

## CANTO 32

*Ninth circle, Cocytus: Cain: traitors to kindred—brothers—Camiscion  
de' Pazzi, Sassol Mascheroni—Antenora: traitors to country or party:  
Bocca del Duca, Buoso Donati—Ugolino and Archbishop Ruggieri*

- 1           If I had harsh and clacking rhymes such as befit  
the dreadful hole toward which all other rocks point  
their weight,
- 4           I would press out the juice from my concept more  
fully; but because I lack them, not without fear do I  
bring myself to speak;
- 7           for it is no task to take in jest, that of describing  
the bottom of the universe, nor one for a tongue that  
calls mommy or daddy.
- 10          But let those ladies aid my verse who helped  
Amphion enclose Thebes, so that the word may not  
be different from the fact.
- 13          Oh beyond all others ill-created throng who dwell  
in the place of which it is hard to speak, better had  
you here been sheep or goats!
- 16          When we were down in the dark well, far below  
the giant's feet, and I was still gazing at the high  
wall,
- 19          I heard one say to me: "Watch how you step! Walk  
so that you do not trample with your feet the heads of  
your wretched weary brothers."
- 22          I turned then and saw before me and beneath my  
feet a lake to which icy cold gave the appearance of  
glass and not of water.
- 25          So thick a veil was never made over its course by  
the Austrian Danube in winter, nor by the Don under  
its freezing sky,
- 28          as was there; and if Tamberlic should fall on it, or  
Pietrapana, at its edge it would not even creak.

31           And as the frog sits croaking, with its muzzle out  
of the water, at the season when the peasant woman  
often dreams of gleanings,

34           the grieving shades, livid, were in the ice up  
to where shame appears, playing the tune of the  
stork with their teeth.

37           Each held his face turned down; from their  
mouths the cold, from their eyes their wicked hearts  
exact testimony among them.

40           When I had looked around myself a little, I looked  
down at my feet and saw two so pressed together  
that the hair of their heads was mingled.

43           “Tell me, you who so press your breasts together,”  
I said, “who are you?” And they bent back their necks;  
and when they had turned their sight up to me,

46           their eyes, which had previously been wet within,  
dripped tears over their features, and the cold  
pressed the tears into the eyes and locked them up.

49           Board with board clamp never bound so tight; and  
they like two goats butted together, such anger  
overcame them.

52           And one who had lost both ears to the freezing,  
still with his face turned down, said: “Why do you  
mirror yourself in us?”

55           If you want to know who those two are, the valley  
where the Bisenzio descends belonged to their father  
Albert and to them.

58           From one body they were born; and you can  
search through all Caina and not find a soul worthier  
to be fixed in gelatine,

61           not him whose breast and shadow were pierced  
by one blow from the hand of Arthur, not Focaccia,  
not this one who so encumbers me

64           with his head that I cannot see any further, and  
his name was Sassol Mascheroni: if you are Tuscan,  
you know who he was.

67           And so you won't have me make any more  
speeches, know that I was Camiscion de' Pazzi; and I  
await Carlino to excuse me.”

70           Then I saw a thousand faces made doglike by the  
cold, whence I shudder, and always shall, at frozen  
fords.

73           And while we were walking to the center toward  
which all weight collects, and I was trembling in the  
eternal chill,

76           if it was wish or destiny or fortune, I do not  
know, but, pacing among the heads, I struck my foot  
hard in the face of one.

79           Weeping it scolded me: “Why do you pound me?  
if you are not here to increase the vengeance for  
Montaperti, why do you bother me?”

82           And I: “My master, now wait for me here, so that  
I can be freed from a doubt by him; then you can  
hurry me as much as you will.”

85           My leader stopped; and I said to that one, who  
was still cursing violently: “Who are you, to  
reproach others so?”

88           “Now who are you, to walk through Antenora  
striking,” he said, “others’ cheeks, so that, if you were  
alive, it would be too much to bear?”

91           “I am alive, and it can be precious to you,” was my  
reply, “if you wish fame, that I place your name  
among my other notes.”

94           And he to me: “The opposite is what I’m greedy  
for. Get up from here, and stop pestering me, for you  
flatter badly here in this swamp!”

97           Then I seized him by the scalp and said: “You will  
have to name yourself or not a hair will be left up  
here.”

100          Then he to me: “Though you scalp me, I will not  
tell you who I am nor show you, though you  
fall on my head a thousand times.”

103          I had already wrapped his hair around my hand  
and had torn out more than one tuft of it, he barking  
with his eyes kept down,

106          when another shouted: “What’s wrong with you,  
Bocca? isn’t it enough to play tunes with your jaws,  
that you have to bark, too? What devil is tickling  
you?”

109           “Now,” I said, “I don’t want you to say any more,  
wicked traitor, for to your shame I will carry back true  
news of you.”

112           “Get lost,” he replied, “and tell what you will; but  
do not be silent, if you escape from here, about him  
whose tongue was so loose just now.

115           He bewails the silver of the French here; ‘I saw,’  
you can say, ‘him from Duera, down there where the  
sinners keep cool.’

118           If you were asked, ‘Who else was there?’ beside  
you is that Beccheria whose throat-piece Florence  
sawed through.

121           Gianni de’ Soldanier I believe is over there with  
Ganelon and Tebaldello, who opened Faenza when it  
slept.”

124           We had already left him, when I saw two frozen  
in one hole so that one head was a hat to the other;

127           and as bread is eaten by the starving, so the one  
above put his teeth to the other, there where the  
brain joins the nape:

130           not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw Menalippus’  
temples in his rage, than this one did the skull and  
the other things.

133           “O you who show by such a bestial sign your  
hatred over him you are eating, tell me why,” I said,  
“with this pact,

136           that if you justly complain of him, when I know  
who you are and what his sin, in the world above I  
shall repay you for it,

139           if that with which I speak does not dry up.”

