

Toronto Salutes Dante

Inferno I in Italian, English, and Anishinaabemowin (lines 1-30)

Italian	English	Anishinaabemowin
Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, ché la diritta via era smarrita.	When I had journeyed half of our life's way, I found myself within a shadowed forest, for I had lost the path that does not stray.	Epiichi naawi-gibabaamadizimin Ningii- aawenim niin dibiki-naawaakwaa Onji-gwayakoshkaa gii-ayaan gii-wanisin-ayaa.
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte che nel pensier rinova la paura!	Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, that savage forest, dense and difficult, which even in recall renews my fear:	Howah, aaniin ezhi mashkawaa? Idan aaniin gii-awediaakwaa, mii bagwad miinawaa gaawaa miinawaa maskkawaa miish gi- maaminonenden gii-ozhitoon niigosaa oshki-miinawaa niigosaa!
Tant'è amara che poco è più morte; ma per trattar del ben ch'i' vi trovai, dirò de l'altre cose ch'i' v' ho scorte.	so bitter-death is hardly more severe! But to retell the good discovered there, I'll also tell the other things I saw.	Aapiji wiisagan a'aw gii-niboizi ayaa agaasendan! Idash izhi-babaakido mino-gegoo gii-niaawenim imaa Nidibaadodan nawaj gegoo ningii-wabaamaan.
Io non so ben ridir com'i' v'intrai, tant'era pien di sonno a quel punto che la verace via abbandonai.	I cannot clearly say how I had entered the wood; I was so full of sleep just at the point where I abandoned the true path.	Niin gaa-gaawin geget idan aaniin ezhi ningii-biindige imaa, Mii Ningii-boozaangwaam a'aw imaa ayaa aaniin apii ningii- nagadan akeyaa izhi-debwe.
Ma poi ch'i' fui al piè d'un colle giunto, là dove terminava quella valle che m'avea di paura il cor compunto,	But when I'd reached the bottom of a hill- it rose along the boundary of the valley that had harassed my heart with so much fear-	Idash aaniin apii Ningii-ayaan gii-oditan maaji-bikwadinaa aandi gii-ishkwe-aya'ii basadina a'aw gii-ayaan gii-bazaiba'an niin gide' wiiji-gotan.
Guardai in alto e vidi le sue spalle vestite già de' raggi del pianeta che mena dritto altrui per ogne calle.	I looked on high and I saw its shoulders clothed already by the rays of that same planet which serves to lead men straight along all roads.	Ningii-ganawaabi ishpi-gigishkaan miinawaa ningii-wabaamaan odinimaaganan azhigwa waaseyaapizo onji-aki a'aw giiniigaani- gwayka boozi akina miikaan.
Allor fu la paura un poco queta, che nel lago del cor m'era durata la notte ch'ì passai con tanta pieta.	At this my fear was somewhat quieted, for through the night of sorrow I had spent, the lake within my heart felt terror present.	Apii gotan gii-bangese wiid-biinde zaaga'igan niin gide' ningii- niibaa-zhaabwe aaniwi gichi-wiisagendam.
E come quei che con lena affannata, uscito fuor del pelago a la riva, si volge a l'acqua perigliosa e guata,	And just as he who, with exhausted breath, having escaped from sea to shore, turns back to watch the dangerous waters he has quit,	Miinawaa dibishkoo bezhig wiiji-akwanaamo ningii-zaaga-nibi miinawaa ningii-agwaataa/Awenen washkigiwe naniizaanad nibi miinawa ganawaabi:
così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva, si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo che non lasciò già mai persona viva.	So did my spirit, still a fugitive, turn back to look intently at the pass that never has let any man survive.	Mii ninmanidoo, geyaabi ginjiba', gii-washkigiwe ganawaabam miinawaa ishkwa-dakokiwin a'aw da-ayaan gaawiin wiikaa mashi gaa-onji-naganigod awiya bimaadizi.
Poi ch'èi posato un poco il corpo lasso, ripresi via per la spiaggia diserta, sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso.	I let my tired body rest awhile. Moving again, I tried the lonely slope- my firm foot always was the one below.	Ishkwaa ningii-ayaan agaasaa-anwebi ninyaw gii-ayekozi Ningii-aabijitaa miinawa bim-ayaa a'aw bizhishigwaa dabasadinaa Mii a'aw ningii-nagaa-zid gii-apane niisa'an
Ed ecco, quasi al cominciar de l'erta, una lonza leggera e presta molto, che di pel macolato era coverta;	And almost where the hillside starts to rise- Look there!-a leopard, very quick and lithe, a leopard covered with a spotted hide.	
e non mi si partia dinanzi al volto, anzi 'mpediva tanto il mio cammino, ch'i' fui per ritornar più volte vòlto.	He did not disappear from sight, but stayed; indeed, he so impeded my ascent that I had often to turn back again.	
Temp'era dal principio del mattino, e 'l sol montava 'n sù con quelle stelle ch'eran con lui quando l'amor divino	The time was the beginning of the morning; the sun was rising now in fellowship with the same stars that had escorted it	
mosse di prima quelle cose belle; sì ch'a bene sperar m'era cagione di quella fiera a la gaetta pelle	when Divine Love first moved those things of beauty; so that the hour and the gentle season gave me good cause for hopefulness on seeing	
l'ora del tempo e la dolce stagione; ma non sì che paura non mi desse la vista che m'apparve d'un leone.	that beast before me with his speckled skin; but hope was hardly able to prevent the fear I felt when I beheld a lion.	
Questi pareo che contra me venisse con la test'alta e con rabbiosa fame, sì che pareo che l'aere ne tremesse.	His head held high and ravenous with hunger- even the air around him seemed to shudder- this lion seemed to make his way against me.	

Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
sembiava carca ne la sua magrezza,
e molte genti fé già viver grame,

questa mi porse tanto di gravezza
con la paura ch'uscita di sua vista,
ch'io perdei la speranza de l'altezza.

E qual è quei che volontieri acquista,
e giugne 'l tempo che perder lo face,
che 'n tutti suoi pensier piange e
s'attrista;

tal mi fece la bestia senza pace,
che, venendomi 'ncontro, a poco a
poco
mi ripigneva là dove 'l sol tace.

Mentre ch'i' rovinava in basso loco,
dinanzi a li occhi mi si fu offerto
chi per lungo silenzio parea fioco.

Quando vidi costui nel gran deserto,
"Miserere di me", gridai a lui,
"qual che tu sii, od ombra od omo
certo!".

Rispuosemi: "Non omo, omo già fui,
e li parenti miei furon lombardi,
mantoani per patria ambedui.

Nacqui sub Iulio, ancor che fosse tardi,
e vissi a Roma sotto 'l buono Augusto
nel tempo de li dèi falsi e bugiardi.

Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giusto
figliuol d'Anchise che venne di Troia,
poi che 'l superbo Ilión fu combusto.

Ma tu perché ritorni a tanta noia?
perché non sali il diletto monte
ch'è principio e cagion di tutta gioia?"

"Or se' tu quel Virgilio e quella fonte
che spandi di parlar sì largo fiume?"
rispuos'io lui con vergognosa fronte.

"O de li altri poeti onore e lume,
vagliami 'l lungo studio e 'l grande
amore
che m' ha fatto cercar lo tuo volume.

Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore,
tu se' solo colui da cu' io tolsi
lo bello stilo che m' ha fatto onore.

Vedi la bestia per cu' io mi volsi;
aiutami da lei, famoso saggio,
ch'ella mi fa tremar le vene e i polsi".

"A te convien tenere altro viaggio",
rispuose, poi che lagrimar mi vide,
"se vuo' campar d'esto loco selvaggio;

ché questa bestia, per la qual tu gride,
non lascia altrui passar per la sua via,
ma tanto lo 'mpedisce che l'uccide;

e ha natura sì malvagia e ria,
che mai non empie la bramosa voglia,
e dopo 'l pasto ha più fame che pria.

And then a she-wolf showed herself; she
seemed
to carry every craving in her leanness;
she had already brought despair to many.

The very sight of her so weighted me
with fearfulness that I abandoned hope
of ever climbing up that mountain slope.

Even as he who glories while he gains
will, when the time has come to tally loss,
lament with every thought and turn
despondent,

so was I when I faced that restless beast,
which, even as she stalked me, step by step
had thrust me back to where the sun is
speechless.

While I retreated down to lower ground,
before my eyes there suddenly appeared
one who seemed faint because of the long
silence.

When I saw him in that vast wilderness,
"Have pity on me," were the words I cried,
"whatever you may be- a shade, a man."

He answered me: "Not man; I once was man.
Both of my parents came from Lombardy,
and both claimed Mantua as native city.

And I was born, though late, sub Iulio,
and lived in Rome under the good Augustus-
the season of the false and lying gods.

I was a poet, and I sang the righteous
son of Anchises who had come from Troy
when flames destroyed the pride of Ilium.

But why do you return to wretchedness?
Why not climb up the mountain of delight,
the origin and cause of every joy?"

"And are you then that Virgil, you the fountain
that freely pours so rich a stream of speech?"
I answered him with shame upon my brow.

"O light and honour of all other poets,
may my long study and the intense love
that made me search your volume serve me
now.

You are my master and my author, you-
the only one from whom my writing drew
the noble style for which I had been honored.

You see the beast that made me turn aside;
help me, o famous sage, to stand against her,
for she has made my blood and pulses
shudder."

"It is another path that you must take,"
he answered when he saw my tearfulness,
"if you would leave this savage wilderness;

the beast that is the cause of your outcry
allows no man to pass along her track,
but blocks him even to the point of death;

her nature is so squalid, so malicious
that she can never sate her greedy will;
when she has fed, she's hungrier than ever.

Molti son li animali a cui s'ammoglia, e più saranno ancora, infin che 'l veltro verrà, che la farà morir con doglia.	She mates with many living souls and shall yet mate with many more, until the Greyhound arrives, inflicting painful death on her.
Questi non ciberà terra né peltro, ma sapienza, amore e virtute, e sua nazione sarà tra feltro e feltro.	That Hound will never feed on land or pewter, but find his fare in wisdom, love, and virtue; his place of birth shall be between two felts.
Di quella umile Italia fia salute per cui morì la vergine Camilla, Eurialo e Turno e Niso di ferute.	He will restore low-lying Italy for which the maid Camilla died of wounds, and Nisus, Turnus and Euryalus.
Questi la caccerà per ogni villa, fin che l'avrà rimessa ne lo 'nferno, là onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.	And he will hunt that beast through every city until he thrusts her back again to Hell, from which she was first sent above by envy.
Ond'io per lo tuo me' penso e discerno che tu mi segui, e io sarò tua guida, e trarrotti di qui per loco eterno;	Therefore, I think and judge it best for you to follow me, and I shall guide you, taking you from this place through an eternal place,
ove udirai le disperate strida, vedrai li antichi spiriti dolenti, ch'a la seconda morte ciascun grida;	where you shall hear the howls of desperation and see the ancient spirits in their pain, as each of them laments his second death;
e vederai color che son contenti nel foco, perché speran di venire quando che sia a le beate genti.	and shall see those souls who are content within the fire, for they hope to reach- whenever that may be-to the blessed people.
A le quai poi se tu vorrai salire, anima fia a ciò più di me degna: con lei ti lascerò nel mio partire;	If you would then ascend as high as these, a soul more worthy than I am will guide you; I'll leave you in her care when I depart,
ché quello imperador che là sù regna, perch'ì fu' ribellante a la sua legge, non vuol che 'n sua città per me si vegna.	because that Emperor who reigns above, since I have been rebellious rebellious to His law, will not allow me entry to His city.
In tutte parti impera e quivi regge; quivi è la sua città e l'alto seggio: oh felice colui cu' ivi elegge!"	He governs everywhere, but rules from there; there is His city, His high capital: o happy those He chooses to be there!"
E io a lui: "Poeta, io ti richieggo per quello Dio che tu non conoscesti, acciò ch'io fugga questo male e peggio,	And I replied: "O poet-by that God whom you had never come to know-I beg you, that I may flee this evil and worse evils,
che tu mi meni là dov'or dicesti, sì ch'io veggia la porta di san Pietro e color cui tu fai cotanto mesti".	to lead me to the place of which you spoke, that I may see the gateway of Saint Peter and those whom you describe as sorrowful."
Allor si mosse, e io li tenni dietro.	Then he set out, and I moved on behind him.

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.

Anishinaabemowin: the first 30 verses were translated by Matthias Nunno, a self-taught novice speaker of Anishinaabemowin, of which there are many dialects and regional variations of speech. Matthias "would like to acknowledge and express his thanks to his family, and all those involved informally in the Anishinaabemowin Aabaakaawin Maamajise/Anishabek language revitalization movement."

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 American Sign Language, 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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) from March 25th to June 2021.

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