

Toronto Salutes Dante

Inferno XVI in Italian, English, and German

Italian	English	German
Già era in loco onde s'udia 'l rimbombo de l'acqua che cadea ne l'altro giro, simile a quel che l'arnie fanno rombo, quando tre ombre insieme si partiro, correndo, d'una torma che passava sotto la pioggia de l'aspro martiro. Venian ver' noi, e ciascuna gridava: "Sòstati tu ch'a l'abito ne sembri essere alcun di nostra terra prava". Ahimè, che piaghe vidi ne' lor membri, ricenti e vecchie, da le fiamme incese! Ancor men duol pur ch'i' me ne rimembri. A le lor grida il mio dottor s'attese; volsè 'l viso ver' me, e "Or aspetta", disse, "a costor si vuole esser cortese. E se non fosse il foco che saetta la natura del loco, i' dicerei che meglio stesse a te che a lor la fretta". Ricominçar, come noi restammo, ei l'antico verso; e quando a noi fuor giunti, fanno una rota di sé tutti e trei. Qual sogliono i campion far nudi e unti, avvisando lor presa e lor vantaggio, prima che sien tra lor battuti e punti, così rotando, ciascuno il visaggio drizzava a me, sì che 'n contrario il collo faceva ai piè continuo viaggio. E "Se miseria d'esto loco sollo rende in dispetto noi e nostri prieghi", cominciò l'uno, "e 'l tinto aspetto e brollo, la fama nostra il tuo animo pieghi a dirne chi tu se', che i vivi piedi così sicuro per lo 'nferno freghi. Questi, l'orme di cui pestar mi vedi, tutto che nudo e dipelato vada, fu di grado maggior che tu non credi: nepote fu de la buona Gualdrada; Guido Guerra ebbe nome, e in sua vita fece col senno assai e con la spada. L'altro, ch'appresso me la rena trita, è Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, la cui voce nel mondo sù dovria esser gradita. E io, che posto son con loro in croce, Iacopo Rusticucci fui, e certo la fiera moglie più ch'altro mi nuoce". S'i' fossi stato dal foco coperto, gittato mi sarei tra lor di sotto, e credo che 'l dottor l'avria sofferto; ma perch'io mi sarei bruciato e cotto, vinse paura la mia buona voglia che di loro abbracciar mi facea ghiotto. Poi cominciai: "Non dispetto, ma doglia la vostra condizion dentro mi fisse, tanta che tardi tutta si dispoglia,	No sooner had I reached the place where one could hear a murmur, like a beehive's hum, of waters as they fell to the next circle, when, setting out together, three shades ran, leaving another company that passed beneath the rain of bitter punishment. They came toward us, and each of them cried out: "Stop, you who by your clothing seem to be someone who comes from our indecent country!" Ah me, what wounds I saw upon their limbs, wounds new and old, wounds that the flames seared in! It pains me still as I remember it. When they cried out, my master paid attention; he turned his face toward me and then he said: "Now wait: to these one must show courtesy. And were it not the nature of this place for shafts of fire to fall, I'd say that haste was seemlier for you than for those three." As soon as we stood still, they started up their ancient wail again; and when they reached us, they formed a wheel, all three of them together. As champions, naked, oiled, will always do, each studying the grip that serves him best before the blows and wounds begin to fall, while wheeling so, each one made sure his face was turned to me, so that their necks opposed their feet in one uninterrupted flow. And, "If the squalor of this shifting sand, together with our baked and barren features, makes us and our requests contemptible," one said, "then may our fame incline your mind to tell us who you are, whose living feet can make their through Hell with such assurance. He in whose steps you see me tread, although he now must wheel about both peeled and naked, was higher in degree than you believe: he was a grandson of the good Gualdrada, and Guido Guerra was his name; in life his sword and his good sense accomplished much. The other who, behind me, tramples sand- Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, one whose voice should have been heeded in the world above. And I, who share this punishment with them, was Jacopo Rusticucci; certainly, more than all else, my savage wife destroyed me." If I'd had shield and shelter from the fire, I should have thrown myself down there among them- I think my master would have sanctioned that; but since that would have left me burned and baked, my fear won out against the good intention that made me so impatient to embrace them. Then I began: "Your present state had fixed not scorn but sorrow in me-and so deeply that it will only disappear slowly-	Ich war am Ort, wo's widerhallend brauste Vom Wasser, das da stürzt' ins nächste Tal, Als ob ein Schwarm von Bienen summt' und sauste; Da rannten Schatten her, drei an der Zahl, Und trennten sich von einer größern Bande, Die hinlief durch des Feuerregens Qual, Und schrien: "Halt du, wir sehn es am Gewande Dir deutlich an, du bist hierher versetzt Aus unserm eignen schnöden Vaterlande." Ach, alt' und neue Wunden, eingeätzt Von Flammen, sah ich nun in ihrem Fleische, Und noch voll Mitleid denk' ich ihrer jetzt. Mein Meister horcht' auf dieses Schmerzgekreische Und sah mich an und sprach: "Hier harren wir! Bedenke jetzt, was Höflichkeit erheische. Denn wäre nicht der Feuerregen hier, Nach der Natur des Orts, so würd' ich sagen: Die Eile ziemt, mehr als ihnen, dir." Ich stand und hörte neu ihr altes Klagen; Zu uns gekommen waren alle nun, Da sah ich sie sich selbst im Kreise jagen. Wie nackende gesalbte Kämpfer tun, Die Griff und Vorteil zu erforschen pflegen, Indessen noch die Püff' und Stöße ruh'n; So sah ich sie im Kreise sich bewegen, Mir immerdar das Antlitz zugewandt, Und Hals und Fuß an Richtung sich entgegen. Und einer sprach: "Wenn dieser lockre Sand Und unsre Not uns nicht verächtlich machte. Und unsre Haut, so rußig und verbrannt, Dann unser Flehn, ob unsers Rufs, beachte; Sprich, wer bist du? Wie lebend hier erscheinst? Und was dich sicher her zur Hölle brachte? Der, welchem du mich folgen siehst, war einst, Muß er auch nackt hier und geschunden rennen. Von höhern Range wohl, als du vermeinst. Wer hörte nicht Gualdradas Enkel nennen, Den Guidoguerra, dessen Schwert und Geist Wohl Puglia und Florenz als tüchtig kennen? Der hinter mir den lockern Sand durchkreist, Tegghiaio ist's, des Rat man noch auf Erden, Obwohl man ihm nicht folgt', als heilsam preist. Ich, ihr Genoss' in schrecklichen Beschwerden, Bin Jakob Rusticucci, und mich ließ Mein böses, wildes Weib so elend werden." — Wenn irgend was vor'm Feuer Schutz verhieß. So stürzt' ich gern mich unter sie hernieder, Auch litt, so glaub' ich, wohl mein Meister dies. Allein verbrannt hätt' ich auch meine Glieder, Drum unterdrückte Furcht in mir die Lust, Die Jammervollen zu umarmen, wieder. "Nicht der Verachtung bin ich mir bewußt," Begann ich, "nur des Leids für euch Geplagte, Und schwer verwunden wird es meine Brust.

tosto che questo mio signor mi disse
parole per le quali i' mi pensai
che qual voi siete, tal gente venisse.

Di vostra terra sono, e sempre mai
l'ovra di voi e li onorati nomi
con affezion ritrassi e ascoltai.

Lascio lo fele e vo per dolci pomi
promessi a me per lo verace duca;
ma 'nfinò al centro pria convien ch'i' tomi".

"Se lungamente l'anima conduca
le membra tue", rispuose quelli ancora,
"e se la fama tua dopo te luca,

cortesia e valor d'ì se dimora
ne la nostra città sì come suole,
o se del tutto se n'è gita fora;

ché Guglielmo Borsiere, il qual si duole
con noi per poco e va là coi compagni,
assai ne cruccia con le sue parole".

"La gente nuova e i sùbiti guadagni
orgoglio e dismisura han generata,
Firenza, in te, sì che tu già ten piagni".

Così gridai con la faccia levata;
e i tre, che ciò inteser per risposta,
guardar l'un l'altro com'al ver si guata.

"Se l'altre volte sì poco ti costa",
rispuoser tutti, "il satisfare altrui,
felice te se sì parli a tua posta!

Però, se campi d'esti luoghi bui
e torni a riveder le belle stelle,
quando ti gioverà dicere "I' fui",

fa che di noi a la gente favelle".
Indi rupper la rota, e a fuggirsi
ali sembiar le gambe loro isnelle.

Un amen non saria possuto dirsi
tosto così com'e' fuoro spariti;
per ch'al maestro parve di partirsi.

Io lo seguiva, e poco eravam iti,
che 'l suon de l'acqua n'era sì vicino,
che per parlar saremmo a pena uditi.

Come quel fiume c'ha proprio cammino
prima dal Monte Viso 'nver' levante,
da la sinistra costa d'Apennino,

che si chiama Acquacheta suso, avante
che si divalli giù nel basso letto,
e a Forlì di quel nome è vacante,

rimbomba là sovra San Benedetto
de l'Alpe per cadere ad una scesa
ove dovea per mille esser recetto;

così, giù d'una ripa discosciosa,
trovammo risonar quell'acqua tinta,
sì che 'n poc'ora avria l'orecchia offesa.

Io avea una corda intorno cinta,
e con essa pensai alcuna volta
prender la lonza a la pelle dipinta.

Poscia ch'io l'ebbi tutta da me sciolta,
sì come 'l duca m'avea comandato,
porsila a lui aggroppata e ravvolta.

Ond'ei si volse inver' lo destro lato,
e alquanto di lunge da la sponda
la gittò giuso in quell'alto burrato.

as soon as my lord spoke to me with words
that made me understand what kind of men
were coming toward us, men of worth like yours.

For I am of your city; and with fondness,
I've always told and heard the others tell
of both your actions and your honored names.

I leave the gall and go for the sweet apples
that I was promised by my truthful guide;
but first I must descend into the center."

"So may your long lead your limbs and may
your fame shine after you," he answered then,
"tell us if courtesy and valor still

abide within our city as they did
when we were there, or have they disappeared
completely; for Guglielmo Borsiere,

who only recently has come to share
our torments, and goes there with our companions,
has caused us much affliction with his words."

"Newcomers to the city and quick gains
have brought excess and arrogance to you,
o Florence, and you weep for it already!"

So I cried out with face upraised; the three
looked at each other when they heard my answer
as men will stare when they have heard the truth.

"If you can always offer a reply
so readily to others," said all three,
"then happy you who speak, at will, so clearly.

So, if you can escape these lands of darkness
and see the lovely stars on your return,
when you repeat with pleasure, 'I was there,'

be sure that you remember us to men."
At this they broke their whell; and as they fled,
their swift legs seemed to be no less than wings.

The time it took for them to disappear-
more brief than time it takes to say "amen";
and so, my master thought it right to leave.

I followed him. We'd only walked a little
When roaring water grew so near to us
we hardly could have heard each other speak.

And even as the river that is first
to take its own course eastward from Mount Viso,
along the left flank of the Apennines

(which up above is called the Acquacheta,
before it spills into its valley bed
and flows without that name beyond Forlì),

reverberates above San Benedetto
dell'Alpe as it cascades in one leap,
where there is space enough to house a thousand;

so did we hear that blackened water roar
as it plunged down a steep and craggy bank,
enough to deafen us in a few hours.

Around my waist I had a cord as girdle,
and with it once I thought I should be able
to catch the leopard with the painted hide.

And after I had loosened it completely,
just as my guide commanded me to do,
I handed it to him, knotted and coiled.

At this, he wheeled around upon his right
and cast it, at some distance from the edge,
straight down into the depth of the ravine.

Ich fühl' es, als mein Herr mir Worte sagte,
Durch welche mir es deutlich ward und klar,
Daß, wer hier komme, hoch auf Erden ragte.

Ich bin aus eurer Stadt, und nimmerdar
Wird eures Tuns ruhmvoll Gedächtnis schwinden,
Das immer mir auch lieb und teuer war.

Ich ließ' die Gall, um süße Frucht zu finden,
Die mein wahrhafter Führer prophezeit,
Doch muß ich erst zum Mittelpunkt mich winden."

"Soll lang' noch deine Seele das Geleit
Der Glieder sein," so sprach nun er dagegen,
"Soll leuchten noch dein Ruf nach deiner Zeit,

So sage mir, bewohnen, wie sie pflegen,
Wohl unsre Stadt noch Kraft und Edelmut?
Sind sie verbannt und völlig unterlegen?

Denn Borsiere, welcher diese Glut
Seit kurzem teilt, und dort mit andern schreitet,
Erzählt' uns manches, was uns wehe tut!--"

"Neu Volk und schleuniger Gewinn verleitet
Zu Unmaß dich und Stolz, der dich betört,
Florenz, und dir viel Leiden schon bereitet!"

Ich rief's, das Aug' emporgewandt, verstört.
Starr sah'n die drei sich an bei meinen Reden,
Wie man sich anstarrt, wenn man Wahrheit hört.

"Wir wünschen Glück, wenn du so wohlfeil jeden
Abfert'gen kannst," war aller Gegenwort,
"Und dir's bekommt, nach Herzenslust zu reden.

Entkommst du einst aus diesem dunkeln Ort
Und siehst den Sternenglanz, den schönen, süßen,
Und sagst dann froh und heiter: Ich war dort,

Vergiß dann nicht, die Welt von uns zu grüßen!--"
Hier aber brachen sie den Kreis und floh'n
Voll Eil' und wie mit Flügeln an den Füßen.

Eh' man ein Amen ausspricht, waren schon
Sie alle drei aus meinem Blick verschwunden.
Drum ging sogleich mein Meister auch davon.

Ich folgt' ihm nach, um Weitres zu erkunden,
Worauf uns bald des Stroms Gebraus erklang,
So nah, daß wir uns sprechend kaum verstunden.

Gleich jenem Flusse mit dem eignen Gang,
Des Fluten ostwärts vom Berg Veso toben.
Vom Apennin an seinem linken Hang;

Das stille Wasser heißt er erst dort oben,
Dann senkt er sich und wird bei Forlì bald
Des ersten Namens wiederum enthoben—

Des Sturz dort ob Sankt Benedikt erschallt.
Wo seine Wellen in den Abhang brausen,
Der groß für Tausend ist zum Aufenthalt:

So brach von einem Felsenhang voll Grausen
Der rotgefärbte Fluß sich brüllend Bahn,
Und kaum ertrug das Ohr sein wildes Sausen.

Mit einem Stricke war ich umgetan,
Und manches Mal mit diesem Gurte dachte
Ich das gefleckte Panthertier zu seh'n.

Nachdem ich los von mir den Gürtel machte,
Wie ich vom Führer mir geboten fand,
Macht' ich ein Knäuel draus, das ich ihm brachte.

Er aber kehrte dann sich rechter Hand
Und schleuderte zum tiefen Felsenschlunde
Das Knäul hinunter ziemlich weit vom Rand.

'E' pur convien che novità risponda',
dicea fra me medesimo, 'al novo cenno
che 'l maestro con l'occhio sì seconda'.

Ahi quanto cauti li uomini esser dienno
presso a color che non veggion pur l'ovra,
ma per entro i pensier miran col senno!

El disse a me: "Tosto verrà di sovra
ciò ch'io attendo e che il tuo pensier sogna;
tosto convien ch'al tuo viso si scovra".

Sempre a quel ver c'ha faccia di menzogna
de' l'uom chiuder le labbra fin ch'el puote,
però che senza colpa fa vergogna;

ma qui tacer nol posso; e per le note
di questa comedia, lettor, ti giuro,
s'elle non sien di lunga grazia vòte,

ch'i' vidi per quell'aere grosso e scuro
venir notando una figura in suso,
maravigliosa ad ogne cor sicuro,

sì come torna colui che va giusto
talora a solver l'àncora ch'aggrappa
o scoglio o altro che nel mare è chiuso,

che 'n sù si stende e da piè si rattrappa.

"And surely something strange must here reply,"
I said within myself, "to this strange sign-
the sign my master follows with his eye."

Ah, how much care men ought to exercise
with those whose penetrating intellect
can see our thoughts- not just our outer act!

He said to me: "Now there will soon emerge
what I await and what your thought has conjured:
it soon must be discovered to your sight."

Faced with that truth which seems a lie, a man
should always close his lips as long as he can-
to tell it shames him, even though he's blameless;

but here I can't be still; and by the lines
of this my Comedy, reader, I swear-
and may my verse find favor for long years-

that through the dense and darkened air I saw
a figure swimming, rising up, enough
to bring amazement to the firmest heart,

like one returning from the waves where he
went down to loose an anchor snagged upon
a reef or something else hid in the sea,

who stretches upward and draws in his feet.

"Entsprechend", dacht' ich, "muß die neue Kunde
Dem neuen Wink und diesem Blicke sein,
Womit mein Meister schaut zum tiefen Grunde."

Stets präge doch der Mensch sich Vorsicht ein
Mit solchen, die des Herzens Sinn erspähen,
Und nicht sich halten an die Tat allein.

Er sprach: "Bald werden wir auftauchen sehen,
Was ich erwart'; und das, was du gedacht,
Wird deutlich bald vor deinen Blicken stehen."

Bei Wahrheit, die der Lüge gleicht, habt acht,
Soviel ihr könnt, euch nimmer auszusprechen,
Sonst werdet ihr ohn' eure Schuld verlacht.

Doch kann ich mich zu reden nicht entbrechen
Und schwör', o Leser, dir, bei dem Gedicht,
Dem nimmer möge Huld und Gunst gebrechen:

Ich sah durch jene Lüfte schwarz und dicht
Ein Bild, nach oben schwimmend, sich erheben,
Dem Kühnsten wohl ein wunderbar Gesicht—

Wie jemand kehrt, der sich hinabbegeben.
Den Anker, der im Felsenrisse steckt,
Zu lösen, wenn er sich beim Aufwärtsstreben

Von unten einzieht und nach oben streckt.

Credits

Italian: D. Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. by G. Petrocchi (Florence, 1994) from the website www.danteonline.it by the Società dantesca italiana.

English: D. Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, ed. by Allen Mandelbaum (Berkeley, 1980) from the website www.danteonline.it by the Società dantesca italiana.

German: D. Alighieri, *Göttliche Komödie*, ed. by Karl Streckfuß (Leipzig, 1876).

Commemorating the 700th anniversary of the death of Dante Alighieri, **Toronto Salutes Dante** features more than thirty Canada-based guests who read Dante's *Inferno* in various languages, several for the first time. In addition to ten different Italian dialects, there are represented Anishinaabemowin, Arabic, Bulgarian, English, Farsi, French, German, Latin, Mandarin, Portuguese, Québécois, Russian, Sanskrit, Slovak, Spanish, Stoney Nakoda, Swedish, Thai, and Ukrainian. In 15-minute clips, well-known personalities of Canadian public and cultural life, professors, and students at the University of Toronto, and members of the Italo-Canadian community share their voices and fresh memories of the most important Italian author in world literature. Listen to Dante's *Inferno* as you have never heard it before on the [Department of Italian Studies' Youtube channel](#) from March 25th to June 2021.

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