweet air breathed through by the bright sun,  
Hugging our gloom within us. We are sad  
Now we are plunged within this dismal swamp.’  
Thus do they gurgle in their throats, unable  
Plainly to speak.” We skirted all the marsh  
In a great curve between the wet and dry,  
Our eyes still turned on those who drank the mud;  
And finally we came beneath a tower.

## Inferno - Canto 8 - Shaw

I should have said, that ere we reached the tower  
Our eyes were raised towards its height, and saw  
Two flames as signals placed upon it; one  
Answered, from so far off we scarce could see it.  
I turned to him who knew so much, and said:  
"What does the signal mean, and the reply?  
And who are they who use it?" And he said:  
"Already on the dusky waves thou mayest  
Discover what we wait for, if the mists  
Of the marsh, steaming, do not hide it from thee."  
Never did string despatch so swift an arrow  
To cleave the air, as was a little boat  
I now saw come toward us on the water,  
Pulled by one man alone, who cried aloud,  
"Art there, fell spirit?" "Phlegyas, Phlegyas,"  
My lord addressed him; "thou dost call in vain  
This time; and hast us but to cross the pool."  
As one who feels he has been cheated, then  
Complains; was Phlegyas, in mute anger caught.  
The leader passed into the boat, and called  
For me to follow, and she only seemed  
To feel a weight when I stepped into her.  
As soon as I was there beside the leader,  
Her ancient keel began to plough the water  
More deeply than its wont. And while we ran  
Over the stagnant space, there rose a form  
Soaked from the bog, before me, and it said:  
"Now who art thou, so prematurely come?"  
"Although I come, I stay not. Who art thou  
Now made so foul?" He said: "Thou seest I weep."  
I said to him: "Then stay, and weep, and grieve,  
Accursed spirit, for I know thee well  
All filthy as thou art." At that he clutched  
The boat with his two hands. Prepared for this,  
My master thrust him off. "Away," he cried,  
Down to the other dogs." And then he put  
His arms around my neck, and kissed my face,  
And said, "O scornful spirit, blest be she  
Who carried thee. In life that man was one  
Beyond all reason proud, and goodness none

Had he, that now might keep his memory bright;  
And here his spirit rages on. How many  
Great kings there are on earth who thus shall stand,  
Like swine, within this marsh: a hideous  
Contempt the legacy they leave behind."  
Then I said: "Master, it would give me pleasure  
To see him wallow in the bog before  
We leave these waters." He said: "Ere the bank  
Comes into sight, thy wish is satisfied,  
And fit enjoyment will it be for thee."  
A little after that, I saw the torment  
And plague, the filthy people put him to;  
Such as I thank and praise the Almighty for.  
They screamed: "Have at Filippo Argenti,  
That furious spirit out of Florence." He,  
Raging at them, tore his own form in frenzy.  
We leave him here, and say no more; a wail  
Rang in my ears, whereat I gazed intent  
Toward the sound, and my good master said:  
"Son, thou art nearing now the city of Dis  
Thickly inhabited by broken souls."  
And I: "Within the valley surely I  
See plain, its tops and towers glowing red  
As in a furnace." He: "The fire eternal  
Burns there, and makes all red as thou dost see,  
In this low tract of hell." We were now come  
To the deep moats that run around the walls  
Which seemed of iron, of that deathly city;  
Yet not till we had made a lengthened round  
Our boatman cried: "Go forth! ye see the entrance."  
More than a thousand at the gates I saw,  
And all had fallen from Heaven; angrily  
They questioned: "Who is this that has not died  
Yet dares to come into the dead folk's realm?"  
And my wise master signed his wish to speak  
With them alone; and softening their disdain  
A little, they: "Then come; and let him go  
Back, if he can, to earth, who was so bold  
As enter here on his foolhardy way.  
But thou shalt prove what 'tis to stay with us,  
Who chose to bring him to this land of darkness."  
Think, reader, how my courage fell at this

Curst word. I felt I never could return.  
"Dear leader, who so many times hast brought me  
Safety, and taken me from out great peril,  
O leave me not," I said, "thus all undone!  
If they deny me to go further with thee,  
Let us retrace our steps together, quickly."  
My faithful leader answered: "Do not fear.  
Such an one opens: none can bar our way.  
Wait for me here; comfort thy wearied mind,  
And feed it with good hope. I shall not leave thee  
In this low world." And then he goes away;  
My gentle father does abandon me;  
And I am left to chance, and 'yes' and 'no'  
Are warring in my brain. I could not hear  
What words he laid before - them, but he stayed  
Not long, for every one within renewed  
The wrangling: in his face they shut the doors,  
In my lord's face, and left him standing there.  
And with his eyes upon the ground he came  
Back to me slowly, and all boldness seemed  
Gone from his brow, and with a sigh he said:  
"Who has denied to me these woeful courts?"  
And then to me: "Be not dismayed if I  
Be angered. I will vanquish this attempt  
They make within to balk us; this display  
Of insolence is no new thing to me  
They proved it once at a much greater gate,  
Which ever since has stood without a lock;  
Thyself hast seen the fatal words upon it.  
And now already, from it, down the steep,  
Passing through all the circles, without guard,  
Comes one who will throw wide the gate to us."

## Inferno - Canto 9 - Shaw

The pallor with which fear o'erspread my face  
When Virgil left me, caused him to restrain  
More quickly in his own all discomposure.  
He stood attentive like a man who listens;  
For sight could pierce but very little way  
Through the thick mist, and darkened air. He then  
Began: "This conflict must be won by us  
Unless - but help was promised - Oh, how long  
It seems to me till some one come." I marked  
He covered one beginning with another,  
Which came with different words, but still they made  
Me fear, though perhaps I took the broken speech  
To have worse meaning than it really had.  
"Into the depth of this sad tomb have any,  
From the first circle, come, whose only pain  
Was having hope cut off?" I asked of him.  
"Seldom," he said, "have any of us made  
The journey I now take. But once before  
Have I been here myself. I was conjured  
By harsh Erichtho, who could call a spirit  
Back to its body. But a little while  
My body was left empty, when she caused  
That I should come within these very walls,  
And fetch a spirit up from Judas' circle.  
Which is the darkest, lowest, of them all,  
Furthest from Heaven and the sun. But thou  
Be easy, for I know the way. This marsh  
Breathing so foul, engirds the sorrowing city  
Where now we cannot enter without anger."  
He told me more, but I forget it. Drawn  
Were now my eyes to the red turret top,  
From which there darted up three things of hell,  
As it were women of blood colour, girt  
With greenish hydras; serpents through their hair  
Binding their dreadful temples. Then he said  
Knowing these grim slaves of the Queen of grief,  
"See the Erinnyes, the terrible;  
Megaera on the left; and on the right  
Alecto weeping; and Tisiphone  
Between them." He was silent while they tore

Their breasts, and clapped their hands, and cried out loud  
- I pressed myself to Virgil's side in fear -  
"Medusa, come! and we will turn him quick  
To stone," all three cried, looking down at us.  
"We took revenge when Theseus' self assailed us."  
"Turn round,- and keep thy face hid, ere the Gorgon  
Looks out, for if thou see her nevermore  
Canst thou go hence," the master said, and he  
Turned me, and trusted not alone my hands,  
But with his own wide spread he hid my face.  
Ye of sane minds, consider well the teaching  
Hidden beneath the veil of these strange lines.  
And now, above the turbid waves, there came  
A swell of awful sound that shook the banks  
As it had been a wind impetuous  
From storms opposing, which with no restraint  
Bows all the woods, and tears the branches off,  
Flings them away in whirls of dust; the while  
Before it every living creature flees.  
He freed my eyes. "Now look with all thy might,"  
He said, "over that troubled ageless foam  
Where the smoke hangs most acrid." There, like frogs  
That loosen all their clusters to escape  
Before the water serpent, till at last  
They heap themselves upon the shore, I saw  
Numbers of these waste spirits crowd before  
One who came swiftly on, I know not how,  
But came dry-footed o'er the Stygian bog.  
He waved his left hand often at his lips,  
Stirring the heavy air; for this alone  
Seemed to annoy him. Well could I perceive  
He was a messenger of God ; I turned  
Toward my master, and he made a sign  
That I should stand quite still and bow to him.  
Ah, how he seemed imbued with heavenly scorn!  
He reached the gate, and touched it with his rod,  
And it swung open; there was no resistance.  
Then, at the dreadful threshold, he began  
To speak: "O abject folk, and chased from Heaven,  
Why does outrageous boldness tempt you so?  
Why to that Will are ye recalcitrant,  
Which none can thwart, nor alter, but which ye

Ere now have caused to punish you more sorely?  
What ails you thus to kick against the pricks?  
Ye may remember that your Cerberus  
Bears scars to warrant what I say." He turned  
And spoke no word to us, but took his way  
Like one whom other care besets, and pricks,  
Than that of those who chance to stand anigh him.  
Safe in the power of his holy words,  
We set our feet towards the open gate,  
And entered without quarrel. I, intent  
To learn the secrets of so strange a fortress,  
Gazed all around me; and on either hand  
There lay a field of grief, and stream of pain.  
Like as at Arles where Rhone runs slow, or Pola  
Near to Quarnaro, closing Italy  
With seas which bathe her shores, the ground is rough  
With graves; so here, but in a bitterer way;  
For among these were scattered flames, and burned  
With heat as great as iron-workers need.  
The covers of the tombs were hung above them;  
And lamentations of such sullen sort  
Came from within, as showed the inmates' mind.  
"Master," I said, "who are the folk within  
These tombs, who give such groans?" He answered me,  
"These are chief heretics, and all their followers;  
Of every sect ; the tombs are loaded more  
Than you would think; each with his kind is buried  
And less, or more, of heat allotted each."  
He turned him to the right: we passed between  
The sufferers, and the ramparts of the city.

## Inferno - Canto 10 - Shaw

My master went along a narrow path  
Between the outer wall, and place of tombs;  
And I behind him. "O great Knowledge," then  
Said I, "thou who through wicked turnings tak'st me  
As thou dost please, speak to me, satisfy  
My wish. May these within the tombs be seen?  
The lids are lifted; no one guards." He said:  
"All will be locked within when they return  
From judgment in the vale of Joshaphat,  
Each in the body that he left below.  
The Epicureans, with their master, who  
Deny the spirit future life, lie here.  
But thy demand shall soon be satisfied;  
So shall the wish which yet thou dost not tell me."  
I said: "Good leader, I reserve from thee  
My heart, for nothing but to make few words  
To which thine own example has disposed me."  
"O Tuscan, live man, through the City of fire  
Going, and speaking thus. so worthily,  
Pray thee to stay a little in this place;  
Thy speech declares thy noble country, which  
I troubled, perhaps too much." The sudden voice  
Rang from a vault; and startled, I moved near  
My leader, who said: "Turn; what doest thou?  
See Farinata, who has risen there;  
Above the belt thou seest him." I had fixed  
My eyes already on his face; he stood  
Erect, full-chested, as despising hell.  
With bold quick hands my leader took, and thrust me  
Among the tombs to him. "Thy words must be  
Well manifest," he said. As soon as I  
Stood at the foot of the proud spirit's tomb,  
He looked at me a little, and demanded:  
"Who were thine ancestors?" disdainfully.  
Prompt to reply, I told him, hiding nothing.  
He put his eyebrows up at me for that;  
And said: "They were most furiously hostile  
To me, and to my forebears, and my party;  
And twice I scattered them to all the winds."  
"And if thou didst so," straight I answered him,

"They all came back both one time, and the other;  
 Thy followers did not learn to do the like."  
 Then rose to sight, discovered to the chin,  
 Upon his knees, I think, a form near this one,  
 And looked around me anxiously, as if  
 To see if some one were not with me; then,  
 His gazing vain, he wept, and said to me  
 "If by thy depth of knowledge, thou dost go  
 Through this blind prison, tell me of my son,  
 Where is he, and why is he not with thee?"  
 I said: "Not by myself I come, and he  
 Who waits me there, he leads me, whom I think  
 Your Guido held in some contempt." His words;  
 The pain appointed; spelled his name to me  
 And so I spoke so free. He sprang upright  
 And cried: "He *held* - why? Why? He is not dead!  
 Do not his eyes behold sweet daylight now?"  
 Perceiving that I paused before I answered,  
 He fell supine, and reappeared no more.  
 But the magnanimous, at whose request  
 I had remained, changed not a whit his look,  
 Nor turned his neck, nor bent his body, but,  
 Taking again the subject of discourse:  
 "And if indeed they had not learned that lesson,"  
 He said, "it would have hurt me more than does  
 This bed of torment; but my Lady Moon,  
 Regnant, shall shine no more than fifty times  
 Before thou shalt find out their learning's worth.  
 Now, as thou wouldest return to the sweet world,  
 Tell me what makes the Florentines so cruel  
 My folk to harass with their every law?"  
 Whence I to him: "The havoc, and the slaughter  
 Which made Arbia run in crimson waves,  
 Caused these orations in our church to ring."  
 Sighing, he shook his head: "In that affray  
 I was not by myself; nor without cause  
 Assuredly, allied with all the rest.  
 But once I was alone; when every other  
 Harboured the thought of razing our fair Florence,  
 And I defended her with fearless face."  
 "Peace therefore to thy seed for evermore," I said:  
 "and solve me now, I pray, this knot

Which tangles in my judgment; for it seems  
If I hear right, that in this life ye see  
Beforehand what the time will bring; but yet  
Know not the present things it has brought forth."  
"With vision of old age we see," he said,  
Far in the distance: there, the highest power  
Accords us light, but nearer, none nor know  
We aught of men on earth, unless there come  
Some one with news: thou seest that our knowledge  
Will fail and die, what time the doors must close  
Upon the future." Here I felt me pricked  
For my own fault, and said: "Thou, prithee, tell  
That spirit who sank down that his son lives;  
And if I did not answer him at once,  
Tell him it was because my mind was filled  
With musing riddles thou hast solved for me."  
My master called me now, and all in haste  
I asked the spirit who were his companions.  
"I lie here with some thousand more," he said.  
"Frederic the second, and the Cardinal  
But I am silent on the rest." And then  
He hid himself. "He speaks as does a foe,"  
I thought: and turned my steps meanwhile to Virgil.  
The Roman poet moved, and walking asked  
"Why art so downcast?" And I told him all.  
"Keep in thy mind what he foretold against thee,"  
The sage commanded: "Mark me," and he raised  
His finger: "when thou standest in the presence  
Of the sweet beams of her whose lovely eyes  
See all: the future journey of thy life,  
Thou then shalt learn from her." To left he turned  
And from the walls we hastened on a path  
Which struck into a valley further on,  
The smell of which rose up to us already.

## **Inferno - Canto 11 - Shaw**

We came where huge and broken rocks enclosed  
A circle over a deep precipice,  
Below which lay worse things than wt; had seen.  
And here, because of the excess of stench  
That the abyss threw up, we went behind  
The lid of a great tomb on which was written:  
"I guard Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus  
Enticed from the right way." "We must go down  
Later; our sense must use itself a little  
To this foul smell; and then can disregard it."  
So Virgil; and I answered: "Thou wilt find  
Some compensation to redeem the time."  
He said: "See now, I think of that. My son,  
Within these rocks, step below step, are three  
Circles like this we leave; and all are full  
Of spirits condemned; to see them will suffice  
For thee to know their state; but mark thee, how  
And why, they are held fast. All malice works  
To hurt mankind, and Heaven hates that malice.  
All hurt by force, or fraud, must be inflicted.  
Fraud is man's special sin, and most displeases  
God; therefore who use it stand the lowest,  
And suffer most. In the first circle all  
Are violent: but since against three persons  
Force strikes, there are three turns within the circle.  
Force strikes at God: the neighbor; and the self.  
I say, these three; and things of these: thou must  
Hear with an open mind. Force wounds, or kills  
The neighbour, and deals ruin, fire, plunder,  
Upon his house and goods. Whence murderers  
And all who injure; robbers, pillagers,  
To the first lesser circle, but in bands  
Apart, are sent to suffer. Men who kill  
Themselves, and wrong their own possessions, go  
Into the second lesser circle; there,  
Vainly to wish undone what they have done.  
Who cuts himself adrift from the sweet earth  
Gambles, to lose his all of every kind  
And leaves his house of joy for house of grief.  
And thus denying and despising Nature,

As if he cursed her and her plenteous goodness,  
 He offers force to very Deity.  
 The third less circle brands with its own mark  
 Usury; sodomy; and contempt of God  
 Spoken from heart of man. Now fraud, which bites  
 At every conscience, may be used against  
 Him who doth trust, or not trust. This last severs  
 The simple tie of blood which Nature makes  
 Whence in the second circle gathers all  
 Flattery, hypocrisy; and sorcery;  
 And falsity; and theft; and simony;  
 All ministry to vice; all life in it.  
 Whereas; in fraud of trust, the natural tie  
 Not only broken, but the further bond  
 Of special faith created, is forgotten;  
 And in the lowest circle with the scorners,  
 In that last border of the universe  
 On which is seated Dis, - the traitor there  
 For ever and for ever wastes, and lives."  
 "Master," I said, "thy reasoning is most clear;  
 The gulf, and those within it I distinguish.  
 But tell me, those of the thick marsh, or driven  
 Before the wind, or battered by the rain,  
 Or rushing at each other with harsh cries,  
 Why, under wrath of God, are they not sent  
 To the red city? Or, not under wrath,  
 Why dealt with thus?" And he to me: "But why  
 Wanders thine intellect from what thou knowest?  
 Or whither looks thy mind? Dost not remember  
 The words in which thy *Ethics* shows there are  
 Three dispositions all unloved of Heaven  
 Malice, incontinence, and mad brutality?  
 And how of these, incontinence is blamed  
 The least, because the least offending God.  
 Recall those words; and then what men were those  
 Who bear their penalties outside the city;  
 And thou wilt see why they are kept apart,  
 And divine Justice punishes them less."  
 "Oh, Sun thou art to clear my clouded sight!  
 So dost thou solve my questions, that content  
 Makes doubt a pleasure like to knowledge; yet,"  
 I said, "look back a little, show me why

Usury grieves so greatly heavenly love."  
"Philosophy," he said, "to him who heeds her,  
At no one point alone makes plain how Nature  
Follows the art and intellect divine;  
Note well the *Physics* in not many pages  
Thou wilt find out how man's art follows Nature's,  
Far as it can, as teacher draws his pupil.  
And thus man's art is grandchild unto God's.  
From Nature, and from art, if thou dost mark  
The genesis; the world takes life, and thrives mankind.  
The usurer holds another road, and scorns  
Both Nature, and her follower; all his hope  
Centred in something else. But follow me  
For now I wish to turn. The Fishes glide  
On the horizon, and the Waggon lies  
In the north west, and we must soon descend  
The precipice which yet drops down beyond us."

## Inferno - Canto 12 - Shaw

The place to which we came for the descent  
Was wild, and savage, and in aspect such  
That all who saw would be aghast at it;  
Like to that ruin in the mountain side  
Which the Adige meets near Trent; by earthquake  
Caused; or by landslip crashing from above,  
Or treacherous soil below; the rocks are cleft  
Down to the very plain and none can pass.  
Such was this place to pass; and here on guard,  
Among the shattered stones lay stretched at length  
The infamy of Crete, the Minotaur;  
Who, when he saw us, bit himself for rage,  
As those do who are racked with selfish wrath.  
Then my wise guide called out to him: "Perchance  
Thou thinkest this may be the duke of Athens  
Who slew thee in the world above. Be off,  
Beast! for he is not of thy sister's servants;  
He comes to see thy pains." As a bull pierced  
By the death-stroke can turn no more, but springs  
To this side, and to that, so did the monster.  
And Virgil, prudent, cried: "Run to the rocks,  
He is in fury, and 'tis wise to hasten."  
And so we hurried down through crumbling shale,  
And pebbles which gave way beneath our feet.  
Thinking I went; and Virgil said: "Thou thinkest  
Of this waste ruin, guarded by the wrath  
Of the great beast, which I have checked in time.  
Now thou must know that when I came before  
To this low hell, the mountain was not riven.  
If I count right, it was but just before  
The coming of that One to Dis, who took  
A noble prey from out her highest circle,  
This gloomy gulf through all its space fell trembling.  
I thought the universe was sick for love;  
That love which some believe has turned the world,  
And more than once, to chaos: at that time  
This huge cliff split; its fellow split; a chasm  
Dived down between the crags: but turn thine eyes;  
We near the river of blood in which there seethe  
Those who have violently hurt their fellows."

O blind cupidity! O idiot anger!  
Which spurs us on throughout this little life  
To such ill bathing in the life that lasts  
I saw the curve of a great moat enclose  
A level space, of which my guide had told.  
Under the cliff, and round it centaurs ran,  
One after one, with arrows armed, which they  
Use to go hunting in the world above.  
Seeing us come, they stood; but three moved out  
With bows, and arrows fitted to the string.  
One shouted from his place: "To what infliction  
Come ye, descending through the chasm? Speak;  
From where ye stand, or else I draw the bow."  
My master said: "We have an answer ready  
For Chiron, when we reach him. Always thou  
Wast impudent of temper." Touching me Softly:  
This one is Nessus, and he died  
For Dianira; yet in death he left  
A charm, and it avenged him of his fate.  
This in the middle, gazing on his breast,  
Is the great Chiron, teacher of Achilles  
And this, who was so angry, he is Pholus."  
They run around the moat in thousands, each  
Sending an arrow at whatever spirit  
Shall raise himself above the blood, beyond  
His limit, which is set by his own guilt."  
We drew anigh these swift and fiery creatures;  
Then Chiron took an arrow: with its shaft  
Thrust back the beard on either side his face  
Unto the jaw, and freeing his great mouth Said:  
Do ye notice that the man behind  
Moves what he touches? Dead feet do not so."  
And my good leader, standing at his breast,  
Where man joins horse, said: "Faith, he is alive;  
He is alone; it is my place to show him  
This darkened valley. There was one desisted  
From singing hallelujahs to commit me  
To this new office. For a need he comes;  
Not for his pleasure. I am no bad spirit;  
He is no criminal: by that high virtue,  
In power of which I tread this gloomy way,  
Give me, I ask, a centaur of thy troop,

To show us where the ford is, and to take  
 This man upon his back, because he is  
 No spirit that can run upon the air."  
 To his right shoulder Chiron turned his head,  
 And said to Nessus: "Go, and be their guide;  
 Protect them if the others interfere."  
 So we moved onward with the trusty escort,  
 Along the stream that boiled in crimson waves,  
 Wherein the immersed cried loudly; some I saw  
 Plunged to the eyebrow: the great Centaur said:  
 "These were all tyrants given o'er to blood  
 And rapine: here Thessalian Alexander  
 And Dionysius, who crushed Sicily;  
 And black-haired Ezzolin of Padua;  
 And that fair-haired Obizzo, avaricious,  
 Murdered for treasure by his son-in-law."  
 The Poet turned to me, and said: "Thy guide  
 In chief is now the Centaur; I the second."  
 And further on, the Centaur fixed his eyes  
 Upon a tribe of folk who, to the throat,  
 Were hid within the seething. There, a form  
 Somewhat apart he showed us, saying: "This  
 Is Guy of Montfort; in a church he killed  
 The nephew of his king, who still is honoured  
 Upon the banks of Thames." And then I saw  
 Many who o'er the waves could lift the head,  
 And many who were breast and shoulders free;  
 Enough of these I knew and recognised.  
 Thus lower, and still lower, fell the blood  
 Till but the feet were covered; at that point,  
 The ford; and there we crossed. The Centaur said:  
 "Since thou hast seen the source diminish here,  
 Thou must conceive how once again it rises  
 Flooding and flooding on, beyond the ford,  
 Till at its full depth it rejoins itself  
 There where thou sawest how the tyrants suffer.  
 There, divine Justice upon Attila,  
 Who was the scourge of all the earth, inflicts  
 His due; on Pyrrhus; Sextus; and compels  
 By the hot flood, the tears of many robbers  
 Who laid the streets and highways desolate."  
 He turned to leave us, and recrossed the ford.



## **Inferno - Canto 13 - Shaw**

Ere Nessus had returned from whence he came,  
We found ourselves within a pathless wood.  
The foliage was not green, but dun, and dusky;  
No well-grown boughs, but gnarled and twisted ones;  
No fruit thereon; but thorns with poisonous prick.  
So rough nor rank the brushwood is between  
Cecina and Corneto, where wild beasts,  
Living at large, abhor the furrowed fields.  
Here the brute harpies make their nests, who chased  
From Strophades the Trojans, wailing sore  
To them their future fate. These have wide wings,  
Faces and necks of women, feet with claws,  
Great feathered bodies; and in these strange trees  
They make lament. Then the good master said:  
"Before we further go, learn where thou art;  
Within the second circle, which continues  
Till thou shalt see the sand-plain horrible.  
But now look well around if thou canst see  
Things to accredit my ensuing speech."  
From every part I heard a groaning round me;  
But I could see no one who could have made it.  
I stood in great dismay. I think he thought  
That I believed so many voices came  
From people hidden from us in the wood.  
"Now," said the master, "if thou breakest off  
One little twig from any of these boughs,  
Thyself will find thy fancy was at fault."  
I put my hand a little out before me,  
And broke a twig from a great briar, which cried,  
Its stem cried out: "Why dost thou break me thus?"  
And as dark blood-drops came, it cried again:  
"Why tear me so? Hast thou no sort of kindness?  
We once were men, and now are turned to trees.  
Thou might'st have had a kinder hand, if we  
Had been but serpents' spirits." As a green  
Log burns at one end, hissing at the other  
With the escaping air, and seems to groan;  
So from that stem came blood and words together.  
I let the twig fall, and I stood affrighted.  
"O wounded spirit!" answered Virgil, wise:

Had he at first been able to believe  
 What he had seen in reading of my verse,  
 He should not have put forth his hand at thee:  
 But this was so incredible, that I  
 Told him to do it, though myself was grieved.  
 Now tell him who thou wast, that for amends,  
 He may revive thy fame upon the earth  
 To which he has permission to return."  
 "Thou soothest me with gentle words," the stem  
 Replied: "I cannot choose but speak, and if  
 I shall dilate my talk a little, thou  
 Wilt not be vexed. I was the Chancellor  
 Who held both keys of Emperor Frederic's heart;  
 And turned them, softly, locking and unlocking,  
 Drawing his trust from all men but myself.  
 I toiled in faith toward my glorious office  
 Till I lost sleep and strength therein.  
 That whore, Envy, whose venal eyes were ever fixed  
 On Caesar's household; she, the common vice  
 And death of courts, inflamed the courtiers  
 Against me, and in turn they fired Augustus;  
 And my bright honours changed to bitter griefs.  
 Exalted and disdainful, then, my spirit  
 Thinking by death to flee the world's disdain,  
 Doomed me unjustly, a just man, to die.  
 But, by the new and clinging roots which here  
 Fix me in wood, I swear, I never broke  
 Faith to my lord, who was so worthy faith.  
 If either of you see the world again,  
 Refresh my memory, which lies there yet,  
 Crushed by the fatal blow that envy dealt."  
 There was a pause, and then: "Since he is silent,"  
 The Poet said to me: "lose not the moment;  
 But speak, and ask of him what more thou would'st."  
 And I to him: "Thou rather, ask what seem  
 To thee the things that I would wish to know;  
 I cannot, for my heart is dumb with grief."  
 So he began: "If this man freely grant  
 What thou dost beg of him, imprisoned spirit,  
 Thou wilt inform him further, how the soul  
 Is bound within these knotted stems, and if  
 Thou canst, say whether any one be ever

Freed from the bondage." The stem quaked, and breathed  
Hard, and the breath congealed into a voice  
Which said: "I answer shortly: when the fierce  
Spirit is parted from the loosened body,  
Minos commands it to the seventh circle.  
It falls into the wood, to take its chance;  
Where fortune casts it, there it sprouts like wheat;  
Springs up a sapling: then a wildwood tree;  
The harpies pain it, feeding on its foliage,  
Yet give it opening to exhale its pain.  
Like all the rest, for our spent bodies we  
Return, but none shall be re-clad in them;  
Because it is not just a man should have  
That which he robbed himself of: we must drag  
Hither each man his own, and through the sad  
Wood, shall the bodies all be hanged, each one  
Upon the tree of its sore-wounded spirit."  
We were still hearkening to the stem, and thinking  
That it might tell us more, when sounds surprised us,  
As when a man hears come the boar, and all  
The chase behind him, toward his ambush, all  
The rush of animals, and crack of branches.  
On the left hand ran, torn and naked, two,  
Who fled so hard they crashed through all the brushwood.  
The first was crying for the help of death;  
The other thought him slow, and called: "O Lano,"  
Thy legs availed thee otherwise at Toppo."  
And then, as if his breath had failed him quite,  
He held, and clung within, a thorny bush;  
And up behind him rushed black raging bitches,  
Of which the wood was full, like greyhounds slipped  
From leash, and there where he was crouching seized him,  
Tore him in pieces, and bore off his limbs.  
Thereon my escort took me by the hand,  
And led me to the bush, which vainly mourned  
Through all its bleeding fractures; and it said:  
"Jacopo of Sant Andrea, of what use  
Was it to thee to make a shelter of me?  
And why am I to blame for thy bad life?  
After a little pause my master spoke  
Who wast thou then, that at so many points  
Breathest out blood, and words of sorrow, too?"

And it to us: "O souls, that are come here  
To see such cruelty unjustly, rend  
My branches from me; gather them, I pray,  
And heap them up beneath my saddened head.  
Of Florence I: she left her patron Mars  
For John the Baptist; wherefore Mars will do  
All that he can to vex the saint; and if  
Where Arno flows, all vestige of his honour  
Had gone, the citizens rebuilding Florence  
After that Attila had burned her down  
Would have proved all their toil in vain; - for me  
I made myself a gallows in my house."

## **Inferno - Canto 14 - Shaw**

The charity of our common birthplace urged me  
To gather up the scattered broken sprays,  
And place them close beside the weakened stem.  
From hence, we gained the border which divided  
The second circle from the third; wherein  
Is seen the dreadful skill of penal Justice.  
To set forth rightly what new things appeared,  
I say, that we had reached a sterile land  
Which not a leaf allows in its bleak bed.  
The grievous wood encloses this, as she  
Herself is closed within the moat of blood,  
And our feet paused upon her very edge.  
Before us, all was thick dry sand like that  
Desert once trodden by the foot of Cato.  
O God! thy vengeance! how shouldst thou be feared  
By every man who reads what my eyes saw.  
They saw great flocks of spirits, weeping all  
Most miserably, pressed, it seemed, by laws  
Diverse, for some lay flat upon the ground,  
And some sat gathered in a heap, and some  
Moved ceaselessly from one spot to another.  
But those who paced around were most in number,  
And fewer those who lay beneath the pain,  
Yet freer in complaint: and overall  
Alike, o'er all the sand-pit, in a slow  
Fall as of snow on alps in windless days,  
Descended idly-dropping flakes of fire.  
Thus in hot India Alexander saw  
Flames from above fall down upon the soil;  
And made his squadrons trample them, that so  
The vapour that remained might melt away  
More easily. So fell the eternal fire;  
Whence the sand caught the heat, as tinder does  
From flint, and thus the agony was doubled.  
Never a moment did the wretched hands  
Cease their sad shaking dance of misery,  
To keep the flames away. I spoke, and said:  
"Master, who mastered all things save the demons  
Which stopped our entrance at the gate above,  
Who is this great one seeming not to heed

The flames, and though contorted, still in pride  
 Lies, as if fire could not overcome him?"  
 That very one perceived that I was asking  
 My leader of him, cried out: "Thus was I  
 When I was living, and thus am I now.  
 Though angry Jove should tire the smith who forged  
 For him the sharpened bolt which struck me down  
 On my last day,- or weary them all out  
 In turn, calling: 'Good Vulcan, help them, help!'  
 Toiling at the black forge in Mongibello,  
 Or, as he did at the Phlegean fight,  
 Hurl all his darts with all his force at me,  
 Not even then should lie enjoy his vengeance."  
 My leader interposed his word, and spoke  
 With force such as I had not heard from him:  
 "O Capaneus, because thou dost not tame  
 Thy pride, it wins thee further punishment.  
 There is no pain but madness could complete  
 Sufficient suffering for such rage as thine."  
 With gentler face, he turned to me, and said:  
 "One of the seven kings besieging Thebes  
 Was this; who despised God, and still despises,  
 It seems,- small prayer indeed he offers Him.  
 But, as I told him, such rebellious breast  
 In taunts and scoffs finds fitting garniture.  
 Now come behind me, and beware how thou  
 Set foot upon the fiery sand, but keep  
 Close to the wood." We went on silently;  
 Till now there gushed a little rivulet  
 From out the wood; its redness frights me still.  
 As runs the little brook of Bulicame  
 Which the bad women drink, so runs this other  
 Through the hot sand; its sloping shores and bottom  
 And edges are all lined and paved with stone,  
 So that I saw our way must lie along it.  
 "Among all other things that I have shown thee,  
 Since we came in through that gate from which none  
 Is turned away; thou hast seen nothing yet  
 So notable as is this stream thou seest;  
 Which deadens all the falling flakes of fire."  
 My leader said. I begged him, since he caused  
 My thirst for knowledge, he would quench the same.

“There is a desolate isle within the sea  
Called Crete,” he said, “under its king of old  
His folk lived chastely; there a mountain rises,  
They call it Ida, and it once was glad  
With water and with greenery, but now  
Is all a desert like a worn-out thing.  
Great Rhea found on it a shelter safe  
To hide her baby, and she loudly sang  
To drown his little voice when he was crying.  
Within that mountain stands a huge old man;  
He turns his back on Damiata, but  
He looks to Rome as his own looking-glass;  
His head pure gold, and silver arm, and breast,  
Brass to the middle, finest iron below,  
Save his right foot of potter's clay on which  
He mainly rests his weight: and all except  
The golden head is cleft; a lengthened chink  
Runs down, and drops with tears, which, gathering, creep  
Into that shelter; gather still, and flow  
Adown the rocks into a valley; issue  
As Styx, and Acheron, and Phlegethon  
And still descending in a narrow runnel  
Deep, deep, where no one dives, they make Cocytus  
What that is thou wilt see, I need not tell thee.”  
And I to him: “If this stream be derived  
From stream on earth, how can it get down here?”  
And he to me: “Thou knowest this place is round,  
And thou hast come through much of it, but yet  
There to the left it falls far deeper still  
And thou hast not completed the whole circle  
So that thou need'st not be surprised if fresh  
And diverse things appear for thee to learn.”  
But I again: “Master, where find we Lethe,  
And Phlegethon, for one thou tell'st not of;  
And of the other that this water makes it?”  
He said: “Be sure thy questions always please me;  
But that red boiling water answered one  
Of these thou put'st; and Lethe thou shalt see,  
Though far beyond this moat; there where the spirits  
Go, gently, to be laved, when sin repented  
Shall be removed;” and then: “The time is come  
To leave this wood; thou must keep close behind me.

The edges of the rill give safe cool footing;  
Above its flow all vaporous heat is quenched."

## **Inferno - Canto 15 - Shaw**

Beneath our feet is now the stone embankment;  
And a full mist that broods above the stream  
Saves stone and water from the dropping flames.  
As between Ghent and Bruges the Flemings, fearing  
The rushing flood that might o'erwhelm them, built  
A wall that could rebut the flowing sea;  
And as the Paduans along the Brenta  
Built, to protect their castles and their towns  
From the wild river which the melting snow  
Swells, when the sun shines in Chiarentana;  
Though not so high nor wide, such ramparts, here  
Were raised, whatever master-workman made them.  
When now we were so far from the sad wood  
That had I turned I should have failed to see it,  
We met a troop of spirits 'neath the wall  
Coming; they peered at us as those who meet  
At eventide beneath a crescent moon;  
Straining their sight as an old tailor does  
To hit his needle's eye. All looked at me;  
One knew me, caught me by the cloak, and said:  
"What marvel!" stretching up his hand to me.  
I saw his aspect scorched, and his burned face;  
They could not hinder me from knowing him.  
I stooped and put my hand down to his face,  
"O Ser Brunetto, art thou here?" I said.  
And he said: "Oh, my son, be not displeased,  
But let Brunetto turn a little back,  
And walk with thee, and let his fellows go.  
I said: "All that is possible, I pray thee do;  
And if thou wilt that I sit down with thee,  
If my companion give me leave, I will."  
"O son," he said: "whoever of this troop  
Shall stop outright, must lie a hundred years  
And not e'en fan himself against the fire.  
Therefore go on, and I will walk beside thee;  
And then rejoin the troop who weep for ever  
Their everlasting loss." I did not dare  
Go down upon the sand to walk with him,  
But moved with head bent low, as one makes reverence.  
And he began: "What fortune, or what fate

Can bring thee hither ere thy day of death?  
And who is he that guides thee on the road?"  
"Up there on earth," I answered, "I was living  
A quiet life, being barely thirty-five;  
I lost myself in wandering through a valley;  
Yesterday morning I was turning back,  
When there appeared to me this man, and he  
Will lead me home by passing o'er this road."  
He said to me: "By following of thy star  
Thou canst not fail an honourable port;  
Or so on happy earth I would have judged it.  
Had I not died so young, I could have helped thee,  
Knowing that Heaven was so kind to thee.  
But these ungrateful people and malign,  
Coming from Fésole in ancient time,  
And having still a hardness as of stone,  
For any good thou dost will only hate thee  
And well they may: the sweet fig should not fruit  
Among sour crabs. Of old they were deemed blind,  
Envious, and proud, and avaricious;  
No custom of their life must cling to thee.  
Thy fate has kept for thee such honour, Black  
And White alike shall covet thee: but may  
The grass grow far from the wild goat! The beasts  
Of Fésole may use themselves for litter,  
But never touch the plant, if yet there be  
One springing in their soil, from sacred seed  
Of Romans, who had stayed there when the place  
Became a nest of malice." Here he paused.  
"Had my request been granted," answered I,  
Thou would'st not now be exiled from thy flesh  
For in my mind is fixed, and on my heart  
Strikes now thy face, dear, good, and fatherly;  
Thou teaching me how man should win his fame.  
And I did prize thy lessons. While I live  
They should be manifested in my speech.  
What thou dost tell of my remaining life  
I write, and keep to lay, with other text,  
Before that lady who will know it all  
If I win to her, and may gain her ear.  
But this I tell thee that it may be plain  
And clear my conscience. I am fit to meet

What Fortune choose; such pledges as she offers  
Are nothing new to me: turn she her wheel  
Which way she will; and peasant wield his pick."  
My master on his right hand turning round,  
Looked at me, saying: "He who listens well  
Takes note." But not the less I walk, and ask  
Of Ser Brunetto what companions most  
Are famed, and highest in his sorrowing troop.  
And he to me: "To know of some is good,  
But silence of the rest; for time is short.  
Briefly thou know'st they all were clerics; all  
Famous in literature; and one sin  
Fouled all. Priscian among the wretched throng  
Goes with Francesco of Accorso and  
- If thou had'st wished to see such scum, thou might'st  
Him whom the Pope, that servants' servant, moved  
From Arno's flow to that of Bacchiglione ;  
And there he left his flesh and ill-used nerves.  
I could say more, but feet and tongue must halt;  
I see fresh vapour rising on the sand;  
Folk come with whom I can have nought to do.  
My book, my *Treasure*, do I recommend thee,  
In this I yet may live; I ask no more."  
Like one of those who at Verona race  
Across the fields for the green silk, he turned  
And ran as one who wins, not one who loses.

## Inferno - Canto 16 - Shaw

I now was where I heard the streamlet fall  
To the next circle, with a booming sound  
Like that of many beehives; when there ran  
Together, from a crowd that passed beneath  
That rain of penetrating fire, three spirits  
Toward us, and each one of them cried out:  
"Stop, thou whose garb is that of wicked Florence!"  
O me, what wounds I saw both scarred and fresh  
From the live flames on all their limbs! E'en now  
I feel the grief of it in memory.  
My teacher listened to their cry, and turned  
His face to me, and: "Wait," he said: "to these  
We must show courtesy; yet I would say  
If it were not for the prevailing fire,  
Thy haste would be much greater than would theirs."  
We stopped; they fell to the same call again,  
And when they reached us all the three went wheeling  
Together, as do naked oily champions  
Eyeing each other keenly; so to find  
Grasp, and the place of vantage, ere the fight  
Which shall decide their fame. And each one kept  
Turned toward me his miserable face,  
With a continual twist of neck from feet.  
"And if the pain of this unstable place,  
And our own aspect chafed and burnt, must bring  
Contempt on us, and our poor prayers," said one;  
"Our fame above may move thee, that thou tellest  
Who thou may'st be, with living feet that tread  
Safely through hell. He, in whose footsteps here  
Thou see'st me go, though naked and half-skinned,  
Was of a higher rank than thou could'st credit.  
He was the grandson of the good Gualdrada;  
His name was Guidoguerra, and he did  
Good work in life both with his head and sword.  
The other whose feet grind the sand beside me  
Is Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, whose  
Name is in honour in the world above.  
And I, on the same cross that they are, was  
Jacopo Rusticucci: and the truth  
Is: a proud wife hurts more than all beside."

If I had had defence against the fire  
 I would have sprung down instantly among them,  
 I think my teacher would have let me go.  
 But fear of being scorched and seared prevailed  
 To conquer the good-will which made me wish  
 Much to embrace them. "Not contempt, but grief"  
 I said, "for your condition hurt me so,  
 It almost slew me when my master spoke  
 In words to make me think there were some coming  
 Such as you are. I am your countryman;  
 And always heard, and told of your good names  
 And work, with love. But now I leave these bitter,  
 And seek to the sweet fruits my truthful master  
 Promised; but first into the depths I go."  
 "Long may the spirit animate thy flesh,  
 And fame gleam bright behind thee," he replied,  
 "But tell me, courtesy and valour, still,  
 As once, within our city are they found?  
 Or are they flung aside by all her men?  
 For Guglielmo Borsiere, he,  
 But lately come to mourn with us, and walking  
 There with the others, gave us such report  
 As hurt us sorely." I exclaimed aloud,  
 Lifting my face: "O Florence, sudden gains  
 And followers new have bred in thee such pride,  
 And such excess, that now thou need'st go weep."  
 The three, who took my outcry as an answer,  
 Looked at each other as if seeing truth.  
 And all three said: "If it costs thee as little  
 At any time, as now, to satisfy  
 Questions, thou happy! and thy speech most fit.  
 So if thou dost escape from these dark haunts,  
 And seest the stars in beauty once again,  
 When, pleased in talk, thou say'st: 'I did such things,'  
 Make that the people talk a little of us."  
 The wheel they formed broke up, and they ran off  
 As swift as they had wings instead of legs,  
 And disappeared ere one could say Amen.  
 The master moved to go, I followed him,  
 And soon we came so near the falling water  
 That we could hardly hear each other speak.  
 Like to the stream which has its proper course

First from Mount Veso, running to the east  
And on the left, down slopes of Apennine,  
Which they call Acquacheta on the heights,  
But Montone at Forli; thunders then  
Over the alp of Santo Benedetto,  
Falling to be received of thousand monks;  
Thus from a bank, precipitous we found  
This dark stream roaring, till our ears were deafened.  
I had a rope wound round about my body;  
For I had thought that sometime I might capture  
With it that panther of the spotted hide.  
When I had pulled it off from me, my leader  
Commanding thus, I gave it him rolled up,  
And knotted. Then he turned to his right hand,  
And standing back a little from the edge,  
Flung it adown the torrent's fall.  
"And now," Said I to me, "some wonder must reply  
To this strange signal which my master seeks  
With steady eye." How careful should men be  
Near those who see not merely deeds, but pierce  
In mind the thoughts themselves.  
For now, he said: "What I expect will quickly come, and what  
Thy fancy. dreams, thine eye will quickly see."  
Best not to speak a truth which seems a lie,  
For shame will come without her herald sin.  
Yet here can be no silence, .and I swear,  
By verse of this *Commedia*, O reader,  
And long may it remain not lost to favour;  
I looked hard through the murky air, and saw  
Come swimming such a creature as would scare  
The stoutest heart; which rose as might a diver  
Who frees the anchor fouled upon the rock,  
Or otherwise, below the sea, and stretches  
Toward the surface drawing up his feet.

## **Inferno - Canto 17 - Shaw**

“This is the beast whose hurt is in his tail,  
Who conquers hills, and breaks down walls and weapons,  
Corrupting all the world where'er he goes.”  
My leader told me thus; and signed to him  
To land where the embankment ended: there,  
Vile image of vile Fraud, he came, and reared  
His head and upper body, but still kept  
His tail below the level of the bank.  
He had a face as of an honest man,  
Being so amiable on the outside  
But all the rest of him was writhing dragon.  
And hairy claws came down from armpits; both  
His sides showed wheels, and twists, of mingled colours.  
Nor Tartary, nor Turkey, made such gay  
Embroidery, nor e'en Arachne's loom.  
As boats lie half on shore, and half in sea;  
As beaver in the land of greedy Germans,  
Sits watching for his fish; so lay this beast  
Upon the stone, all gliding on himself;  
And now with tail erect like poisonous scorpion.  
The leader said: “We now must take our way  
To that accursed beast.” So we went down  
On the right hand, and bent our careful steps  
Ten paces further from the sand and flame.  
On reaching him, I saw still further off,  
Folk sitting on the sand close to the cliff.  
My master said; “Learn all thou canst of this  
Circle; go now and see their state, but speak  
Shortly; and I will tell the beast meanwhile  
To give us place upon his mighty back.”  
And so I went, alone, to the last point  
Of that seventh circle, where the sad folk sat.  
Their eyes made plain their woe, and here, and there,  
Their hands flew, shaking, at the flames and sand;  
As dogs with paw and muzzle fight the flies.  
I looked into their faces, and I saw  
None that I knew, but I observed a thing  
That from the neck of each one hung a pouch,  
Of its own sign and colour, and on this  
He seemed to feed his eyes. I saw a pouch,

Gold, lion rampant azure; and another  
 A darker red than blood, display a goose,  
 White, fat as butter; one had blazoned his  
 Pouch of fair white, with a blue lordly swine.  
 This one to me: "What dost thou in this ditch?  
 Get out of it! and since thou be'st alive  
 Thou know'st Vitaliano, my good neighbour,  
 Will soon be sitting here at my left side.  
 I am a Paduan 'mongst these Florentines;  
 And constantly they bellow in my ears  
 'Hey, for the coming of the noble knight  
 Who shows a pouch emblazoned with three goats.'"

And he grimaced, and lolled his tongue, as does  
 An ox to lick his muzzle round. I feared  
 He who had warned. me would not brook delay  
 And turned me back, and left the wretched spirits,  
 I found my leader ready seated, low,  
 Upon the dragon, and he said to me:  
 "Now be both brave and bold, for we descend  
 Get up in front, for I am best behind,  
 To hinder any harm from the beast's sting."  
 As a man feels who has the ague-fit  
 So close upon him that his nails are wan,  
 And, keeping in the shade, he trembles, I  
 Felt at these words: but shame was threatening me,  
 Which makes the man strong 'fore his good lord's face.  
 I climbed upon the dragon's scaly shoulders,  
 And would have said, but that my voice seemed choked,  
 "O Master, hold me tight!" But he, who erst  
 In higher place had guarded me, at once  
 Put both his arms around me and sustained me.  
 "Now, Geryon," he said, "move thyself slowly;  
 In ample circles bring thee gently down;  
 Remember thine unwonted burden." Then,  
 As a small boat draws backward out, did he,  
 The beast, and when he felt his length was clear,  
 He swooped around till head replaced the tail,  
 And all his length slipped onward like an eel,  
 While with his claws he gathered up the air.  
 Fear was not more when Phaethon let go  
 The reins because the sky, as still, seemed fired;  
 Nor when unhappy Icarus, disfeathered,

Felt the wax run, and heard his father shout:  
"Bad way thou makest," than it was with me.  
Now nought but air was round me, and I saw  
Only the beast beneath me, slowly swimming,  
And wheeling largely, downward by degrees.  
But all that I perceive is that the wind  
Strikes upward to my face. I heard already  
On the right hand the stream crash far below  
I bent my head to look for it, and then  
I was more scared at sight of the abyss,  
Because I saw fresh fire and heard fresh wailing.  
I cowered down in terror, and perceived  
As I had not before, by all the horrors  
Approaching us, the last descent was near.  
And as the falcon that has flown enough,  
But will not mark the lure, or bird, and makes  
The falconer cry out; "Thou witless gentle!"  
Then tires, and stoops, and drops with hundred wheelings,  
And sits a good way off her master, haughty  
And ill-disposed; so Geryon came to pause  
At foot of the steep cliff, and let us light;  
And disappeared as arrow from a bow.

## **Inferno - Canto 18 - Shaw**

There is a place in Hell called Malebolgia,  
All stone: in hue like iron ore, and so  
The cliffs around it: in the very middle  
Of its malignant field there yawns a well,  
Wide, deep enough: its use due time will show.  
The space between it and the border cliffs  
Is therefore round : the bottom is divided  
Into ten separate circles, by great walls.  
As where, to guard a castle wall, her moats  
More and more of them, circle her around  
So here, in like form rise the barriers.  
As from that castle fly forth little bridges  
Across the moats, so from the cliff's base run  
Small shelves of rock which cut across the barriers  
And fosses, meeting, ending, at the well.  
From Geryon's back dropped off, we found ourselves  
Within this place; the Poet to his left  
Turned, and I walked behind him: on the right  
I saw new grief, new scourgers, and new pain.  
With this the first division was replete.  
Upon the ground the naked sinners ran;  
They came out from the middle toward us, then,  
Others o'ertook us running to the middle.  
In this way did the Romans move the people,  
For the great crowds, that year of Jubilee,  
Upon the bridge, bidding that on one side  
Facing the castle, all walk toward St. Peter's;  
And on the other, all toward the mount.  
From here, from there, over the gloomy stone  
The horned demons ran, and with great rods  
Flogged on the naked creatures cruelly.  
Ay, how they made them lift their legs and run;  
At the first stroke none waited for a second.  
But, as I walked, my eyes on one were fixed;  
"I have not fasted long from seeing thee,"  
I said, and gazed the more to recollect him.  
My kindly leader paused with me, and let  
Me turn a little back; and the scourged creature  
Holding his face down, fancied he could hide.  
Little did it avail him, for I said:

“Thou, looking at the ground, unless the features  
Thou showiest here play false to their old form,  
Art Venedico Caccianimico;  
And what brings thee to taste such pungent sauce?”  
And he to me: “Against my will I tell thee  
But thy plain speech recalls the world of old,  
And forces me. I took my sister Ghisola  
To be the pleasure of the Marquis:  
Whatever wretched tale may have been told.  
Nor I the only Bolognese to weep  
Such deed; the place is crammed with us, with more  
Souls than say *sipa* all the way from Reno  
Into Savena: if thou needest more  
Of proof, or testimony, thou canst think  
How avarice disposes all our hearts.”  
A demon lashed him then, and cried: “Be off!  
No women to be bought down here, thou pander.”  
I joined my escort, and we shortly came  
Upon a rock outstanding from the bank;  
We went up easily and turned above  
To the right hand, and left this ageless circle.  
And when we came where opens a great arch  
To let the flagellated pass, then said  
The leader: “Stop and let the wretched faces  
Which yet thou hast not seen because they moved  
In the same line with us, now meet thine eye.”  
So from the bridge we watched the files who came  
Scourged on toward us, from the other side,  
In the same manner. My good master then  
Without my asking, said: “See this great figure  
Who comes, and will not shed a tear for pain.  
How royal is the aspect he still wears!  
He is that Jason who with heart and head  
Took the gold fleece from Colchis; thence he passed  
To Lemnos; where the bold and impious women  
Killed all their men; and there with words and acts  
He deceived young Hypsipile who had  
Deceived her mates and saved her father's life;  
And left her all alone to bear his child.  
Such fault to such a fate condemns him here;  
Here is Medea avenged; and with him go  
All such, who have deceived in such a way.”

We stood where a slight rock-bridge crossed the second  
Circle, which lifted it in a high arch.  
Here we heard folk who struck themselves, and groaned,  
Not loud but low, in choking, snorting sounds,  
Within the next division; where the banks  
Were crusted with a mouldy cloud, which rose  
And clung, disgusting both to sight and smell.  
The bottom is so deep one cannot see it  
But from the arch where the rock overhangs.  
From thence we saw the folk below immersed  
In filth of human drainage; and I saw  
A head so foul I knew not whether clerk  
Or layman lifted it; it cried to me:  
“Why starest more at me than other brutes?”  
“Because I saw thee when thy head was clean.” I answered;  
Thou art of Lucca, and thy name Alessio Interminei is.”  
And, battering his pate, he spoke again  
“Down here those flatteries have sunk me deep,  
Which my glib tongue was never tired of plying.”  
My leader by me, said: “Stretch thy neck out,  
And see that horror in the shape of woman,  
Now crouching, and now standing, in sheer woe.  
Thais the courtesan: who answered to  
Her paramour demanding: ‘Do I please thee?’  
‘Why, to a miracle.’ We have seen enough.”

## Inferno - Canto 19 - Shaw

O Simon Magus, wretched thou, and thine!  
The things of God which should be wed with goodness  
Do ye, rapacious, prostitute to gold.  
Fitly for you the trump of reckoning sounds  
Ye dwell in the third circle. We were now  
On the next arch of rock, so that we looked  
Exactly down the middle of the pits.  
O highest wisdom, what design thou showiest  
In heaven and earth, and 'neath the earth, dividing  
In thy just virtue, a just due to all.  
The dusky stone, both at the sides and bottom,  
Was full of holes, round, and of equal size;  
Not less nor larger, so it seemed, than those  
In the Baptistry of my fair St. John  
Made for the christening fonts: and one of which  
Not many years ago I broke, to help  
One who was drowning in it: let this be  
A seal of truth, if any man should doubt.  
From out the mouth of each a sinner's feet  
Protruded, to the calf; and either foot  
Was lit with fire, and the convulsed muscles  
So writhed they would have broken withs of rush.  
As flame plays o'er greased skin when it is singed,  
From toe to heel this played. "Master, who is it  
In fierce rebellion writhing more than others,  
And upon whom the flame sucks brighter red?"  
He said: "Wilt thou that I should carry thee  
Down there, by this less steeply sloping bank,  
And thou mayest learn of him and of his deeds?"  
I said: "What pleases thee is good to me;  
Thou rulest, knowing to thy will I hold,  
And knowing too the things I do not say."  
We came above the fourth division; turned  
On the left hand, descending to the bottom,  
Narrow and hollowed. And the master kind  
Kept me upon his hip till we arrived  
Beside the hole of him whose tortured legs  
Must act his weeping. "O thou wretched spirit,  
Placed as a stake set upside down," I said,  
"Speak if thou canst." I stood as stands the friar

Confessing an assassin treacherous.  
 Who calls him back, though he is bound already,  
 That thus he may delay his death a little.  
 And he cried out to me: "What! standing there?  
 What! standing there already, Boniface!  
 Then by some years the prophet told me false.  
 So soon as this art weary of the wealth  
 For which thou didst not fear to hoodwink first,  
 And after tear in pieces, our fair Church?"  
 I made as those who, understanding not  
 What is said to them, taken all aback,  
 Feel a strange shame and know not how to answer.  
 Then Virgil said: "Speak out, and say: 'Not I;'  
 It is not I am he whom thou supposest.'"

And I replied as he desired me.  
 The spirit strained his feet, and sighing deep,  
 In grievous voice said: "Why then didst thou call me  
 If eagerness to know my name was all  
 That brought thee down this bank? I tell thee, once  
 I wore the Papal robes, and I have been  
 A true son of the Bears: to serve the cubs  
 I banked my gains above, myself below.  
 Beneath my head those others have been drawn  
 Who led the way for me in simony;  
 And each laid out flat in his groove of stone.  
 Down there I, too, shall fall, when he shall come  
 Whom I took thee to be, and shouted to him.  
 But longer now already have I stood  
 Thus downward with my feet alight, than he  
 Will stand in the same way, and the same pain,  
 For one of worse works still will follow him,  
 A Western shepherd, illegitimate,  
 Such as is fit to stand o'er him and me.  
 Another Maccabean Jason, he  
 And favoured by his king, as was the first."  
 I do not know if now I was too wild;  
 But I began to answer him, and said  
 Ay, tell me now what payment did our Lord  
 Ask of St. Peter when he gave the keys?  
 Unless indeed it were: 'Come, follow me.'  
 Did Peter, or the rest, ask of Matthias  
 Silver, or gold, when the lot gave him place

Of Judas guilty? Stand thou here, for well  
Keep safely that ill-gotten wealth which made  
Thee strangely insolent to Charles of Sicily.  
If reverence for the keys that thou didst hold  
in thy fat life on earth did not prevent me,  
I would use sharper words than these; because  
Your avarice aggrieves the world; ye tread  
Down the good men, and ye exalt the bad.  
Such shepherds the Evangelist foreknew  
When he saw her who sat upon the beast  
Beside the waters, luring all the kings  
Of earth to fornication; she arises  
From the seven heads; and from the ten horns draws  
Her gold, and purple, and her brimming cup  
Of lewdness and of wine, so long as all  
The virtue that she proffers please her consort.  
He worships one, and you a hundred idols.  
Purple, and gold, and silver, are your gods:  
What difference between you and an idolater?  
He worships one, and you a hundred idols.  
O Constantine! what evil sprang to birth  
Through thy conversion not, but through that gift  
Our first rich Pope thought well to take of thee."  
And while I sang such piercing notes as these,  
Or anger, or his conscience, bit him so,  
He thrust out strongly at me with his feet.  
I think my guide indeed was glad at heart  
For the true words he heard with well-pleased face.  
He took me in both arms, and lifted me  
Upon his breast, and climbed again the way  
We had come down, nor wearied of my weight,  
But bore me to the summit of the arch  
Which links the fourth and fifth divisions. Here  
He, faithfully, his faithful burden placed  
Upon the rugged rock which made rough footing,  
Even for goats: and down new depths I looked.

## Inferno - Canto 20 - Shaw

My verse must speak of further suffering,  
And give its subject to the twentieth canto  
Of my first strain, which is of souls submerged.  
I was disposed at once to gaze into  
The depth uncovered, which was bathed in seas  
Of sorrow: and within the caverned circle  
I saw folk, silent, weeping, as they walked  
Slowly like those who sing the litanies.  
I bent my head to see; they all appeared  
Most strangely twisted at the neck: their face  
Looked down upon their back, and they walked backward  
For otherwise they could not see before them.  
By force of palsy men may thus have been  
Twisted. I have not seen it, nor believe it.  
Now, if God help thee, reader, to gain fruit  
From what thou readest, think for thine own self  
If I could keep my face unwet, beholding  
Near me man's figure so awry that tears  
Fell 'twixt the shoulder-blades, and down the spine.  
Be sure I wept, leaning against a rock  
Of the hard cliff ; till my guide said to me:  
"Art thou, too, as are other foolish ones?  
To have no pity here, is to have pity;  
For who is more perverse than he whose pity  
Leads him to question of Almighty Justice?  
Lift up thy head, lift up, and see the man  
'For whom the earth gaped wide in sight of all  
The Thebans: wherefore they cried out: 'Where rushest?  
Why leave the war Amphiaras?' He  
Fell headlong without stay till Minos' clutch  
Received him. See, his back is made his breast;  
He would have looked too far before, but now  
Walks backward, looking backward. See Tiresias  
Who from a man was changed into a woman;  
And seven years past, he saw the snakes again,  
And struck again, and re-became a man.  
This is Aronta, belly turned to back;  
Who in the hills of Luna, where there toil  
The Carrarese who house themselves below,  
Had for abode a den in the white marbles

Whence he could scan the stars and the wide sea.  
And she whose breasts are covered by her hair  
Flowing straight down, was Manto, who roamed far  
O'er many lands, and came where I was born:  
So it will please me somewhat if thou listenest.  
After her father died, and Bacchus' city  
Had been enslaved, she wandered long the world.  
Up in fair Italy there lies a lake,  
Below the Alps that press on Germany,  
Above Tirol; and she is called Benaco.  
By thousand springs and more I think she waters,  
Between the Val Cominica and Garda,  
The Apennines. A spot is on her breast  
Where saintly shepherds three might give the blessing;  
He of Verona, and of Trent, and Brescia,  
Should they all meet thereat upon Benaco.  
Peschiera sits, a fine and gallant fortress,  
Fronting the Brescan and the Bergamese;  
And on all sides the ground slopes down, and there  
The water that Benaco cannot hold  
In her full bosom, flows away in streams  
Through the green meadows; when it gains a head  
No more Benaco, but they call it Pincio,  
Down to Governo, where it joins the Po.  
Not long it runs before it finds a flat  
O'er which it spreads, and filters into marshes,  
Which wont in summer to be bad for health.  
Here the wild maiden passed, and found a place  
Within the marsh, untilled, and bare of folk,  
And, shunning every comradeship of man,  
She stayed there with her slaves to ply her arts:  
And there she lived, and there she left her body.  
And then the men around betook themselves  
To this marsh-guarded place; and built a city  
Over her bones, and called it by her name  
Who chose the place; and asked no further omen.  
The people thickened on the ground before  
That Casalodi raiding mastered them:  
Himself by Pinamonte to be ousted.  
Now, if thou hearest tell of other source  
From which my country sprang than this, I warn thee  
To let no falsehood cheat thee of the truth"

I answered: "Master, thy discourse is all  
So sure to me, and takes my faith so well,  
Aught else would be spent coals to me. But say,  
If in the people moving here thou seest  
Some worthy note: my mind is bent on this."  
He said: "This one with beard on his brown back  
Down falling, he it was when Greece was manless  
Nor e'en the cradles full, was augur: he,  
With Calchas, drew the signs to cut the rope,  
And hoist the sail: Eurypilus his name;  
And I have sung him in my tragedy.  
Thou, knowing it from first line to the last,  
Knowest this. That other slight-made man  
Is northern Michael Scott the wizard: and  
Guido Bonatti, see, in magic skilled:  
Asdente, who would gladly now resume  
Leather and packthread, but repents too late.  
See these sad women who forsook the needle,  
The spindle, and the shuttle, and became  
Witches with potions, images, and herbs.  
But now come on: Cain with his thorns is holding  
The border of each hemisphere, and touching  
The waves beneath Seville: the moon was full  
Last night; thou dost remember, for not once  
Didst trip, or hurt thyself by the deep wood."

## **Inferno - Canto 21 - Shaw**

From bridge to bridge, we talked of other things  
My verse cares not to sing; we reached and kept  
The top, to look into the other fissure  
Of Malebolgia, and the other woes.  
And it was marvellously dark. As when  
In the Venetian Arsenal they boil,  
In winter, the tenacious pitch, to caulk  
Such boats as need repair to take the sea,  
At that time one man fits new timber, one  
Plugs up the holes in sea-worn ribs that long  
Braved many a voyage; and one planks the bow,  
And one the stern; others are shaping oars;  
Some twist the cables; others patch the mainsail,  
And one the staysail; thus, though not by fire  
But by unearthly skill, boiled down below  
Thick pitch, that daubed the banks on every side.  
I saw it, but I saw no more than that  
It lay in ebullition, bubbling up,  
The whole mass lifting, sinking, back again.  
But while I stared at it, my leader said:  
“Look! look!” and drew me from the place I kept  
Towards himself. I turned me, as a man  
Turns back from seeing what will make him flee,  
And then is enervate in sudden fear  
Lest, having seen it, flight should be denied him.  
And up behind us a black devil ran  
To the cliff's edge: ay, he was horrible!  
And how inhuman in his act he seemed,  
With his wings up, and on his nimble feet.  
A sinner sat upon his strong sharp shoulder,  
The ankles of whose feet he gripped together;  
And from our bridge he cried: “O Malebranche!  
Here comes a magistrate of Santa Zita;  
Duck him beneath, while I go back for more  
To Lucca, so well furnished with them; all  
Save Buontoro are fine swindlers there.  
Quickly do gifts turn no to yes.” Then down  
He hurled him, turned, and sped along the cliff;  
No bloodhound loosed on robber ever took  
The trail so fast. The sinner sank; then rose,

Struggling; the demons underneath the bridge  
 Yelled: "There 's no Holy Face of Lucca here!  
 Ye swim not here as in the Serchio!  
 And if thou hast no wish to prove our hooks  
 Thou wilt not rise above thy sheet of pitch."  
 More than a hundred hooks were flung to catch him.  
 They yelled: "A dancer here had better hide!  
 Thou canst filch then in secret, an' thou wilt."  
 Thus act the cooks, who call their boys to thrust  
 The meat below the boiling broth with hooks.  
 Then my good master warned me: "Lest they see  
 Thee here, crouch down behind a sheltering rock.  
 And though they should insult me, do not thou  
 Be feared, for all these things I fully know,  
 Since once before I have passed through such doings."  
 With that he moved from the bridge-head; and when  
 He came upon the sixth cliff, he had need  
 Of a determined face. With such a storm,  
 And fury as the dogs rush out with, on  
 A ragged beggar who perforce must cry  
 His prayer from where they stop him; out came these  
 From 'neath the bridge with all their hooks against him.  
 He loudly called: "Be none of you such felon!  
 Before ye dare to touch me, bring out one  
 Of you to hear me speak, and then take counsel  
 Whether ye may attack me." They all cried,  
 "Go, Malacoda!" One came forward, while  
 The rest stood still, and said to him: "What use  
 Am I to thee?" My master answered him"  
 "Dost thou suppose I could have come so far  
 Secure from threats like thine, unless by aid  
 Of heavenly Will, and a propitious fate,  
 O Malacoda? Now give passage. I  
 Must take this man upon such savage way,  
 Because Heaven wills it." And the devil's pride  
 Was so abashed, he dropped his hook before him,  
 Saying to all: "This man must not be struck."  
 My leader unto me: "O thou who sittest  
 Behind the steep rock of the bridge so still,  
 Now thou canst safely come to me again."  
 I moved, and quickly went to him, but all  
 The devils came so forward that I feared

They would not keep their pact. Just so I saw  
The forces of Caprona in alarm  
Lest, issuing, their safeguard should be broken  
By all the foes they saw on every side.  
I pressed my whole self close against my leader;  
But gazed at those who were not good to see.  
They lowered their hooks, and: "Shall we not just touch him  
Behind?" said one to other as they came.  
But the big devil who had given word  
To Virgil looked round sharply, and said: "Halt!  
Halt there, Scarmiglione!" And to us  
You can no further go this way, for all  
The sixth arch lies in ruins to the bottom.  
But if you must, it will be by this tunnel  
Which brings you out on rock that you can traverse.  
Yesterday, five hours later than the hour  
That now it is, there were fulfilled twelve hundred  
Sixty and six of years, since here the path  
Was blocked. I send my men that way to see  
If any ambush lies. Go ye with them.  
They will not harm you." He began to call:  
"Come forward, Alichino, Calcabrina!  
Thou, Barbariccia, thou shalt lead the ten.  
And thou, Cagnazzo, Libicocco too,  
Ciriatto with the tusks, and Graffiacane,  
And Draghignazzo, also Farfarello,  
Mad Rubicante: search ye well around  
The boiling pitch, and take these travellers safe  
To the great rock that stretches o'er the dens."  
"Oh me, my master, what is this I see?"  
Cried I. "Alas! Oh I let us go alone.  
If thou canst find the way, for my part I  
Would never call them. Thou art prudent still  
As always: dost not see them grind their teeth,  
And scowl their cruel threats?" And he: "I would  
Not have thee frightened. Let them gnash at will.  
They do it for the traitors whom they punish."  
The troop turned on the left, but first each devil,  
His tongue held tight between his teeth; for signal,  
Looked to his chief, who gave it devilwise.

## Inferno - Canto 22 - Shaw

I have seen gallant troopers shift their ground,  
Go into fight, or gather to the muster;  
Sometimes fall back for safety: on your land,  
Arezzans! soldiers' forays have I seen;  
And tilts at tournaments, and jousts of skill,  
Now to the sound of trumpets, now with bells,  
With drums, and smoke or flame from castle walls,  
And with our own devices, or of strangers  
But never yet to instruments like these  
Have I seen horse or foot move to the march,  
Nor ship, by signal of the land or stars.  
We walked with the ten devils: horrid comrades!  
But, go to church, with saints; to inns, with gluttons.  
My eyes were fixed upon the pitch, to see  
All in the circle, and the scalded people.  
As dolphins spring with an arched back, and give  
The seamen sign to run before the wind  
So here and there, for lessening of the pain,  
A sinner showed his back and hid once more  
Quicker than flash of lightning. And as frogs  
At edge of pond squat with their noses out,  
But feet and body hidden; so the sinners  
Crouched all around. But Barbariccia neared them,  
And down they went beneath the boiling bubbles.  
My heart fell shivering, shivers still. I saw  
That one delayed, just as one frog might stay  
While the rest dived: and Grafiacane then  
Being the nearest, hooked his clotted hair,  
And dragged him up as he had been an otter.  
I knew their names, for when they had been chosen  
I took good heed; and noticed how they called  
Each other. With one voice the accursed cried:  
"Flay him now, Rubicante, lay thy hooks on."  
I said: "O Master, try to learn the name,  
If possible, of that poor abject wretch  
Fallen into his adversaries' hands."  
My master went up close to him, and asked  
Who was he? And he answered: "In Navarre  
My mother bore me to a worthless man  
Who ruined both himself, and all he had.

She put me to be footboy to a knight;  
 Then I was servant to the good king Thibault;  
 There I began to practise knavery,  
 For which I give account within this broth."  
 Ciriatto, from whose mouth projected tusks,  
 Gave him to feel their edge. The mouse was caught  
 'Twixt cruel cats. Then Barbariccia seized  
 Ciriatto in his arms, and cried: "Stand, there!  
 My business 'tis to stick him," turned his face  
 Toward my master, saying: "Now demand  
 What thou dost wish to know of him, before  
 One of us rend him." Virgil asked of him:  
 "Among the wicked know'st thou any Latin  
 Beneath the pitch?" And he: "Only just now  
 I left one who had come from nigh that land;  
 And were I covered up with him again,  
 I should fear neither hook nor claw." Then said  
 Libicocco: "We have waited far too long,"  
 And struck his arm, and carried off a piece.  
 And Draghignazzo then would fain have hooked  
 The wretched legs; but the decurion turned  
 Around with scowling face on all of them.  
 And when they were a little pacified,  
 My leader, not delaying, asked at once  
 Of him who still was looking at his wound:  
 "Who was it, from whom bad luck brought, thee out  
 As thou didst say, to dally on the shore?"  
 "Brother Gomita was that one," he said,  
 "Him of Gallura: vessel full of fraud,  
 Who kept in play his master's enemies  
 So cleverly, all praised his parts: he took  
 Their moneys, and discharged them all, he says.  
 And in all office, no poor petty thief  
 But sovereign swindler, he: and with him goes  
 One Michel Zanch' of Logodoro, and  
 Their tongues are tireless, talking of Sardinia.  
 Ay me! look at that other devil grinning  
 I would go on, but I so fear that he  
 Is getting ready there to scratch my head."  
 Now their big captain turned on Farfarello  
 Whose eyes were gloating to inflict a wound,  
 And said: "Fall back, thou scavenger!" And then

The frightened spirit straight began again:  
"Tuscans, or Lombards, if ye wish to see  
Or hear them, I can make them come. But ye  
Must keep those evil claws a little quiet,  
Or they will be too scared, lest ye should strike.  
But, sitting still just here, for the one head  
That I am, I can bring you seven at least;  
I need but whistle. 'Tis our signal, when  
We wish to bring each other up." At this  
Cagnazzo shook his head, and tossed his muzzle.  
Said he: "That is his trick to save himself."  
The spirit, overflowing with such tricks,  
Replied at once: "A likely trick indeed,  
Since it ensures my fellows bigger pains,"  
Alichin's wrath boiled over, and he spurned  
His comrades' say, and screamed: "If thou go down  
I shall not run to catch thee. I shall beat  
My wings, and watch the pitch well. But now come,  
Leave this, and let the bank mark out the ground,  
And see what thou canst do among us there."  
O thou who readest, thou shalt hear fresh sport.  
Each from beyond the pool turned eager eyes;  
And he the first, whose deed had been most cruel.  
But ay! the Navarrese had seized his chance,  
Planted his feet, and in a moment sprung  
Clean from their captain; say, were they aghast!  
And he the most, the cause of the mishap.  
He ran, and cried: "I have thee now!" But all  
In vain, for fear was fleeter than his wings;  
And the prey dived, while the pursuer darted,  
Flying breast downward over him, too late.  
So dips the teal when down the falcon swoops,  
And he draws off fatigued and angry. Then  
Flew Calcabrina, furious at the trick  
And held back Alichin, delighted that  
Since he had failed, himself would have the fight.  
But now the Navarrese had disappeared,  
He turned his weapons on his own companion.  
They fell to fighting right above the pool.  
But Alichin was a fierce goshawk too  
To grapple with a foe, and both together  
Dropped in the middle of the boiling pitch.

Quickly the stuff made either one let go;  
But yet in no way either could get up;  
Their wings were so well weighted with the pitch.  
So Barbariccia and the crew were vexed,  
And sent four flying from the further side  
With all their diverse hooks; and quick enough  
Each at his proper place they dropped to work;  
And threw the hooks toward their clogged companions,  
Who were well cooked by now within the crust.  
And so we left them to their own affairs.

## **Inferno - Canto 23 - Shaw**

Silent, alone, and without convoy, now  
We walked; the one behind the other, as  
The Minor Brothers do upon the road.  
And Esop's fable to my mind was brought,  
(The frog and mouse), by those two devils' duel,  
Which was as like it as is pea to pea;  
If with fixed mind you think of it all through.  
And as from one thought buds another, so  
From this sprang out another, doubling all  
My first alarm; for thus I thought: "Through us  
These devils have been mocked; and such a trick,  
And the pitch bath have, I am sure, enraged them;  
And fury being joined to their ill-will,  
They will pursue us far more cruelly  
Than greyhound does the leveret he pins."  
And now I felt my hair all stand on end;  
I paused and listened hard. I said: "O master,  
Unless thou hide thyself and me directly,  
I drop for fear of Malebranche: now  
They are behind us, and I think I feel them."  
He said: "Were I a mirror, I should catch  
Not quicker thy resemblance from outside,  
Than now I catch the image of thy mind.  
For all thy thoughts find entrance among mine,  
Alike in act and look; and thus from both  
But one resolve I make. If it should be  
The slope lies rightly, so that we can climb  
Down to the next division, we will flee  
This chase we now imagine." Ere he finished  
Giving this counsel, I could see them coming  
Not too far off us, with their wings all tense,  
To catch us. In a flash, my leader seized me;  
As may a mother who is waked by noise,  
And sees the flames alight and flickering close,  
And catches up her baby and runs out,  
Not stopping, feeling him, and not herself,  
Though she has only flung her shift upon her.  
And headlong he descended from the rough  
Bank toward the hanging rock that forms a bridge  
From one deep dark division to another.

Never ran water through a channel down  
 To turn the wheel of mill upon the shore,  
 E'en where it whirls into the circling blades,  
 So fast as ran my master down the rock,  
 Claspng me high upon his breast as were I  
 Child of his own, not merely a companion.  
 Scarce were his feet upon the lowest ground  
 When I could see their faces on the top  
 Above us; but my fear was gone; the high  
 Providence, appointing them to the fifth circle,  
 Takes from them power to depart from it.  
 Down in the depth we found the hypocrites,  
 Moving around with steps exceeding slow,  
 Vanquished, and weeping, weary in the face.  
 Cloaks with low hoods over their eyes they wore,  
 Made in the fashion of the Cologne monks;  
 Gold-worked outside, and passing handsome, but  
 Within all lined with lead, and such a weight  
 That Frederic's punishment had seemed of straw.  
 O everlasting cloak of sad fatigue!  
 So slow they went that every step of ours  
 Caught up with a fresh file. I to my guide:  
 "Try thou to find some known by name or deed,  
 And look around too, as we walk." Then one,  
 Who knew the Tuscan, heard and cried behind us,  
 Halt, ye who walk so quick through the dusk air,  
 Thou mayst perchance hear from me what thou askest."  
 Wherefore my guide turned saying: "Wait for him;  
 Then we will walk their pace." I paused, and saw  
 Two making haste; their mind was in their eyes  
 To reach me, but the way was straight, the load  
 Heavy. They came, and stood, silent, askance  
 Of eye, and one to other turned, and said:  
 "He is alive, his throat moves when he speaks;  
 Even if dead, what privilege have they  
 To walk uncloaked?" and then to me: "O Tuscan,  
 Come to the sad academy of hypocrites,  
 Show no contempt, but tell us who thou art."  
 And I to them: "I grew where I was born,  
 In the great city by the fair stream Arno,  
 And have the body which I always had.  
 But who are ye from whom such grief distils

As I see dropping down your cheeks? And what  
 Can be the pain that strikes such sparks?" Then one  
 Said: "These gold cloaks are leaded to such weight  
 They set the balance screeching. But we were  
 Both Joyous Friars; Bolognese; his name  
 Was Loderingo, mine was Catalano;  
 Jointly appointed by thy land, though custom  
 Usually calls one man alone, to keep  
 Peace between differing men, and arbitrate  
 Their cause; and what we were may still appear  
 Around Gardinga." "Friars," I said, "your pains -"  
 But said no more, for to my eye there sprang  
 One stretched upon the ground in form of cross  
 Held by three stakes: he writhed on seeing me,  
 And his deep sighs came sougning through his beard.  
 Then Friar Catalan, observing, said:  
 "That staked one that thou seest gave advice  
 Unto the Pharisees, that one man die,  
 Nor all the people perish under Rome.  
 Naked athwart the path he lies, and all  
 With all their leaden weight must tread on him.  
 The father of his wife the same way lies  
 Within this depth, and others of that council  
 Which sowed such seed of misery for the Jews."  
 Then I saw Virgil rapt in wonder sore  
 Over this man stretched down into a cross  
 In such base way, through an eternal exile.  
 And afterwards, he said to the cloaked friar:  
 "It will not vex thee, if thou may'st, to tell  
 Whether there lies a passage on the right  
 Where we can both go forth, nor need to call  
 Those sable angels to come back and guide us."  
 He answered: "Nearer than ye think there lies  
 A rock dislodged from the great circle crossing  
 These dark divisions, but o'er this one broken  
 And not connecting; ye can climb the ruin  
 Tumbled beside it, which commands the depth."  
 My leader stood a little, looking down  
 Then said: "He badly treated us who hooks"  
 The sinners there below." The friar said:  
 "We at Bologna used to hear enough  
 Of all the devil's vices, and I heard

'He was a liar and the father of it.'"  
My leader walked away with lengthened steps,  
His lofty face a little moved with anger.  
So I departed from those loaded spirits,  
Walking within the prints of his dear feet.

## Inferno - Canto 24 - Shaw

At that time of the young year when the sun  
Cools his hot rays beneath Aquarius,  
And night already takes full half of day,  
And frost is gathered on the earth, and seems  
The very image of her sister snow;  
The peasant, whose small store is at its least,  
Gets up, and looks, and finds the country white,  
Strikes hand on thigh, and goes back to the house  
Complaining here and there, and like a wretch  
Who knows not what he does; but then goes out  
Again, and picks up hope because the world  
Within short time has changed, and takes his staff,  
And drives his sheep to pasture. In like way  
The master frightened me when I beheld  
His face disturbed; but to quick hurt, quick salve.  
For, as we came to the cleft bridge, my leader  
Turned upon me that gentle look I saw  
First at the mountain foot; with open arms,  
Considering with himself and looking well  
Over the ruin, up he lifted me;  
As one who acts, and judges, as it seems  
Ever with foresight; thus he put me up  
On a great rock, and showed me one above it.  
“Now, thou canst climb on that,” he said; “but first  
Make sure that it will take thy weight.” No way  
Was this for lead-cloaked folk; for we with toil,  
He light, and pushing me, must mount from point  
To point, and if it had not been the course  
Was shorter here than from the other side.  
For him, I know not: I had broken down.  
But because Malebolge toward the mouth  
Of the most lowest depth is all inclined,  
It causes all the barriers to lie  
With one side rising, and one dropping down.  
We came at length upon the top, from which  
The last dividing rocks go gaping down  
My lungs were so exhausted of their breath,  
Now I was up, I could no further; but  
I sat me down on the first spot I found.  
“Now, now, thou must cast off all cowardice,”

The master said: "Sitting on feathers never  
Will bring to fame, nor lying under quilts.  
And without fame he who consumes his life  
Leaves as, much vestige on the earth as smoke  
Upon the air, or foam upon the water.  
So now, get up, and conquer breathlessness  
With the brave mind which wins its every battle  
Unless o'erweakened by its body's weight.  
We have to mount a longer ladder still  
'Tis not enough to have got over these.  
Dost understand? Now do thy worthiest."  
I rose up then, and made as if I had  
More breath than truly I knew how to muster,  
And said: "Go on, for I am strong and ready."  
We took our way along upon the rock,  
And it was narrow, rugged, hard to pass,  
And steeper still than it had been at first.  
I talked the while I climbed, not to seem weak.  
And then a voice came up from depths below,  
Inapt at forming words; I did not know  
What it was saying, though upon the arch  
Bridging the barriers I stood. I looked  
Below, but living eyes could never pierce  
Down to the bottom through the dark, so I:  
"Master, wilt thou not go to the next circle?  
Let us climb down the wall, for as I hear  
Not understanding, so I see without  
Forming a figure." He: "I answer not,  
But do it, for a fair demand should be  
We came upon the arching bridge that joins  
The eighth division; thence the depth was seen.  
Within it I beheld a dreadful mass  
Of serpents of so many diverse kinds,  
My blood is frozen at remembering them.  
Libya, with all her sands, can boast no more:  
Cobra, and deadly adder, and all others.  
In Ethiopia no such plagues and horrors,  
Nor over the Red Sea can there be found.  
And 'mid this cruel and most fearful brood  
Ran terrified and naked folk, without  
Shelter to run to, or a charm to make them  
Invisible. Their hands were bound behind

With snakes, which fixed the head and tail upon  
 Their loins, and were all knotted up in front.  
 And there was one was just in front of us,  
 And a snake darted, bit him where the neck  
 Joins to the shoulder. Quicker than an O  
 Or I is made, he lit, burned up, turned ash,  
 Which, falling, scattered on the ground, and then  
 Regathering itself, re-formed in him,  
 All of a sudden. Thus the wise men say  
 The phoenix does every five hundred years;  
 Consumes, and springs afresh, and never feeds  
 On leaf or grain, but tears of frankincense,  
 As one who falls, he knows not how, possessed  
 Of devils which fling down, and fain would rend him  
 Or through some inward cramp which binds a man;  
 And when he rises, looks, and looks around,  
 And, looking, deeply sighs: so stood that sinner.  
 O divine Justice! how severe art thou,  
 With righteous vengeance overwhelming sin.  
 The leader asked him who he was; he said:  
 "I dropped from Tuscany not long ago  
 To these dire jaws: I liked a bestial life,  
 And not a man's, the bastard that I was:  
 Beast, Vanni Fucci, that am I. Pistoia  
 My fitting den." I to my leader said:  
 "Tell him he must not jeer, and ask him why,  
 For what faults done, he was thrust down: for I  
 Have seen already men of blood and anger."  
 The sinner heard, and ceased pretending; he  
 Gave me his mind, and face all steeped in shame,  
 And said: "It hurts me more that thou hast caught  
 Me here in this great woe where thou dost see me,  
 Than when they took me from the other life.  
 Deny I cannot what thou claimest! here  
 I am because I robbed the sacristies  
 Of their fair goods, and laid the blame on others.  
 Now that thou may'st not joy of this sweet sight,  
 When thou dost leave, if ever, these dark places;  
 Open thine ears to what I say, and listen!  
 Pistoia first shall thin the Black away;  
 Then Florence shall renew her folk and laws.  
 From Valdimagra wrapt in turbid cloud

Mars shall draw vapour, and with tempest sharp  
The battle shall be fought impetuous  
Over Piceno's fields; and suddenly  
The mists shall break, and every White be left  
Struck down. I tell thee this to wound thee sore."

## **Inferno - Canto 25 - Shaw**

When he had said these words, the robber raised  
Both his two hands, and thrusting out his thumbs,  
Cried, "Take it, 'tis at Thee I do it, God."  
Ever since that, the serpents are my friends;  
For instantly one twined about his neck  
As it would say: "I will not have more words."  
Another took his arms with double turn,  
Clenching itself upon itself in front,  
So that he could not move a single muscle.  
Pistoia! ah, Pistoia! thou shouldest order  
Thine own death-fires, and be no more known.  
Thy sin outstrips that of thine ancestors.  
In all the circles of the night of hell  
Never a soul so arrogant to God,  
Not even he who fell from Thebes' walls,  
Had I beheld. He fled. He spoke no more.  
I saw a centaur full of fury, flying  
Behind him, shouting: "Where is the blasphemer?"  
Maremma could not yield so many adders  
As clung together heaped upon his croup  
And on his back, to where the man springs up  
Behind his neck, and stretched across the shoulders  
There lay a dragon with his wings erect,  
And set on fire all that hindered him.  
My master told me: "He is Caco, who  
Beneath the cliffs of Aventine had oft  
Caused pools of blood ; but now for theft, and fraud,  
He must not run among his fellows, for  
He carried off the splendid herd that fed  
Within his reach, and Hercules so taught him  
With his great mace to quit these crooked ways,  
May be he felt but ten of hundred blows."  
And while he spoke, and while the centaur passed,  
Three spirits came below us: neither I,  
Nor did my leader notice them till when  
They cried: "Who are ye?" Our discourse was stopped;  
And we observed them there. I did not know them.  
But it fell out, as happens in such case,  
One spoke to other: "Where can Cianfa be?"  
Wherefore, to call my leader to attend,

From chin beside the nose I laid my finger.  
And now, O reader, wert thou very slow  
To credit what I say, it were no wonder;  
Myself, who saw, can scarcely credit it;  
Oh, how my eyebrows lifted o'er my eyes!  
There darted up a lizard with six feet  
Upon one spirit; fitting himself close,  
With middle feet he clasped the belly round,  
And with the fore-feet held to either arm,  
And fixed his fangs in one and other cheek.  
His hinder feet he stretched upon the thighs,  
And put his tail between the legs, and tightened  
It up the spine. The thousand-suckered ivy  
No faster holds the alder than this beast  
Clung with its every member to the man's.  
And then they stuck as if of melting wax,  
And all their colours mixed, and neither seemed  
The thing he was; as when before the burning  
A brownish colour runs all up the paper  
Ere it turn black; and all the white is gone.  
The other two were looking on, and each cried out:  
"O Angel, how thou changest! See!  
Thou art not one thing, neither art thou two."  
Already had the two heads become one;  
Still there appeared two faces mixed within  
One countenance, and there the two were lost.  
Four members made themselves into two arms;  
The calves and thighs, the belly, and the chest  
Became such limbs as never had been seen.  
All primary aspect was changed and cancelled.  
Two, and yet neither, the perverted thing  
Appeared, and so it slowly went away.  
As the lithe lizard, under the sharp sting  
Of the dog-days which dry the hedges up,  
Seems like a flash in darting o'er the road;  
So seemed a snake which suddenly in anger  
Dashed toward the bellies of the other two  
Purple and black like pepper fruit he was;  
And in that part which first draws sustenance  
Ere birth, he pierced the one; and then he fell,  
Lying stretched out before him on the ground.  
The bitten one looked at him, but said nothing,

And stood unmoved upon his feet, and yawned  
As if the fever or a sleep assailed him.  
He at the snake looked, and the snake at him.  
One at his wound, the other at his mouth  
Sent forth a fume, and the two fumes commingled.  
Be silent, Lucan, thou who touchest on  
Sabellus wretched, and Nasidius  
Attend to hear what now came forth to sight.  
Ovid, speak not of Arethuse, or Cadmus,  
For if in poetry, thou dost convert  
One to a fountain, one into a snake,  
I have no envy for thee; face to face,  
Two natures thou didst not transmute in such  
Manner that form of each was apt to change  
Its very substance, and the other take.  
Each corresponding to the other thus  
The snake now cleft his tail in two; the wounded  
Drew his feet close together; legs and thighs  
Appeared to stick, and in a little while  
No mark remained of joining; now the cleft  
Tail took their form, and lost itself therein  
And its skin became soft, and theirs grew hard.  
I saw the arms slip in as if at armpits;  
The rudiments of the snake-feet were lengthened;  
The man's feet shortened in an equal measure;  
Its twisted end became his middle parts,  
Which vanished in the body of the snake.  
At the same time the fumes tinged one and other  
With a new colour, which on one part grew,  
And on the other seemed to peel away.  
One figure rose; and one fell down to earth.  
But the inhuman eyes were undisturbed,  
Though underneath them either face formed fresh.  
In him who stood, it drew towards the temples  
And from the flowing stuff the ears unfolded  
Above the jaw; and that which did not flow  
Formed for the face its nose, and filled the lips.  
And he who lay thrust forward all his muzzle,  
And drew his ears in, as the slug her horns;  
The tongue compact which had been quick to speak  
Now cleaves; in him who stands the cleft unites.  
The fumes are laid: the spirit in the brute

Glides hissing through the depth; behind it stands  
The other creature, foaming as he speaks.  
He turned his new-made shoulders then, and said  
To his companion: "Buoso well may crawl  
Upon his belly down that road, as I did."  
So saw I in the seventh pit the change,  
And the exchange; and the new thing must be  
Excuse, if I have made the tale too long.  
But though my eyes bewildered, and my mind  
Confounded were; these could not flee so deftly  
But that I recognised them well: one was  
Puccio Sciancato ; he alone unchanged,  
Of the three spirits who came first, remained.  
He whom thou mourn'st, Gaville, was the other.

## **Inferno - Canto 26 - Shaw**

Thou may'st rejoice, O Florence! thou art great  
Beating thy wings both over land and sea;  
Thy name is known in hell! Among the thieves  
I have found five such, all thy citizens;  
Whence shame is come to me: no more canst thou  
Go out with much of honour from this thing.  
But if in dreams anigh the morn, the truth  
Is seen ; then thou shalt feel in little time  
From hence, that which not only stranger folk  
But Prato too shall wish thee; and if now  
It came, 'twere not too soon, for it must be  
As Fate has ordered it: and I shall mourn  
The more as wearing age shall overtake me.  
We took our way again, ascending steps  
Of points of rock by which we had come down.  
My leader climbed, and thrust and aided me.  
And re-pursuing the long lonely track  
Among the splintered fragments of the crag,  
Our feet from hands exacted due assistance.  
Then I was grieved, and now again I grieve  
When I direct my mind to what I saw.  
And more than wont I rein my genius in  
Lest it should run beyond where virtue guides  
For truly if kind stars, or somewhat better  
Gave me this gift, myself I do not envy.  
As many glow-worms as the peasant sees,  
Who in the summer when the sun least hides  
His face informing all the world, is resting  
Upon a hill at that time when the flies  
Yield to the gnats, down in the valley where  
He ploughs perchance, or gathers grapes by day;  
So many lights in the eighth barrier glittered;  
Which I perceived as soon as we could see  
The bottom. As the prophet, who called forth  
The bears for vengeance, saw Elijah's chariot  
Soar with the horses stretching toward heaven,  
And gazed as long as eye could follow it  
Till he saw nothing but the flame alone,  
A speck of flame and going upward still;  
So moved each flame around the gaping mouth

Of the abyss, nor showed what it had stolen;  
 For every flame had seized, and held, a sinner.  
 As high as could be on the bridge I stood  
 To see; but tightly clung unto the rock  
 Or, without e'er a thrust, I should have fallen.  
 The leader, seeing me thus pondering, said:  
 "Within the fires are spirits, each one swathed  
 In that which kindles him." "My master," I  
 Replied, "I heed thy word, but yet already  
 Knew what thou tellest, and had wished to ask  
 Who is within this flame which is divided  
 At top, and might seem that which rose upon  
 The pyre of Eteocles, where they laid  
 His brother with him?" He replied: "In that,  
 Both Diomed and great Ulysses suffer,  
 And to the vengeance now they speed together,  
 As once in wrath, and groan within one flame  
 The ambush of the horse, which made the way  
 Whence issued noble seed of Romans: there  
 They also weep the trick because of which  
 Deidamia dead still mourns Achilles  
 And there for the palladium they atone."  
 "If they can speak within the flame," I said,  
 I pray thee, master, and I pray again,  
 And let each prayer be worth a thousand, that  
 Thou wilt not say me nay to wait the flame,  
 The horned flame which comes; for do but see  
 With what strong wish I lean towards it."  
 He In answer: "Thy request is praiseworthy  
 I grant it; yet thou must refrain from speech.  
 Leave me to speak: I have a just idea  
 Of what thou wishest; but they might be shy,  
 For they are Greeks, to entertain thy tongue."  
 So when the flame was come and Virgil thought  
 The place and moment fitting, thus I heard  
 Him speak upon this manner: "O may ye  
 Two who are wrapt together in one flame,  
 If, while I lived, I did deserve enough  
 From you, and if I did deserve enough  
 Though little, from you, when I wrote great verse  
 Up in the world above; may ye not pass  
 Beyond us till we learn of one of you

Where, through himself lost, he lay down to die.”  
The taller horn of the eternal flame  
Began to shake and murmur, as if wind  
Were wearying it; the tip began to move  
As it had been a tongue to speak, and then  
A voice was thrown beyond the fire, and said:  
“When I left Circe, who for a long year  
Had kept me lingering anigh Gaeta,  
Not then so called, as later of Aeneas;  
Not sweetness of my child, nor piety  
For my old father, nor devoted love  
Which should have gladdened fair Penelope,  
Could conquer in me that prevailing fire  
I felt, to learn the secrets of the world,  
And of the weakness, and the strength of man.  
I put me forth on the deep open sea,  
In one small ship with few of company  
Who never left me; and I saw two coasts,  
Far as Morocco, far as Spain; Sardinia  
And other islands which those waters bathe.  
And I and my companions had grown old  
And slow, when we passed through that narrow strait  
Where Hercules had placed his giant marks  
To show that voyagers could go no further.  
On the right hand I left Seville, as on  
The left I had already left Ceuta.  
‘Brothers,’ I said, ‘who through a hundred thousand  
Perils are come at last into the West,  
From this so little vigil that is left you  
Of your short life, Oh, take not the great knowledge  
Of the unpeopled world beyond the sun.  
Consider your proud seed; ye are not beasts,  
But are to follow worth and understanding.’  
And with this little speech I pricked them so,  
My comrades, to the road, that scarcely now  
I could have held them back. We turned the poop  
Back to the morning, made our oars as wings  
In a mad flight, went gaining all the time  
On our left hand, and night now saw the stars  
Of the other pole, and dropped our own so low  
It never rose again above the wave.  
Five times lit up, as many lost again,

The light was that was given by the moon,  
Since we had entered on those deepened seas.  
Then a dark mountain in the distance lay  
Seeming so high as never I had seen.  
We were all joy, but soon returned to grief  
When a great storm broke out from that new land.  
The ship crashed on a rock; three times the swell  
Lifted her round, but at the fourth she raised  
Her bow, and dropped the stern. And Fate decreed  
The swallowing waters that o'erwhelmed us all."

## **Inferno - Canto 27 - Shaw**

The flame stood straight and still, and said no more  
Then with the Poet's leave it moved away.  
Behind it came another, and our eyes  
Were drawn toward its point, whence issued sounds  
Confused. Like the Sicilian bull who first  
Roared with the groanings of the man whose file  
Had finished him, and this was just, whose roar  
Was the tormented victim's voice, and thus,  
For all he was of brass, he seemed to suffer;  
So was this flame; into whose language were  
The wretched words translated, for they had  
No way nor outlet through the element  
Till, when their path was made to the quick point  
Which moved as does the, tongue to let them pass  
We could hear say: "O thou, to whom I speak,  
To whom I did speak once in Lombard tongue  
Saying, 'Depart, I anger thee no more,'  
Since I am come, although a little late,  
Be not thou vexed, but stay and talk with me;  
I am not vexed, although I be on fire.  
If to this blind world now thou fallest from  
That Latin land of sweetness whence I bring  
My load of sin, tell me if my Romagna  
Fight, or have peace; for I was from the hills  
Within Urbino, and the height whence Tiber  
Unlocks himself." I listened, bending down;  
My leader thrust me in the side, and said:  
"Speak, he is Latin." I who had my answer  
Ready, began to speak without delay.  
"Romagna thine, O spirit hidden there  
Below, never was yet, nor is she now  
Free from the wars within her tyrants' hearts.  
No open war declared, I left. Ravenna  
Stands as she has stood for these many years;  
The eagle of Polenta broods above her;  
And covers Cervia with his wings. The land  
So long besieged that heaped the French in death  
Finds herself now beneath the Lion vert.  
Mastini of Verruchio, old and young,  
Who to Montagna dealt a cruel death,

Tear with their teeth as ever they were wont.  
 The Lion of the argent field still heads  
 Lamone and Santerno, changing sides  
 From summer round to winter. She, whose feet  
 The Savio bathes, sitting 'twixt hill and plain,  
 Thus keeps herself 'twixt tyranny and freedom.  
 Now tell me who thou art, I pray? Be not  
 More hard to me than all the rest have been;  
 But let thy name still front the world." And when  
 After its manner, for a while had roared  
 The flame, its point moved here and there, and then  
 Breathed in reply: "If I believed my answer  
 Given to one who would re-see the world,  
 This flame should never stir; but since from hence,  
 No one has e'er gone back, if I hear true,  
 I tell thee without fear of evil fame.  
 I was a man-at-arms, and turned Franciscan  
 Thinking my girdle would atone my sins.  
 My faith was sound, but then it was the Pope,  
 May evil take him, sent me back to sin.  
 And how, and why, I will explain to thee.  
 What time I lived with flesh and bone, the which  
 My mother gave me; all my works were those  
 Not of the lion, only of the fox.  
 In cunning, and in every stealthy track,  
 I was past master, and so used their arts  
 My fame went out to all the ends of earth.  
 But at that time of life when a man must  
 Haul at the shrouds, and gather in the sail,  
 That which had pleased me once, began to vex.  
 I took me to confess and to repent,  
 Ay! weary wretch; it might have been of use.  
 The Pope, that Pharisee-in-Chief, was fighting  
 Anigh the Lateran, and not with Jews,  
 Nor Saracens; his every foe was Christian,  
 Nor had borne arms 'gainst Acre nor had dealt  
 Within the Moorish land: and he regarded  
 Not in himself his office, nor his orders,  
 Neither in me the habit, which is wont  
 To make ascetics of its girded wearers.  
 As Constantine cried out upon Sylvester  
 To cure him, being leper, at Soracte;

So Boniface cried out for master-skill  
To cure him of his burning fever, hate.  
He asked my counsel; but I kept me silent;  
His words were wildly drunken. Presently  
He said: 'Have no suspicion in thy heart.  
I will absolve thee if thou tell me how  
I shall grind Penestrino in the dust.  
Thou knowest I lock, and I unlock heaven.  
My predecessor cared not for these keys;  
Two keys, thou seest.' The weighty argument  
Beset me sore, but silence seemed the worst.  
'Father.' I said, 'since thou dost wash away  
The sin, I needs must fall into it now.  
And width of promise, and a scant performance,  
Will win thee triumph on thy lofty seat.'  
St. Francis came for me when I was dead;  
But one of the black cherubs interfered  
With: 'Touch him not; what right hast thou to cheat?  
He must come down among my miscreants  
Because he counselled fraud: from then till now,  
I have been close beside his very hair.  
None can repent, and do the wrong, at once;  
That is against the law of contraries.'  
O miserable me, and how I shook!  
He seized me, and he said: 'Thou didst not think  
I was so good a reasoner.' Then he bore me  
To Minos, who curled round his horrid tail  
Eight times across his horny back, and bit  
Himself because he was so madly angry,  
And said: 'This thief goes to the fire of thieves.'  
Wherefore thou seest me here where I am lost,  
Clothed in the fire and crying in my pain."  
And having finished thus his speech, the flame  
Writhing and suffering, took its way again,  
Its sharp tip shaking. Then my leader went,  
I following him, along the broken rock  
To the next bridge over the depth, in which  
Those who sow discord reap the wages of it.

## **Inferno - Canto 28 - Shaw**

Who in plain prose repeated more than once  
Could tell the wounds and blood that now I saw?  
No tongue of man could do it, since our mind  
And speech have not capacity to compass it.  
If there were thrown together all the folk  
Who, through the Romans and long wars, were cast  
Down on the fields of fortune-tossed Apulia,  
When the men's rings were goodly spoils, as Livy  
Writes, and he does not err; and all the folk  
Struck by keen steel of Guiscard, striving with him;  
Those, too, whose bones are heaped at Ceperano  
Which false Apulia lost; at Tagliacozzo  
Where old Alardo fought unarmed; and all  
Could show their wounds, this were no parallel  
To the foul horror of the ninth division.  
A cask with staves knocked out yawns not so wide  
As one I saw, split downwards from the chin,  
With all inside him open to the sight.  
And while I gazed intently at him, he  
Looked at me, pulling at his cloven breast  
Saying: "Now see how I am rent; see how  
Mahomet is maimed; before me Ali walks,  
His face cut open; all thou seest here,  
Alive were sowers both of schism and scandal,  
And here they all are slit. A devil there  
Behind is stationed who thus cruelly  
Divides, striking with slash of sword at each  
Of all this pack of us, as we come round  
The track of pain; and then the wounds are closed  
Before each one come round to him once more.  
And who art thou, thus musing on the rock  
And putting off a while the punishment  
Adjudged above to meet thine own misdeeds?"  
"Death hath not reached him yet, nor sin doth lead  
To torment," said my master, "but to learn  
In full these things, I who am dead can fitly  
Take him through hell from circle down to circle.  
And this is true as that I speak to thee."  
More than a hundred when they heard these words  
Stopped in the depth to look at me, forgetting

In pure amazement their own suffering.  
 "Tell Fra Dolcin to gather stores at once,  
 Thou who mayst shortly see the sun again,  
 Unless he wish too soon to join me here;  
 Full stores of food, that the besieging snow  
 May to Novara toss no victory,  
 Which otherwise she will not lightly gain."  
 Thus Mahmet spoke to me with his foot lift  
 To turn, and then he set it down, and went.  
 Another with his throat and nose gashed through,  
 And one ear cut away, with all the rest  
 Standing, but first of them, to wonder, spoke  
 From out his bloody windpipe; saying thus:  
 "O thou whom sin condemns not, whom I saw  
 Up in the Latin land, if some strange likeness  
 Do not deceive me; shouldst thou see again  
 That pleasant plain that from Vercelli slopes  
 To Marcabo; recall Da Medicina;  
 And tell those two best men of Farno, Messer  
 Guido, and Angiolello, that unless  
 The foresight we have here prove wholly vain  
 They shall be thrown out from their boat, and drowned  
 In weighted sacks nigh to Cattolica,  
 By treachery of a foul tyrant. 'Twixt  
 Majolica and Cyprus, Neptune saw  
 Never such crime as that, 'mongst pirates or  
 An Argive crew. That one-eyed traitor, who  
 Governs the land which some one here with me  
 Fain would have never seen, will summon them  
 As if to counsel ; then will so arrange  
 That they will need no more to pray nor vow  
 Against Focara's traitor wind." Then I:  
 "Tell me, and tell me plain, if thou wilt have  
 Me mention thee above, who is that one  
 To whom Rimini is such sharp remembrance."  
 He put his hand on a companion's jaw,  
 And pulled it open, crying: "This is he;  
 He cannot speak; this exiled crushed the doubt  
 In Caesar, saying: 'To the well-prepared  
 Delay is always danger.' How aghast  
 Did Curio appear to me, his tongue  
 That spoke so boldly, cut from out his throat!

And there was one who had both hands cut off,  
Lifting his stumps up through the gloom, and making  
His face all bloody, crying out: "Remember  
Mosca, ah wretched! who advised, 'once done  
All safe,' and sowed much evil for the Tuscans."  
"And death to thine own house," I said, as he  
Accumulating pain on pain, like one  
Demented in his sadness, moved away.  
But I remained to watch the crowd, and saw  
A thing I would not tell without a witness,  
But that my conscience warrants me: companion  
Good, that abets a man beneath the breastplate  
Of a true mind. I truly saw, and still  
I think I see, a body with no head,  
Moving with all the rest of the sad troop.  
He held his head down-hanging by its hair  
As it had been a lantern; and he looked  
At us, and said: "Ah me!" He made a guide  
Of himself for himself; and he was two  
In one, and one in two; but how this was,  
He only knows who thus permitted it.  
When he was close beside the foot of bridge  
He held up high the arm which held the head  
To bring his words a little nearer me;  
Which were: "Now see this dreadful punishment,  
Thou that goest breathing, looking at the dead.  
See what can be as terrible as this!  
Know I am Bertrand of Bornio who  
Gave wicked counsel to King John, and set  
Father and son together in fierce strife.  
Ahithophel no worse with David did  
And Absalom, inciting them to fight.  
Because I clave apart whom nature joins  
I carry my own brain cut off, alas!  
From its life-source, which is within the trunk.  
In me retaliation is observed."

## **Inferno - Canto 29 - Shaw**

The crowd of folk, the diverse wounds, made drunk  
Mine eyes that only longed to wait and weep.  
But Virgil said: "Why look and lean thy sight  
Down there on the sad creatures mangled thus?  
Thou didst not so in all the other places;  
Now mark, and thou may'st make the count, the valley  
Turns two and twenty miles; the moon already  
Is down below our feet: our time is short,  
And more remains to see than thou hast seen."  
I answered quick: "Hadst thou observed the cause  
Of my fixed gaze, thou might'st have let me stay:"  
But he was gone; I followed, answering still,  
And added: "In that cave on which I kept  
My eyes, there weeps a spirit of my blood  
This sin, so costly here." The master said:  
Torture thy thoughts no more for him, but turn  
Thy mind aside, and let him be. I saw  
Him at the bridge-foot point thee out with stern  
And threatening finger: Geri del Bello, he  
Is called. Thou wast engrossed with him  
Who once held Altaforte, didst not look  
That way till Geri had gone past." "It seems,  
My leader," I replied, "his violent death,  
Still unavenged by any of our kin,  
So vexed him in remembrance that he passed  
Me by, and spoke not: hence I pity him  
The more." And so we talked, till from the cliff  
We first could see the next division; down  
Into its depth had there been light; above  
The last abyss of Malebolge we were,  
And its inhabitants appeared to sight.  
A flight of lamentations shot at me;  
Each arrow-point was tipped with agony.  
And quick I put my hands upon my ears.  
Such misery might be if hospitals  
Of Valdichiana from the month of July  
On to September; of Maremma, and  
Sardigna too, poured out their whole disease  
Into one ditch together: such was here  
And such a stench as rises from corruption.

We now descended to the furthest edge  
Of the long cliff, on the left hand, and thence  
I saw more clearly to the bottom, where  
The minister of God, unerring Justice,  
Who hath recorded, punishes the forgers.  
It was no sadder in Egina when  
Plague-bearing winds swept all the countryside,  
And man and beast, down to the insects, died;  
And then, as say the poets, emmets' eggs  
Furnished new people for the empty land  
Than here within the gallery dark, to see  
The spirits languishing in sickened heaps,  
Over, and under, one another: then  
Dragging their prostrate forms in the sad track.  
Slowly we went, and spoke not, listening  
To the hoarse groans of those who could not rise.  
I saw two sufferers leaning up together  
As housewives lean two dishes at the edge,  
Nor can a groom work faster at a horse  
Than did those wretches for the fury of  
Their flaking sores. "Tell me," began my guide,  
"If there be Latins here among you; so  
May ye be able through eternity  
To peel those sores." "We both are Latins," one  
Said weeping: "Who art thou that askest?" "I,"  
Said Virgil, "take this man, alive, from depth  
To depth of hell, that he may see it all."  
They started each away from other's prop,  
And trembling turned to me; and others too  
Who heard obliquely. My good master drew  
Nearer, and said: "Speak as thou wilt to them."  
He turned aside, and I began: "If ye  
Would wish your memory not lost above  
In minds of men, but that through many years  
It should survive, tell me your names, and race;  
Let not your loathsome and disgusting pain  
Fright you from speech." "I of Arezzo was,"  
One said: "and Albert of Siena sent  
Me to the stake; but not for that which brought  
Me here he burned me. True, I said to him  
In jest, that I could fly upon the air;  
Stupid and curious, he would learn the art;

I could not make him Daedalus: and so  
His father-bishop's were the hands that burned me.  
But Minos doomed me to this lowest circle,  
For alchemy: and none can lie to him."  
And I said to the Poet: "Was there ever  
A race so worthless as the Siennese?  
The French are not their equals." Then the other  
Leprous one, hearing, answered: "Except Stricca  
So temperate, so frugal: Niccolo,  
Who taught us to eat cloves, like epicures,  
Finding how well Siena's gardens grew them.  
Excepting, too, the crew on whom were lavished  
By Caccia d'Acian, woods, and fields, and vineyards,  
And his bedazzled senses. Wouldst thou now  
Know who supports thy judgment of Siena,  
Look sharply at me, till my face shall answer;  
And thou wilt see I am Capocchio,  
Whose alchemy could falsify the metals.  
And if I know thee well, thou shouldst remember  
That nature made me a most skillful forger."

## **Inferno - Canto 30 - Shaw**

When Semele provoked great Juno's wrath  
Against the Theban blood, long time it raged;  
And Athamas became so deadly mad,  
That seeing his own wife with her two sons  
In arm, he cried: "Bring me the nets, that I  
May catch the lioness and cubs together;"  
And stretched his hands unnatural, and seized  
One of the boys, Learchus, flung him down  
Against a rock; which, when the mother holding  
The other child, beheld, she drowned herself.  
Again, when Fortune dashed the pride of Troy  
Down to the ground, and set her all in flames,  
Destroying king and kingdom at a blow;  
Hecuba, miserable, wicked, sad,  
After she saw Polyxena lie dead,  
And Polydorus cast upon the beach,  
Was seized with such wild sorrow that her sense  
Forsook her, and she cried like a hurt dog  
Her grief distorted all her mind. But never  
Furies of Thebes nor Troy so fierce were seen  
Goaded at man or beast, as I beheld  
Two spirits, naked, wan, and fierce, who ran  
Attacking as a boar would, from his pen  
Escaped: one reached Capocchio, and bit him  
In the mid-throat, and dragged him on, face down  
On the hard soil. He of Arezzo, left  
Trembling, said to me: "That mad fool is Schicchi ;  
This is the way he wreaks his pain on us."  
"Oh!" then said I to him; "if the other one  
Set not his teeth in thee, thou wilt not spare  
To tell me who he is, ere he run off."  
And he to me: "That is the ancient spirit  
Myrrha, who by her incest wrought in fraud,  
Was mother of Adonis. Schicchi, the other,  
Personified the dead Buon' Donati,  
Forging his will, with sign, and seal, and oath;  
All for a mare, the beauty of the herd."  
When these two raging spirits passed, which I  
Had watched so closely, I turned round to see  
The other ill-born wretches. I saw one

All twisted out of shape, and full of dropsy,  
With gasping mouth athirst as in a fever.  
"O ye who do not suffer - who knows why? -  
Within this world of pain," he said to us,  
Look and take notice of poor Adam's woe;  
Alive I had whatever I could wish,  
And now I die for one poor drop of water.  
The little brooks that run from Casentin  
Through the green hills to Arno, cool and fresh.  
Are ever with me: with me not in vain,  
For more they dry and wither me within,  
Than the disease consuming my scant flesh.  
The rigid justice which torments me takes  
Occasion from the place wherein I sinned  
To wring more sighs from me: this was Romena.  
There did I forge the lily-flowered coin  
Stamped with John Baptist; and to make amends  
I left my body burned. But could I see  
Here the black souls of Guido, Alessandro,  
Or Aghimulfo, better would I think it  
Than to see Branda's fountain springing free.  
If the mad creatures running round tell truth  
One is already here: what good is that  
To me whose limbs are all disabled? If  
I still were light enough to move an inch  
In every hundred years, I would have started  
Upon a search for him among these folk;  
Although the road curves full eleven miles  
Only to gain the half of its whole circle.  
Through these three men it is that I am here;  
They taught me well the way to coin the florins,  
Three carats' dross in every golden piece."  
I asked: "Who are these wretches at thy right  
Who steam as does a well bathed hand in winter?"  
"I found them here, and they have never moved  
Since I dropped down," he said, "and I believe  
They will not move for ever. One is she  
Who tempted Joseph, then accused him falsely.  
The other Sinon, that false Greek from Troy.  
Their putrid fever throws an evil reek."  
This last, who took it ill to be so called,  
Struck with his fist upon the dropsied belly

A blow which sounded: master Adam struck  
Him back with arm that gave as good a blow,  
Saying: "Although they have prevented me  
From moving, here are arms that I can use."  
Sinon replied: "They were no good to thee  
Going to the stake, but to be sure they were  
When thou wast safely coining in Romena."  
The dropsied answered: "That is true enough;  
But thou wast not so true a witness when  
They asked of thee in Troy, what was the truth."  
"If I said false, and thou mad'st false the coin,"  
Said Sinon, "I am here but for a word,  
Thou for worse things than any other damned."  
"Remember, perjured wretch, the Trojan horse,"  
His swollen foe replied, "and be it bitter  
To thee, that all the world knows all thy guilt."  
"Bitter to thee the thirst that cracks thy tongue,"  
Said Sinon; "and the water foul that swells  
Thy belly, till thou canst not see thy feet."  
Then said the coiner: "Open wide thy mouth;  
Say all the ill thou art so used to say!  
If I am thirsty, and the water swells me,  
Thou hast the burning, and a tortured head.  
Thou couldst lick up Narcissus' looking-glass  
Without much invitation." I was fixed  
In listening eagerly to all they said,  
When Virgil spoke; he said: "Now look at me.  
Thou hast gone very near to meet my anger."  
And when I heard him speak with such displeasure,  
I turned to him in shame, which still I feel.  
And as is he who dreams of hurt, and dreaming,  
Wishes it were a dream; and so he longs  
For that same thing which is as if it were not;  
So I became, not able to find speech  
Which I desired to excuse me, yet  
I did excuse myself, and knew it not.  
"Less shame might wash a larger fault than thine,"  
The master said, "so put thy sadness by.  
But make thy count that I am at thy side,  
If ever it should be that fortune bring thee  
Again among such folk, in such a quarrel;  
To wish to hear such vileness is vile wish."



## **Inferno - Canto 31 - Shaw**

The tongue that bit me, reddening either cheek,  
Proportioned me due medicine afterwards.  
So have I heard Achilles' lance, and also  
His father's, gave the wound, and then the cure.  
We turned our backs upon the woeful depth,  
Taking our way along the rock that girds it;  
Here there was less than night, and less than day;  
We had come silently; and now our sight  
Was nearly baffled; but I heard the sound  
Of a great horn, which would have made all sound  
Beside seem weak; directing adversely  
My eyes to it, I gazed; for not the horn  
Orlando blew when Charlemagne lost the field  
Sadly at Fuenterrabia, was so dread  
As this; and soon when I had turned my face,  
I saw what seemed to me to be high towers.  
Whence: "Master, what can this land be?" I said.  
And he: "Because the distance is too great  
And dusky, fancy leads thee wrong; but soon  
Thou wilt perceive when we arrive at them  
How easy is mistake ; haste thou a little."  
He took my hand with kindness, adding: "First  
Before we reach them, lest they startle thee,  
Know that they are not towers, they are giants.  
And in the moat around the cliff they stand  
Up to their middle." As when drifts the mist,  
Little by little are the forms defined  
Which the thick air and vapour had concealed,  
So, piercing through the gross and heavy dusk,  
As we came near, and nearer, to the bank,  
Error flew off ; but terror larger grew.  
As Montereccion wears her crown of towers,  
So are the heights around the circle towered  
With dreadful giants, seen above the waist  
Whom Jove still threatens when the thunder roars.  
Already I could see the face of one;  
Shoulders, and breast, and great part of his body,  
And hanging arms. Nature, be sure, did well  
To leave the art of making such, refusing  
To Mars like executioners; and if

She repents not of whales and elephants,  
 Who looks with subtle eyes will find her more  
 Discreet and just for that: because if power  
 Of mind is joined to strength, and evil temper,  
 Mankind has no resource to bring against it.  
 His face appeared as long and big as is  
 St. Peter's pine at Rome; his other bones  
 All in proportion; upward from the bank  
 So high he was, three Frieslanders had boasted  
 In vain if they had thought to reach his hair;  
 Because I saw full thirty palms of length  
 Down from where cloaks are buckled at the neck.  
 His savage mouth began a furious gabble;  
 No sweeter psalm than that had suited him.  
 And then the leader to him: "Foolish spirit!  
 Take to thy horn; express thyself with that  
 If thou feel st wrath, or any other passion.  
 Feel at thy neck, and thou wilt find the strap  
 To which it hangs, O thou bewildered spirit!  
 See, thy huge breast is girt with it." And then  
 To me: "Himself is his own accusation;  
 For this is Nimrod, through whose thought perverse  
 We do not speak one tongue in all the world.  
 Let him alone, and do not waste thy speech,  
 For every language is the same to him,  
 As his to others, being known to none."  
 We travelled further; turned towards the right,  
 And at a bowshot distance found another  
 Giant, much bigger, and much fiercer, too.  
 I cannot tell what master had secured him,  
 But his left arm in front of him was chained;  
 His right, behind: the chain which from his neck  
 Came down, encircled five times his whole body.  
 "This haughtiest would prove his strength with Jove,"  
 My leader said: "And now he has his merits.  
 His name is Ephialtus, and he did  
 Great things, when gods were frightened at the giants.  
 But now those arms of his can stir no more."  
 And I to him: "If it might be, I wish  
 Myself to see tremendous Briareus."  
 He answered: "Thou shalt see Antoeus near,  
 Who speaks, and who is loose, and he shall put us

Into the lowest depth of ill. Thy chief  
Desire to see, is further off, and chained;  
And made like this one, but more fierce of face."  
No earthquake ever shook a tower so sharply  
As Ephialtus struggled, hearing us.  
And more than ever then, I dreaded death;  
But for his chains, pure terror would have caused it.  
We went on further, and we found Antoeus,  
Standing nigh six yards, not to count his head,  
Above the rock. My master said: "O thou  
Who in the fortunate vale where Scipio  
Was heir of glory, routing Hannibal  
And all his forces, didst collect thy prey  
A thousand lions: who, hadst been in that  
Stupendous battle which thy brethren waged,  
Would'st, as men fain must still believe, have brought  
Victory to the arms of earth's great sons;  
Let not our prayer disgust thee; put us down  
Where dateless cold is locked in dead Cocytus.  
Make us not go to Tityus, nor Typhon;  
This man can give what all desire here;  
So stoop to us, nor lift thy scornful nose;  
Fame in the world he can secure to thee  
Because he lives, and may expect long life,  
Unless before his time grace calls him home,"  
My master said; and quick Antaeus stretched  
The mighty hand which so squeezed Hercules,  
And took him, who at once called me: "Come close,  
And let me take thee," and we made one handful.  
As looking at the leaning Carisenda  
From underneath, if a cloud passes o'er it  
It seems at once to lean the other way  
So seemed to me Antaeus when he stooped.  
I could have wished another mode of travel.  
But lightly down, where depth devours Judas  
And Lucifer, he placed us, made no pause,  
But towered away like mast-tree in a ship.

## Inferno - Canto 32 - Shaw

Could I but rhyme as harshly as would suit  
That depth, round which the rocks all meet and hang,  
More thoroughly I would crush the grapes of thought.  
But since I cannot, I must lead my words  
With fear; it is no laughing matter this,  
To tell the saddest of the universe,  
Nor for a child to say with, "babbo," "mamma."  
But, Muses, aid me! ye who helped Amphion  
To wall in Thebes; if speech from deed be not  
So diverse, that I may not make request.  
Ye, first of all the evil-nurtured folk,  
Scarce to be told of, dwelling in this place,  
Had ye not better have been sheep or goats!  
We were much lower than the giant's feet,  
Within the great dark depth, and I looked still  
At the high walls, and then I heard: "Look well  
How thou dost walk, and tread not with thy feet  
The heads of these thy wretched weary brothers."  
Then I looked down, and saw beneath my feet  
And all before me, an ice-lake, which seemed  
As frozen glass, and not as frozen water.  
The Austrian Danube does not freeze so hard  
In winter: Tanais, 'neath her cold sky,  
Forms not such ice: the edges had not creaked  
Had Tabernich or Petrapan crashed on it.  
And as the frogs put up their nose to croak  
Just above water, when in harvest, oft  
The girl who gleans is dreaming of her sheaf;  
So rose the faces of the frozen folk,  
Clashing their teeth like note of clattering stork,  
Above the ice that held their livid frames.  
Each held his face down; of the cold, his mouth;  
Of the sad woe, his eyes, gave dismal proof.  
When I had somewhat looked around, I bent  
Towards my feet, and saw there close together  
Two; and the hair of their two heads was mixed.  
"Who are ye, who are pressed so close together?"  
I said. They bent their necks back, raising thus  
Their faces to me, and their eyes all full  
Of tears within, shed drops upon their lips,

Which the frost caught between them, and set fast  
Closer did never clamp hold wood to wood.  
They were so angry that they butted heads  
Like goats: and one, who had lost both his ears,  
His face still down, said: "Why dost look at us?  
Dost wish to know those two? The valley whence  
Bisenzio flows, their father owned, with them  
Sons of one womb. Thou mayest search Caina,  
Nor find a soul more worthy of its ice.  
Not him whose breast and shadow at one blow  
King Arthur broke; nor yet Focaccia;  
Nor this, who puts his head between, that I  
Should see no further; - Sassol Mascheroni.  
If thou wast Tuscan, thou must know him well.  
And not to make more words, know thou that I  
Am Camicion de Pazzi, and await  
Carlin; apology for me, my better."  
And after this I saw a thousand faces  
Made livid by the cold; and shivering  
At the ice-pools, takes, and will take me always.  
We travelled on toward the middle, where  
The central weight of all the world unites,  
And I went trembling through the eternal cold.  
Whether by will, or destiny, or chance,  
I know not, but in passing through the heads  
I strongly struck my foot against a face.  
Weeping, it cried: "Why dost thou trample me  
Unless thou com'st to heap up the revenge  
Of Mont' Aperti, why dost injure me?"  
And I: "My master, pray thee wait me here,  
Till I am out of doubt about this spirit,  
And then I will make all the haste thou wishest."  
The leader waited, and I spoke to this  
Spirit, who still was fiercely cursing me:  
"Who art thou, that thou thus abusest other?"  
"And who art thou," he answered: "going thus  
Through Antenora, kicking others' faces?  
This would be scandalous went thou alive."  
"I am alive, and dear thou mayest find it,"  
Was my reply: "if thou desirest fame.  
I set thy name among my other notes."  
And he to me: "I want the contrary.

Get thee away, and give me no more trouble.  
 Thou dost not know how to pay court down here."  
 I seized him then by nape of neck, and said:  
 "It will be best for thee to tell thy name,  
 Or thou wilt find thyself without thy hair."  
 So he to me: "And if thou leav'st me bald,  
 I will not tell nor show thee who I am,  
 Though thou dost pull my head a thousand times."  
 I had his hair all twisted in my hand,  
 And I had pulled him more than one lock out,  
 He threatening me with eyes cast down, when now  
 Another cried: "What is the matter, Bocca?  
 Do not thy jaws clap loud enough without  
 Thy barking, too? What devil has thee now?"  
 "Now, then," said I: "I will not have thee talk,  
 Accursed traitor, to thine endless shame  
 I will report true things of thee." "Get out,"  
 He said; and say exactly what thou please.  
 But be not silent, if thou get from hence  
 On him who had so glib a tongue above  
 And mourns French money here; and thou mayest say  
 'I saw him of Duera, where in ice  
 The sinners stand.' If thou art asked, 'Who else?'  
 Here at thy side thou hast Beccario;  
 Florence beheaded him. Soldanieri  
 Is further off, and Ganellone too  
 And Tebaldello, who betrayed Faenza  
 While her folk slept." When we had left this spirit  
 I saw two, frozen fast, within a gap  
 So that one head was as the hood to other;  
 And, as if starving, it had set its teeth  
 Into the neck where the spine joins the brain.  
 Not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw the head  
 Of Melanippus, in contempt, than seized  
 This spirit on the head before it. "Thou,"  
 Said I, "who showest like a beast thy hate  
 For him thou gnawest; tell me why thou dost it;  
 For when I know his sin, and who thou art,  
 I will speak justly of thee in the world,  
 If thou hast cause for weeping; and my tongue  
 Retains its power to speak, and speak the truth."

### **Inferno - Canto 33 - Shaw**

The sinner raised his mouth from his strange meat,  
And wiped it on the hair of the pale head  
That he had injured, then began to say:  
Thou wilt that I renew the desperate grief  
Which presses on my heart enough in thought  
Without my speaking of it; but if words  
Of mine may prove the seeds of future fruit  
Of infamy for that traitor whom I gnaw,  
Thou shalt have speech and grief together. I  
Know not who thou mayst be, nor in what way  
Thou camest down below; but Florentine  
Truly thou seemest when I hear thee speak.  
Thou art to know I was Count Ugolino;  
This other is Archbishop Ruggiero.  
Now I will tell thee why I am so near him;  
That through the wrought effect of his ill-will  
I, trusting him, was seized and put to death,  
I need not tell. But what thou canst not know,  
That is, the cruel manner of my death,  
Thou shalt hear now, and judge of his offence.  
A little opening in the tower wall,  
-They call it now from me the Hungry Tower -  
In which some other may be yet shut up,  
Showed light of dawn. I dreamed ill dreams which tore  
The veil that hid my future. In my dream  
That man with all his following went to hunt  
A wolf and cubs within the mountain which  
Hides Lucca from the Pisans. So with gaunt  
And swift, and eager, and experienced hounds  
He sent Sismondi, Gualandi, Lanfranchi,  
First on the trail: and after a short run  
It seemed to me the wolf and young ones tired;  
I seemed to see the sharp teeth tear their sides;  
Then I awoke before the day, and heard  
-For they were with me,- my scarce-sleeping children  
Sobbing, and asking food. Thou must be cruel  
Dost thou not weep now, thinking what my heart  
Foreboded; or if not, dost never weep?  
Now they had wakened, and the hour was come  
When food was due; but haunted by the dream

We doubted of it: then I heard the key  
Clash in the lock of the low tower door.  
I looked in my boys' faces, but spoke not;  
I did not weep, I was all stone within.  
They wept; and then my little Anselm said:  
'Father, why dost thou look like that? What is it?'  
But yet I had no tears, and made no answer.  
So through the day and night, until the sun  
Shone next day on the world; a little ray  
Reached our sad prison, and it showed me how  
I looked, in the four faces that I saw.  
I bit into my hands for woe, and they  
Thinking it hunger, lifted up themselves  
And said: 'O Father, it would hurt us less  
If thou could'st eat us, for thou gav'st us flesh,  
And thou may'st take it.' Then I kept me still  
That I might give the four no further pain.  
That day, and one more yet, we never spoke.  
Hard-hearted earth, thou could'st not open then!  
But Gaddo now, when the fourth day was come  
Dropped outstretched at my feet, and murmuring:  
'Father, canst help me?' there he died, and as  
Thou seest me here, I tell thee, 'twixt that day  
And sixth, I saw the three fall one by one.  
Three days I felt about them, I was blind,  
And called them every one; but they were dead.  
And fasting killed me before grief could kill."  
And having said so far, he threw himself,  
With maddened eyes, upon the head before him,  
And teeth which crunched the bone as do a dog's.  
O Pisa! thou dishonour of the race;  
In that fair land of the Italian tongue  
Thy neighbours are so slow to punish thee,  
I would Capraia and Gorgona might  
Drift, and dam up the mouth of Arno, that  
His flood should drown each several child of thine.  
For were it true Count Ugolino had  
Betrayed thy castles, did that give thee right  
To put his children to so dire a death?  
O thou new Thebes! their tender age was new,  
And made them guiltless; Ugucione and  
Brigata, and the two - I named before.

We passed on further, where the frost had bound  
Sharply, more folk; not bent, but all reversed.  
Their very weeping would not let them weep;  
The grief which met the hindrance in their eyes  
Was forced within, to add to their distress;  
And the first tears in crystal mask were clustered  
And filled the frozen sockets with their ice.  
Now, though the cold had taken all the feeling  
Out of my face, and left it stiff and callous,  
I seemed to feel a little air, and said  
"Master, whence is it? Are not winds all spent  
Down here?" He answered me: "Thou wilt be soon  
Where thine own eye shall show thee how it is,  
For thou wilt see the power that moves the air."  
One of the wretches fixed in the cold crust  
Cried out to us: "Come now, ye cruel souls,  
Ordered for that down to this lowest place;  
Free me my face from its hard icicles,  
And let me shed the tears that fill my heart  
Freely, ere they begin to freeze again."  
And I said: "If thou wishest me to ease thee,  
Say who thou art: and if I do not do it  
It will befit me to go deep through ice."  
"I am," he answered, "Brother Alberigo;  
Fruit of bad orchard; but in recompense  
Down here, for every fig they give a date."  
"Oh then, thou too art dead!" I said to him.  
And he: "I know not how my body fares  
Up there above. This is the privilege  
Of Ptolemaea, where we now abide,  
That frequently the soul arrives before  
Atropos cuts the mortal thread. And so  
That thou more willingly shalt break the ice  
Which is my tears; thou shalt hear somewhat more.  
When, as mine was, the spirit is a traitor,  
A devil takes possession of its body  
And rules it till the natural time of death;  
The spirit hurls itself down this abyss.  
The body probably is still above  
Of this shade wintering beside me here  
Thou should'st know that, if thou art lately come;  
He is Ser Branca d'Oria; many years

Have passed since he was put in his own place."  
"Now thou art fooling me," I said to him;  
For Branca d'Oria is not dead at all;  
He eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and wears his coat."  
"Ere Michel Zanche, whom he killed, had come  
Far as the boiling pitch of Malebranche,"  
The spirit answered, "he had left a devil  
Housed in his body, and his comrade's too,  
Who was co-partner in his treachery.  
Now put thine hand out, open me my eyes."  
I did not open them: to him such courtesy  
Would have been vileness. O ye Genovese,  
Full of all rottenness, divorced from good,  
Why are ye not dispersed from off the earth  
With this worst spirit of Romagna, there  
Was one of you, who for his works already  
Had his soul bathing in Cocytus, while  
His body seemed to live on earth above.

## Inferno - Canto 34 - Shaw

*“Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni”*

Toward us, but look thou;” the master said,  
Whether thou canst discern them.” And as when  
Great mists drive by, or dusk falls on the earth,  
A turning windmill in the distance seems  
A wonder; so seemed somewhat that I saw  
Moving, and vast; but the wind drove me back  
Behind my guide; there was no other shelter.  
This was – with fear, I put it in my verse –  
Where all the spirits were completely covered;  
And could be seen, as straws within the glass.  
Some lay, some stood up stiff, with either head  
Or feet toward the surface; some were arched,  
Their face toward their feet. And when we came  
To such a spot that there my master thought  
It well to show me the great creature who  
Had once been beautiful, a grace of heaven,  
He put me in the front of him, and kept me,  
And said: “We are in Dis, and at the place  
Where thou must clothe thyself with fervent courage.”  
How I became both faint and frozen then,  
Ask me not, reader, for I cannot write;  
There are no words to indicate the thing.  
I did not die, and yet I was not living;  
Think thou, if thou hast but a grain of wit,  
What state was mine, that was not death, nor life.  
The ruler of that realm of final woe  
Stood from the ice at half his figure's height.  
Measured against a giant I were taller,  
Than were a giant measured 'gainst his arm.  
See for thyself what all of him must be,  
Fitly proportioned to an arm like this.  
If he was once so fair, as foul he is,  
Yet raised a scornful brow against his Maker,  
Duly doth every ill proceed from him.  
Oh, how I marvelled when I slowly saw  
Three faces look from forth his dreadful head.  
The one in front was red, the other two  
Over each shoulder looking, all three joined  
At top, were white and yellow at the right,

And at the left as dark as Ethiopians  
Upon the Nile; and underneath these two  
From either shoulder sprang a monstrous wing.  
I never saw such sails upon a ship.  
To what a bird of horror were they suited!  
They had no feathers, but were like the bats;  
They fanned, and they sent out three winds of death,  
In which Cocytus froze from end to end.  
Six eyes shed tears, and on three chins they ran  
And mixed with bloody foam; and in each mouth  
He gnawed a sinner as the brake gnaws hemp.  
Three suffered at one time; the middle one  
More flayed than bitten, was in greatest pain.  
"Judas Iscariot he is," my master said;  
"Thou canst not see his face; and Brutus,  
Thou seest he writhes, but he will make no sound;  
And Cassius, large of limb. But now the night  
Is rising; we must go, we have seen all."  
I clasped him round the neck as he desired,  
And he took wary heed of time and place,  
And when the wings were lifted far enough  
He clung on by the hair of the huge side,  
Letting us down from tuft to tuft, between  
The shaggy side, and the great waves of ice;  
Until we reached the point where the thigh turns  
Round on himself, till head and feet changed place;  
Under the thickest of the hip, and there  
With labour and distress my leader moved  
And seized the hair again, and climbed afresh,  
So that I thought we should get back to hell.  
He panted like a wearied man, but said:  
"Such stairs suit well to get from such a place."  
And carefully came close to me. I raised  
My eyes, and thought that Lucifer would look  
I saw his legs above; and if my mind  
Was worked, the common folk may think who fail  
And then he crept out through a splintered rock,  
And put me down to sit upon the edge,  
As when we first began to go; but now  
To understand the point that I had passed.  
"Get to thy feet!" the master said. "For now  
The way is long, the road is rough, and bad;

Already is the time not far from sunrise."  
No royal road were we upon, but in  
A sort of prison, rough of soil, and scant of light.  
"Master," I said, when I had gained  
My feet, "before I go from this abyss,  
Tell me a little to correct my errors.  
Where is the ice? and why does he thus stand  
Upon his head? And how has the sun rushed  
So fast from morn till eve?" He said: "Thou thinkest  
That thou art still the other side the centre  
Where I first seized the hair of that old Sin  
That bores the world through, worm-like; thou wast there  
As long as I was coming down, but when  
I turned, then thou didst pass the central point  
Which draws the weight on every side; and now  
Thou art arrived beneath the hemisphere  
Opposite that which the great continent  
Spreads over; and beneath whose dome was slain  
The sinless Man : thou hast thy feet upon  
A circled sphere, and in its opposite  
There lies Judaea; it is morning there,  
When it is evening here. And now to tell  
Of him whose hair has been our ladder; he  
Is fixed as at the first, as when he fell  
Down from the heaven; And the earth which here  
Was raised in mountains, in her terror shrank,  
And veiled her in the sea, and moved toward  
Our hemisphere. Perchance this hollow place  
Near us, was left when a bill swung aside  
To shun him. In it is a spot, as far  
From Belzebu, as the whole stretch of hell,  
Not to be sought by sight, but by the sound  
Of a small rivulet which there descends  
In hollow of a cliff, and frets a course  
Which winds, and is not too precipitous."  
So by this hidden track my guide and I  
Entered on our return to the clear world;  
And without thought of pause or rest, we rose,  
Climbing: he first, I pressing on behind him.  
So that ere long I saw the shining things  
Which the sky carries, though a hole above;  
And we came out beneath a dome of stars.

