



## Inferno: Canto 6

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And as a ravenous and barking hound 28  
Falls dumb the moment he gets his teeth on food,  
And worries and bolts with never a thought beyond,

So did those beastly muzzles of the rude 31  
Fiend Cerberus, who so yells on the souls, they're all  
Half deafened - or they would be, if they could.

Then o'er the shades whom the rain's heavy fall 34  
Beats down, we forward went; and our feet trod  
Their nothingness, which seems corporeal.

These [all lay grovelling](#) flat upon the sod; 37  
Only, as we went by, a single shade  
Sat suddenly up, seeing us pass that road.

"O thou that through this Hell of ours art led, 40  
Look if thou know me, since thou wast, for sure,"  
Said he, "or ever I was unmade, made."

Then I to him: " Perchance thy torments sore 43  
Have changed thee out of knowledge - there's no trusting  
Sight, if I e'er set eyes on thee before.

But say, who art thou? brought by what ill lusting 46  
To such a pass and punishment as, meseems,  
Worse there may be, but nothing so disgusting?"

"Thy native city," said he, "where envy teems 49  
And swells so that already it brims the sack,  
Called me her own in the life where the light beams.

Ciacco you citizens nicknamed me - alack! 52  
Damnable gluttony was my soul's disease;  
See how I waste for it now in the rain's wrack.

And I, poor sinner, am not alone: all these 55  
Lie bound in the like penalty with me  
For the like offence." And there he held his peace,

And I at once began: "Thy misery 58  
Moves me to tears, Ciacco, and weighs me down.  
But tell me if thou canst, what end may be

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In store for the people of our distracted town. 61  
Is there one just man left? And from what source  
To such foul head have these distempers grown?"

And he: "Long time their strife will run its course, 64  
And come to bloodshed, the wood party thence  
Will drive the other out with brutal force;

But within three brief suns their confidence 67  
Will have a fall, and t'other faction rise  
By help of one who now sits on the fence;

And these will lord it long with arrogant eyes, 70  
Crushing their foes with heavy loads indeed,  
For all their bitter shame and outraged cries.

Two righteous men there are, whom none will heed; 73  
Three sparks from Hell — Avarice, Envy, Pride —  
In all men's bosoms sowed the fiery seed."

His boding speech thus ended; so I cried: 76  
"Speak on, I beg thee! More, much more reveal!  
Tegghiaio, Farinata - how betide

Those worthy men? and Rusticucci's zeal? 79  
Arrigo, Mosca, and the rest as well  
Whose minds were still set on the public weal?

Where are they? Can I find them? Prithee tell - 82  
I am consumed with my desire to know -  
Feasting in Heaven, or poisoned here in Hell?"

He answered: "With the blacker spirits below, 85  
Dragged to the depth by other crimes abhorred;  
There shalt thou see them, if so deep thou go.

But when to the sweet world thou art restored, 88  
Recall my name to living memory;  
I'll tell no more, nor speak another word."

Therewith he squinted his straight gaze awry, 91  
Eyed me awhile, then, dropping down his head,  
Rolled over amid that sightless company.

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Then spake my guide: "He'll rouse no more," he said, 94  
"Till the last loud angelic trumpet's sounding;  
For when the Enemy Power shall come arrayed

Each soul shall seek its own grave's mournful mounding, 97  
Put on once more its earthly flesh and feature,  
And hear the Doom eternally redounding."

Thus with slow steps I and my gentle teacher, 100  
Over that filthy sludge of souls and snow,  
Passed on, touching a little upon the nature

Of the life to come. "Master," said I, "this woe - 103  
Will it grow less, or still more fiercely burning  
With the Great Sentence, or remain just so?"

"Go to," said he, "hast thou forgot thy learning, 106  
Which hath it: The more perfect, the more keen,  
Whether for pleasure's or for pain's discerning?

Though true perfection never can be seen 109  
In these damned souls, they'll be more near complete  
After the Judgment than they yet have been."

So, with more talk which I need not repeat, 112  
We followed the road that rings that circle round,  
Till on the next descent we set our feet;

There Pluto, the great enemy, we found 115