



### CANTO 3

1 PER ME SI VA NE LA CITTA' DOLENTE,  
PER ME SI VA NE L'ETERNO DOLORE,  
PER ME SI VA TRA LA PERDUTA GENTE.  
4 GIUSTIZIA MOSSE IL MIO ALTO FATTORE;  
FECEMI LA DIVINA PODESTATE,  
LA SOMMA SAPIENZA E'L PRIMO AMORE.  
7 DINANZI A ME NON FUOR COSE CREATE  
SE NON ETTERNE, E IO ETTERNO DURO.  
LASCIASTE OGNE SPERANZA, VOI CH'INTRATE.  
10 Queste parole di colore oscuro  
vid' io scritte al sommo d'una porta,  
per ch'io: "Maestro, il senso lor m'è duro."  
13 Ed elli a me, come persona accorta:  
"Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto,  
ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta.  
16 Noi siam venuti al loco ov' i' t'ho detto  
che tu vedrai le genti dolorose  
c'hanno perduto il ben de l'intelletto."  
19 E poi che la sua mano a la mia puose  
con lieto volto, ond' io mi confortai,  
mi mise dentro a le segrete cose.  
22 Quivi sospiri, pianti e alti guai  
risonavan per l'aere senza stelle,  
per ch'io al cominciar ne lagrimai.  
25 Diverse lingue, orribili favelle,  
parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,  
voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle  
28 facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira  
sempre in quell'aura senza tempo tinta,  
come la rena quando turbo spira.

### CANTO 3

*Hell Gate—the trimmers—the Acheron—Charon and the damned  
souls—the pilgrim's faint*

1 THROUGH ME THE WAY INTO THE GRIEVING CITY,  
THROUGH ME THE WAY INTO ETERNAL SORROW,  
THROUGH ME THE WAY AMONG THE LOST PEOPLE.  
4 JUSTICE MOVED MY HIGH MAKER;  
DIVINE POWER MADE ME,  
HIGHEST WISDOM, AND PRIMAL LOVE.  
7 BEFORE ME WERE NO THINGS CREATED  
EXCEPT ETERNAL ONES, AND I ENDURE ETERNAL.  
ABANDON EVERY HOPE, YOU WHO ENTER.  
10 These words I saw written with dark color above  
a gate, and I said: "Master, their sense is hard for  
me."  
13 And he to me, like one alert: "Here one must  
abandon every suspicion, every cowardice must die  
here.  
16 We have come to the place where I told you you  
will see the grieving peoples who have lost the  
good of the intellect."  
19 And, putting his hand on mine with a cheerful  
glance from which I drew strength, he introduced me  
into the secret things.  
22 There sighs, weeping, loud wailing resounded  
through the starless air, for which at the outset I shed  
tears.  
25 Strange languages, horrible tongues, words of  
pain, accents of anger, voices loud and hoarse, and  
sounds of blows with them,  
28 made a tumult that turns forever in that air  
darkened without time, like the sand when a  
whirlwind blows.

31 E io ch'avea d'orror la testa cinta,  
dissi: "Maestro, che è quel ch' i' odo?  
e che gent' è che par nel duol sì vinta?"

34 Ed elli a me: "Questo misero modo  
tegnon l'anime triste di coloro  
che visser senza 'nfamia e senza lodo.

37 Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro  
de li angeli che non furon ribelli  
né fur fedeli a Dio, ma per sé fuoro.

40 Caccianli i ciel per non esser men belli,  
né lo profondo inferno li riceve,  
ch'alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d'elli."

43 E io: "Maestro, che è tanto greve  
a lor che lamentar li fa sì forte?"  
Rispuose: "Dicerolti molto breve.

46 Questi non hanno speranza di morte,  
e la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa  
che 'nvidiosi son d'ogne altra sorte.

49 Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa;  
misericordia e giustizia li sdegna:  
non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa."

52 E io, che riguardai, vidi una 'nsegna  
che girando correva tanto ratta  
che d'ogne posa mi pareo indegna;

55 e dietro le venìa sì lunga tratta  
di gente, ch' i' non avrei creduto  
che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta.

58 Poscia ch'io v'ebbi alcuno riconosciuto,  
vidi e conobbi l'ombra di colui  
che fece per viltade il gran rifiuto.

61 Incontanente intesi e certo fui  
che questa era la setta d'i cattivi,  
a Dio spiacenti e a' nemici sui.

64 Questi sciaurati, che mai non fur vivi,  
erano ignudi e stimolati molto  
da mosconi e da vespe ch'eran ivi.

67 Elle rigavan lor di sangue il volto,  
che, mischiato di lagrime, a' lor piedi

31 And I, my head girt with horror, said: "Master,  
what is this I hear? and what people is this who  
seem so overcome by grief?"

34 And he to me: "This wretched measure is kept by  
the miserable souls who lived without infamy and  
without praise.

37 They are mixed with that cowardly chorus of  
angels who were not rebels yet were not faithful to  
God, but were for themselves.

40 The heavens reject them so as not to be less  
beautiful, nor does deep Hell receive them, for the  
wicked would have some glory from them."

43 And I: "Master, what is so grievous that it makes  
them lament so loudly?" He replied: "I will tell you  
very briefly.

46 They have no hope of death, and their blind life is  
so base that they are envious of every other fate.

49 The world permits no fame of them to exist;  
mercy and justice alike disdain them: let us not  
speak of them, but look and pass on."

52 When I looked again, I saw a flag running in  
circles so rapidly that it seemed to scorn all pause;  
and after it there came so long a train of people,  
that I would not have believed death had undone so  
many.

58 After I had recognized several, I saw and knew  
the shade of him who in his cowardice made the  
great refusal.

61 Immediately I understood and was certain that  
this was the sect of cowards, displeasing both to God  
and to his enemies.

64 These wretches, who never were alive, were naked  
and much tormented by large flies and wasps that  
were there.

67 These streaked their faces with blood which,  
mixed with tears, at their feet was gathered up by  
disgusting worms.

70 E poi ch'a riguardar oltre mi diedi,  
 vidi genti a la riva d'un gran fiume,  
 per ch'io dissi: "Maestro, or mi concedi  
 73 ch'i' sappia quali sono, e qual costume  
 le fa di trapassar parer sì pronte,  
 com' i' discerno per lo fioco lume."  
 76 Ed elli a me: "Le cose ti fier conte  
 quando noi fermerem li nostri passi  
 su la trista riviera d'Acheronte."  
 79 Allor con li occhi vergognosi e bassi,  
 temendo no 'l mio dir li fosse grave,  
 infino al fiume del parlar mi trassi.  
 82 Ed ecco verso noi venir per nave  
 un vecchio, bianco per antico pelo,  
 gridando: "Guai a voi, anime prave!  
 85 Non isperate mai veder lo cielo:  
 i' vegno per menarvi a l'altra riva  
 ne le tenebre etterne, in caldo e 'n gelo.  
 88 E tu che se' costì, anima viva,  
 partiti da cotesti che son morti."  
 Ma poi che vide ch'io non mi partiva,  
 91 disse: "Per altra via, per altri porti  
 verrai a piaggia, non qui, per passare:  
 più lieve legno convien che ti porti."  
 94 E 'l duca lui: "Caron, non ti crucciare:  
 vuolsi così colà dove si puote  
 ciò che si vuole, e più non dimandare."  
 97 Quinci fuor quete le lanose gote  
 al nocchier de la livida palude,  
 che 'ntorno a li occhi avea di fiamme rote.  
 100 Ma quell' anime, ch'eran lasse e nude,  
 cangiar colore e dibattero i denti,  
 ratto che 'nteser le parole crude.  
 103 Bestemmiavano Dio e lor parenti,  
 l'umana spezie e 'l loco e 'l tempo e 'l seme  
 di lor semenza e di lor nascimenti.  
 106 Poi si ritrasser tutte quante insieme,  
 forte piangendo, a la riva malvagia

70 And when I gazed beyond them, I saw people on  
 the bank of a great river; so I said, "Master, now  
 grant  
 73 that I may know who those are, and what  
 disposition makes them seem so ready to cross over,  
 as I can discern in spite of the weak light."  
 76 And he to me: "These things will be made known  
 to you when we stay our steps on the gloomy shore of  
 Acheron."  
 79 Then with eyes shamefast and cast down, afraid  
 that my speaking might displease him, I refrained  
 from speech until we reached the river.  
 82 And behold coming toward us in a boat an old  
 man, white with the hairs of age, crying: "Woe to  
 you, wicked souls!  
 85 Never hope to see the sky: I come to lead you to  
 the other shore, to the eternal shadows, to heat and  
 freezing.  
 88 And you who are over there, living soul, separate  
 yourself from these here, who are dead." But when  
 he saw that I did not leave,  
 91 he said: "By another way, through other ports will  
 you come to shore, not by crossing here: a lighter  
 vessel must carry you."  
 94 And my leader to him: "Charon, do not torture  
 yourself with anger: this is willed where what is  
 willed can be done, so ask no more."  
 97 Then were quiet the woolly jowls of the pilot of  
 the livid swamp; around his eyes he had wheels of  
 flame.  
 100 But those weary, naked souls changed color and  
 gnashed their teeth, as soon as they heard his harsh  
 words.  
 103 They cursed God and their parents, the human  
 race and the place and the time and the seed of their  
 sowing and of their birth.  
 106 Then all of them together, weeping loudly, drew  
 near the evil shore that awaits each one who does

109 Caron dimonio, con occhi di bragia,  
 loro accennando tutte le raccoglie;  
 batte col remo qualunque s'adagia.  
 112 Come d'autunno si levàn le foglie  
 l'una appresso de l'altra, fin che 'l ramo  
 vede a la terra tutte le sue spoglie:  
 115 similmente il mal seme d'Adamo  
 gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una  
 per cenni, come augel per suo richiamo.  
 118 Così sen vanno su per l'onda bruna,  
 e avanti che sien di là discese,  
 anche di qua nuova schiera s'auna.  
 121 "Figliuol mio," disse 'l maestro cortese,  
 "quelli che muoion ne l'ira di Dio  
 tutti convegnon qui d'ogne paese;  
 124 e pronti sono a trapassar lo rio,  
 ché la divina giustizia li sprona  
 sì che la tema si volve in disio.  
 127 Quinci non passa mai anima buona;  
 e però, se Caron di te si lagna,  
 ben puoi sapere omai che 'l suo dir suona."  
 130 Finito questo, la buia campagna  
 tremò sì forte che de lo spavento  
 la mente di sudore ancor mi bagna.  
 133 La terra lagrimosa diede vento  
 che balenò una luce vermiglia  
 la qual mi vinse ciascun sentimento,  
 136 e caddi come l'uom cui sonno piglia.

109 Charon the demon, with eyes like glowing coals,  
 making signs to them, gathers them all in; he beats  
 with his oar whoever lingers.  
 112 As in autumn the leaves remove themselves one  
 after the other, until the branch sees all its raiment on  
 the ground:  
 115 so the evil seed of Adam throw themselves from  
 that shore one by one, when beckoned to, each like a  
 falcon to its lure.  
 118 Thus they go off across the dark waves, and  
 before they have disembarked over there, over here  
 again a new flock gathers.  
 121 "My son," said my courteous master, "those who  
 die in God's anger all come together here from every  
 land;  
 124 and they are ready to cross over the river, for  
 God's justice so spurs them that fear turns to desire.  
 127 No good soul ever passes this way; and so, if  
 Charon complains of you, you can well understand  
 what his words mean."  
 130 As he finished, the dark landscape trembled so  
 violently that in terror my memory bathes me again  
 with sweat.  
 133 The tearful earth gave forth a wind that flashed  
 with a crimson light which overcame all feeling in me,  
 136 and I fell like one whom sleep is taking.



## NOTES

**1–9. THROUGH ME . . . YOU WHO ENTER:** Like Vergil, Dante gives Hell both an outer and an inner gate (see 8.68 and 9.104, with notes). The early commentators identify the “speaking gate” as a personification; Morpurgo (1926; cited in Simonelli 1993) studied the genre of “gate-inscriptions” in medieval Latin; he found they typically include a statement of intent, often anaphorically with *per me* [through me] (cf. lines 1–3); the name of the builder (cf. lines 4–6); and the date of building (cf. line 7). Compare John 10.9, where Christ says, “I am the door [*ostium*]. Through me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.”

**1. GRIEVING CITY:** The grieving city derives from the biblical personification of Jerusalem mourning its destruction in 586 B.C. See Lamentations 1.1–2:

How doth the city sit solitary. . . . Weeping she hath wept in the night,  
and her tears are on her cheeks: there is none to comfort her.

The destruction of Jerusalem was regarded by the exegetes as a figure of the Last Judgment and thus as applicable to Hell (this figure is discussed further in the note on 30.58–61). Dante quotes the first verse both in the *Vita nuova* (Chapter 29, on the death of Beatrice) and in a political epistle. That both Heaven and Hell are referred to as cities (cf. 1.126, 128) derives from Augustine’s theory of the Earthly and Heavenly Cities in the *City of God*.

**5–6. DIVINE POWER . . . PRIMAL LOVE:** Power is the attribute of the Father, wisdom of the Son, and love of the Spirit: all creation is the work of the Trinity. The central theme of the *Inferno*, of course, is the carrying out of God’s justice on sin.

**7–8. NO THINGS . . . EXCEPT ETERNAL ONES:** In *Par.* 29.22–36, Dante notes that the three eternal creatures are the angels (pure form or act), prime matter (pure potentiality), and the heavens (potentiality partially realized in act).

**7. CREATED:** That Hell was prepared for the rebel angels is biblical (Matt. 25.41: “the everlasting fire . . . was prepared for the devil and his angels”); the rebellion of the angels and their casting out from Heaven is mentioned in Apoc. 12.9:

And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world: and he was cast unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

See also 2 Peter 2.4.

**10. dark color:** The expression can refer both to the appearance of the wing and to the obscure and harsh meaning (“rhetorical” color).

**11. above a gate:** The gate stands open, like that of Vergil’s Hades (*Aen.* 6.127: “noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis” [all night and all day the gate of black Dis stands open]), but for Dante it was not always so (see 4.52–63; note).

**12. sense is hard:** See John 6.61: “durus est hoc sermo” [this saying is hard] said by the disciples hearing Christ offer his flesh as food. See also 9.61–*Purg.* 8.19–22, with notes.

**13–15. Here one must abandon . . . must die here:** Note the antithesis with line 9. The sense echoes the Sybil in *Aen.* 6.261: “Nunc animis opus Aenea, nunc pectore firmo” [Now there is need, Aeneas, of bravery, of a strong heart]; the relation between the pilgrim and his guide Virgil is patterned in many respects on that between Aeneas and the Sybil. In this canto Dante alludes to or quotes Aeneas’s entrance into Hades (*Aen.* 6.261–414) more than a dozen times.

**18. good of the intellect:** The intellectual vision of God. The Aristotelian source of the phrase (*Nicomachean Ethics* 6.2.1139a) is quoted by Dante *Convivio* 2.13.6: “as the Philosopher says . . . , the truth is the good of the intellect.”

**21. the secret things:** Knowledge of the other world. Compare *Aen.* 6.264–6

Di, quibus imperium est animarum, umbraeque silentes  
et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte tacentia late,  
sit mihi fas audita loqui, sit numine vestro  
pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas.

[Gods, whose power controls the shades [of the dead], and you, silent shadow and Chaos and Phlegethon, broad places silent in the night, let it not be impious for me to speak things heard, let it be with your power that I set forth things drowned in the deep earth and darkness.]

**22–27. loud wailing . . . sounds of blows:** Compare Matt. 13.42: “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” also echoed in line 101, where the meaning of “chattering” includes “gnashing.” See also *Aen.* 6.557–59 (of the gate to Tartarus):

Hinc exaudiri gemitus et saeva sonare  
verbera, tum stridor ferri tractaeque catenae

[From there wailing and fierce blows were heard,  
then the grating of irons and chains dragging]

**23. starless air:** Compare *Aen.* 6.534: “tristis sine sole domos” [gloomy sunless dwellings]; the last word of each cantica of the poem is *stars*.

**24. I shed tears:** The first of the pilgrim’s varying emotional responses to Hell.

**25. Strange languages, horrible tongues:** The first hint of Hell’s kinship with Babel, the place of confused speech.

**29. darkened without time:** Air darkened forever, beyond time.

**31. my head girt with horror:** In other words, the pilgrim’s scalp is bristling (Latin *horreo*, to bristle) all around his head. The line echoes *Aen.* 2.559: “At me tum primum saevus circumstetit horror” [Then a dreadful horror first encircled me]; Aeneas is describing the decapitation of Priam, king of Troy.

**36. without infamy and without praise:** Dante’s journey will bring infamy to those in Hell and renewed or better reputations to the blessed; but the neutrals are barred from any preservation of their reputations or “names.” This verse is usually taken as a reference to Apoc. 3:15–16, spoken by Christ the Judge in reproof of Laodicea: “because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth” (see the note to line 64).

**37–39. They are mixed . . . for themselves:** The legend of the neutral angels, mentioned in numerous medieval texts, including the *Voyage of Saint Brendan*, goes back at least as far as Clement of Alexandria (Gmelin). This mixing of human and angelic is not observed anywhere else in the poem.

**39. but were for themselves:** The rebel angels first averted themselves from God and then actively turned to evil with Satan, but the neutrals, once averted

from God, did not act further (Freccero [1960] prefers the translation “stoo themselves”); theirs is a “double negation,” and lines 36–52 offer a number of examples where the double exclusion of the neutrals assumes a character syntactic form (Freccero 1983).

**52–53. flag running in circles:** The first instance of Dante’s *contrapasso* [counter suffering]—the fitting of the punishment to the sin (see 28.142). The flag at the lure, the wasps and flies as prods or stimuli, punishing the neutrals’ purposelessness and lack of affiliation.

**56–57. death had undone so many:** The infinite number of the dead is a classical topos, discussed in the note to lines 112–17, but Dante’s point is more baroque; Eliot translated this line in *The Waste Land*.

**59–60. him who in his cowardice . . . great refusal:** This unnamed soul has been identified as Pontius Pilate, Esau, and a host of others. But Pietro Morrone, the pious monastic reformer (he founded the order of Celestines, elevated to the papacy in 1294 as Celestine V and canonized shortly after death, is the choice of the earliest commentators (the expression “saw and kneel” suggests that Dante had seen him, and Pietro was in Florence in 1280, though the phrase is also used of Hector and Aeneas in Canto 4). Celestine is a plausible candidate because his abdication cleared the way for the accession of Benedictine Caetani as Boniface VIII, Dante’s corrupt enemy (see 19.52–57, 27.85–100). Celestine’s act would thus have been a “neutral” failure to oppose a patent evil resulting from *viltà* [cowardice] (see Virgil’s words to the pilgrim in 2.45), but all identifications are inconclusive.

**62–64. sect of cowards . . . wretches:** The word for “coward” here, *catt* (used also in line 37), still retained for Dante the meaning of “captive” (cf. 30.16).

**64. never were alive:** See Apoc. 3.1 (of the Church at Sardis): “I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive: and thou art dead.”

**65–69. large flies and wasps . . . worms:** In Dante’s day, flies, wasps, and worms were thought to be born of putrefaction.

**70–78. I saw people . . . Acheron:** Dante clusters a number of references to Vergil’s poem in this part of the canto (a dozen in lines 70–105 alone), where the subject is the boundary river of Hades, the Acheron (Dante has rearranged

the traditional rivers of the underworld, which are not clearly distinguished in Vergil's treatment). Compare *Aen.* 6.318–20:

Dic, ait, o virgo, quid vult concursus ad amnem?  
quidve petunt animae? Vel quo discrimine ripas  
hae linquunt, illae remis vada livida verrunt?

[He says: Say, virgin, what means this crowding at the river?  
what do the souls seek? Or by what decision  
do these remain on the shore, while those others beat the dark waters with  
oars?]

**77–81. when we stay our steps . . . until we reached the river:** See *Aen.* 6.295: "Hinc via Tartarei quae fert Acherontis ad undas" [From here the way led down to the waters of infernal Acheron], and 6.384: "Ergo iter inceptum peragunt fluvioque propinquant" [They took up their journey again and approached the river].

**82–111. And behold . . . whoever moves slowly:** In these lines, Dante adapts Vergil's portrait of Charon, the traditional ferryman of the Styx, *Aen.* 6.298–305:

Portitor has horrendus aquas et flumina servat  
terribili squalore Charon, cui plurima mento  
canities inculca iacet, stant lumina flamma,  
sordidus et umeris nodo dependet amictus.  
Ipse ratem conto subigit velisque ministrat  
et ferruginea subvectat corpora cumba,  
iam senior, sed cruda deo viridisque senectus.

[A fearsome ferryman guards these waters, this river:  
Charon. His filth is frightening, thick gray straggly  
whiskers cover his chin; his eyes are flames.  
A dirty cloak hangs from his shoulders by a knot.  
With a pole he steers and tends the sail  
of the iron-hued skiff that conveys the bodies across.  
He is old now, but a god's eld is green and raw.]

Note, in Dante's text, 82 "old man" (cf. *senior*), 83 "white with hairs of age" and 97 "woolly cheeks" (cf. *canities mento inculca*), 99 "wheels of flame," "eyes like glowing coals" (cf. *stant lumina flammae*). For this last, compare Apoc. 1.14: "his eyes were as a flame of fire."

Dante makes Charon a devil (line 109), as he does other figures from Vergilian/classical underworld, in keeping with biblical/Augustinian tradition (see the note to 1.72).

**88–89. living soul, separate yourself from these here:** Compare 6.391–94:

Fare age quid venias iam istinc, et comprime gressum.  
Umbrarum hic locus est, somni noctisque soporae:  
corpora viva nefas Stygia vectare carina.

[Say at once from there, why do you come, and halt your steps.  
This is the place of shades, dreams, and the sleep of night:  
it is sacrilege to carry living bodies in the Stygian hull.]

**91–93. By another way . . . must carry you:** Aeneas crosses in Charon's boat, but how the pilgrim crosses Acheron is left unspecified. Charon's name implies that the pilgrim is destined for salvation. The "lighter vessel" appears in *Purg.* 2.40–42.

**95–96. this is willed . . . ask no more:** The first of several passages in which Virgil quells protest by invoking the theological commonplace of God's omnipotence (see 5.22–24, which are identical to these lines, and 7.10–12). These lines have the distinction of being the first attested quotation from the *Inferno* found on the inside front cover of a register of criminal acts written in Bologna by the notary Gano degli Useppi of San Gimignano in 1317 (this is independent evidence of the circulation of the *Inferno* during Dante's lifetime [Livi 1977, 1] (see the note to 5.23).

**103–5. They cursed God . . . and of their birth:** See Jer. 20.14: "Curse be the day wherein I was born: let not the day in which my mother bore me be blessed." See also Job 3.1 and Hosea [Vulgate Osee] 9.11.

**111. beats with his oar:** This vivid detail, not in Vergil, is vividly rendered by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel's *Last Judgment*.

**112–17. As in autumn . . . to its lure:** See *Aen.* 6.309–12:

Quam multa in silvis autumni frigore primo  
lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto  
quam multae glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus  
trans pontum fugat et terris immitit apricis.

[As numerous as in the forest at the first chill of autumn,  
the leaves fall, let loose, or on the land from the deep waves  
the many birds gather, when the cold season  
drives them overseas to warmer climes.]

This famous simile, in Vergil an imitation of Homer, was taken up by Milton for the multitudes of rebel angels and by Shelley for dead leaves driven by the West Wind. Where Vergil's simile gives two views of large numbers—the multitude of souls as dead leaves, as birds—for Dante the shift from one metaphor to the next (closely linked by the leaf and the bird being single) follows the transformation in the souls, as their reluctance is changed into a desire to cross.

**115. the evil seed of Adam:** Those of Adam's descendants who are damned (even those who did not sin voluntarily are damned by the sin inherited from Adam unless redeemed by faith in Christ). The image draws on the medieval commonplace of the tree of Adam's progeny.

**117. each like a falcon to its lure:** Dante's term is the generic *uccello* [bird], but the reference is clear and is the first of a large number of images drawn from falconry. Falconers used the lure, often consisting of shiny pieces of metal that could be whirled by an attached cord, to recall their birds after the hunt.

**118. dark waves:** Compare *Aen.* 5.2, "fluctusque atros."

**123. together here from every land:** Dante gives itineraries for the soul after death at 13.27 and *Purg.* 2.101–5; the idea of a gathering of birds, introduced in the simile of lines 112–17, is still at work here, as in line 119.

**125–26. God's justice . . . turns to desire:** See the note to lines 112–17. Compare *Aen.* 6.313–14:

stabant orantes primi transmittere cursum  
tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore.

[the first stood praying to be taken across,  
they stretched out their hands in desire for the farther shore.]

**130–133. the dark landscape . . . a wind:** Medieval geology, based on Seneca's *Natural Questions* and Aristotle's *Meteorology*, understood earthquakes as the result of violent winds pent up in the earth (cf. *Purg.* 21.56–57): like winds

in the atmosphere, subterranean winds could produce lightning and thund  
The cause of this subterranean wind would not seem to be natural.

**131–32. my memory . . . with sweat:** Another instance of the narrating po  
being caught again in the experience narrated, discussed in the note to 1.4

**136. one whom sleep is taking:** For other "sleeps" and "swoons" of t  
pilgrim, see 1.2, 1.6, 5.142, and *Purgatorio* 9, 19, 27, and 31.