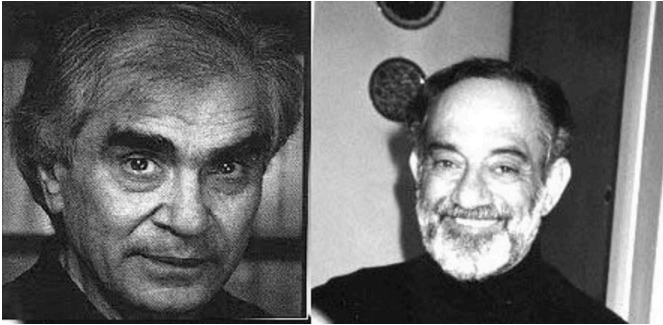


Metropolis + Isosceles



An American Epic Poem

Nicholas Syrianus Katsafanas

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ADAM METROPOLIS
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8,809:11,704 .753

Canto I
614:793 .774

We hadn't been there ninety seconds,
because it was right as we walked
in the backyard of the high school graduation party
that her cousin approached us
and, without the slightest hesitation,
asked my girlfriend right to her face—
'Did you bring my
tupperware with you?'
It took perhaps longer than I
care to confess
to fully recognize what exactly it was
she was referencing.
Oh, the oxtail, I reflected,
a second or so later,
as I recalled there being a beautiful,
wood-covered, piece of glass of tupperware
sitting in our refrigerator for over a week,
incubating an oxtail dish
that had, unfortunately, totally expired—
it was so far gone
I was hesitant to even open
the top of the tupperware container,
despite the fact
the top of the container was a beautiful,
wood finished piece.
There was no doubt in my mind
that this oxtail was, at that point,
not just completely expired
but essentially a type of meat soup,
a type of liquified corpse,
which of course disgusted me severely.
Cleaning it out struck me as a grotesque idea.

I can't say for certain,
but it's more likely than not
that I threw it into the trash—
tupperware, wood top, and oxtail.
'Oh, so sorry,
I'll definitely bring it back soon!' she said,
and I glanced at her and attempted to decipher
if she had any idea the tupperware
and the oxtail were both long gone,
that both now sat in a garbage heap,
a pile of trash somewhere,
at the bottom of a public dump,
still filled with decayed, grotesque oxtail,
and that her cousin would never again
own the privilege of placing her leftovers
into that piece of tupperware
with the beautiful wood cover.
That tupperware was finished.
Having said that, even the finest piece of tupperware—
how precious is it really?
Couldn't we replace it for five dollars or less?
My thinking at the time was yes,
that the tupperware was entirely fungible,
yet as soon as we stepped foot
into this high school graduation party
her cousin inquired about the tupperware—
as if this tupperware perhaps belonged
to some sort of rare species of tupperware,
perhaps a species of tupperware
on the verge of extinction,
perhaps this was some kind of
one-of-a-kind tupperware
I nonchalantly tossed into a pile of trash.
Some people have massive amounts
of respect for tupperware,

but I've never been one of them,
it always eluded me why anyone would
invest more than one dollar
into a piece of tupperware, personally.
To my mind, if a piece of tupperware,
no matter the level of craftsmanship,
is priced above one dollar,
then it's an overpriced piece of tupperware.
It's just not an item I've personally
ever viewed as an investment of any kind.
In my mind, plates and bowls
are relatively worthwhile investments,
while tupperware is essentially
a capitalist ploy to increase the profit margin
on plastic bags—
to convince people they shouldn't only
invest in plates and bowls,
but also invest in the highest quality plastic bags
(tupperware),
that in theory they'll use again and again,
but in practice they'll lose incessantly
and constantly have to replace.

Canto II
696:817 .852

'She's never getting that tupperware back,' I said.
'You threw it in the trash?' she said.
'You gave the okay?' I said,
to which she shook her head,
clearly misremembering
the plethora of times we've thrown out tupperware in the
past,
the countless times I've
seen a piece of well-worn tupperware
taking up space in our refrigerator,
asked her if I could throw said tupperware out,
received approval to throw said tupperware out,
and thrown out said tupperware.
'It's not a problem,' I said,
'we can probably just
buy her a replacement or something.'
She agreed but seemed dubious,
and I felt the same,
I found myself agreeing with both
myself and my girlfriend,
despite the fact we had
diametrically opposed views on this tupperware.
My girlfriend and I disagreed on our ability
to replace this tupperware,
and I agreed with both of us.
I sat in a lawn chair a second or so later,
drinking a glass of Soju,
explicitly attempting to avoid any
unnecessary interaction
at this high school graduation
until I'd imbibed at least half
this bottle of Soju,

doubting my ability
to come off appropriately cordial
in a social setting
sans a minimum of half of a bottle
of this Soju ruthlessly percolating
through my bloodstream.
I sat there, contemplating high school graduations,
contemplating my own high school graduation,
recalling nothing of my high school graduation,
contemplating the pervasive idiocy
of organized education,
considering how more or less every unique thinker—
from Socrates stoned by the Athenians
to Giordano Bruno burnt alive by the Catholic church
to Nietzsche unread and in an insane asylum
as he rotted away—yes,
every unique thinker over the course
of human history was either intensely ostracized
or simply assassinated by the systematic educators
of his or her day. In short,
I was vociferously drinking this glass of Soju
when I thought to myself—Isn't it possible
that we think of the theological philosophers
as the conservatives, as the ones restrained
by this so-called conception of God,
yet it's actually the case that the theological
philosophers,
over the course of human history,
are the most audacious,
the boldest philosophers we have
and have ever had?
How else can we explain Berkeley, I thought—
easily the most radical skeptic the modern West
has produced, yet also a Catholic priest?
Dionysius, for example,

was actually quite vigorous in his skepticism
of our ability to know anything,
his circumlocutions were actually quite radical.
Whereas our typical secular atheist philosopher,
while assured of our ability to know there are no Gods,
is rather neutered in his philosophical speculations
if the fact that God doesn't exist is left to the side.
Isn't it possible that the so-called theological
philosophers
are the most audacious among us?
The ones who are willing to take the properly radical
leaps
necessary when dealing with metaphysics,
I thought while vociferously drinking this bottle of Soju,
unwilling to speak to anyone
at this high school graduation
until I had thoroughly contemplated
the true nature of the theological philosopher.

Canto III
889:1181 .753

How else can we explain Kierkegaard?
The secular philosophers talk our ears off
and more often than not say nothing
beyond what their thesis advisors demand to be printed,
 I thought,
vociferously drinking this bottle of Soju,
while the apex of the theological philosopher
truly enacts the notion of philosophizing with a hammer?
Yet, in our era,
it seems we more or less
dismiss all philosophers who choose to believe in God,
I thought. Is it then possible, I thought,
drinking my Soju, vociferously,
that because the theological philosophers
have been essentially shunned from the modern
 academy,
that the mere mention of God is anathema
to the modern academy,
that because the theological philosopher
has been holistically banned
from partaking in the modern so-called academy,
our modern organized educators,
that they've therefore managed to maneuver
outside of the stifling bureaucracy of the university—
and actually engaged with original thought?
Should we consider that possible?
That they echo early Christian theologians,
persecuted by pagan Roman authorities,
who created elaborate frameworks
that formed the *sui generis*
metaphysical foundation of early Christian thought,
a *sui generis* synthesis

of the canonical Gospels
with Neoplatonic thought,
that our modern theologians,
almost regardless of denomination,
prosecuted by the atheist university bureaucrats,
are working within perhaps similarly radical frameworks?
After all, secular academic philosophers
are loath to speculate on much of anything in our era.
In their place we have theoretical physicists
who employ complex mathematics
to prove the susceptibility of complex mathematics
to almost any type of sophistry.
Frankly, I've never respected mathematicians,
I should admit that much upfront.
I suppose, in my own way,
I've always viewed mathematicians
as essentially charlatans.
I view the art of mathematics
as not only decadent,
but I also view the concept of number
as an essentially metaphysical domain.
The mathematician's formulas
are always derivative
of the numerical axioms of metaphysics—
it's always struck me as entirely possible
that numbers are an impossibility.
That the introduction of the decimal point,
of the fraction,
essentially sank mathematics right in its place,
in my eyes at least.
Of course, I'm at bottom a disciple of Palamas,
for certain, I was inadvertently baptized as a disciple of
Palamas,
of course, I fundamentally disagree
with this modern idea

that we can comprehend everything
in a purely intellectual fashion,
this notion that there's,
in practice, no limit to the human intellect.
I find that idea to be one of the most absolutely absurd.
Sure, of course, we can read, say,
Parmenides and, while it's impressive,
it's also entirely absurd, and I personally enjoy it
immensely,
but on those merits. I'm not sure I'd base my scientific
thought on it.
I'm at least less than certain it'd become
the cornerstone of my secular intellectual pursuits.
Parmenides is one of the perfect works of absurdist
fiction
written in any language,
and if we indeed made it a cornerstone of our secular
intellectual pursuits,
then at least we'd need to recognize our absurdist
origins,
as Dionysius rightfully does.
Yet we've employed Parmenides for centuries
as a fundamental commentary on allegedly rationalist
notions.
Allegedly rationalist notions—
is this not what we find ourselves steeped in,
more or less night and day?
When I comment on metaphysics
I do so in a consciously absurd fashion,
because I recognize the limits of language,
the limits of language that at bottom are incapable
of communicating metaphysics in linear and/or rational
fashions.
It seems somewhat obvious
that there's a nefarious literalism at play here,

I think it's safe to say that.
Ever since grade school
I was positive that I stood in the presence
of a nefarious literalism.
Even as a young boy, instinctively,
I knew numbers were, in all likelihood,
impossibilities, and that my systematic education
was highly susceptible to,
if not entirely complicit in, a nefarious literalism.
The education of my youth
didn't exactly encourage audacious thought.

Canto IV
805:1077 .747

In any case, we can't compose metaphysics
in a rational sense, can we?
Isn't it always in a between-the-lines sense
that we compose metaphysics,
in winks and nods that we write metaphysics,
because we can't write metaphysics
in a linear and/or rational fashion?
We take far too much at face value.
Our literalism is intentionally or unintentionally nefarious.
Because the reality is nearly nothing
can be taken at face value.
Do you really believe the greatest minds of Antiquity
intended to be taken at face value?
The Byzantines read Plato
the same way we read Dostoyevsky,
whereas we read Plato the same way
the Byzantines read the Gospels.
Perhaps both are absurd. Now, sure,
I'm without a doubt, from a certain vantage point at least,
a disciple of Palamas, I won't attempt to deny that,
but we can't take everything
Palamas put to papyrus at face value either.
Although Palamas understood
the shortcomings of Antiquity better than even
the most progressive modern scholar,
I'd be the last one to say I take
everything the saint wrote at face value,
because I'm far from a literalist.
The modern scholar, insofar as he keeps his faith in
rationalism,
will most likely never come to terms
with the nature of Antiquity—is that fair to say?

He'll read Parmenides and take everything literally,
and in taking everything literally
he'll inevitably take everything idiotically.
Isn't it the case that the theologians
are the greatest skeptics among us?
We view faith as poison
as we retain fanatical levels of faith
in our sensory organs.
We peruse a variety of empirical studies
that vivisect the grotesque fictions
of our sensory organs—
did you know it's now speculated
human beings didn't see the color blue
until the latter BC centuries at earliest?
All around us our sensory organs
excrete evidence of their utter unreliability,
yet we view faith as idiocy
while retaining this fanatical notion
that our sensory organs
can and should and must be trusted—
which is why we're not quite radical enough.
The modern age retains radical faith
in its sensory organs in a more fanatical fashion
than any historical religion known to man.
Nothing can be taken at face value,
that much we should agree on,
which brings me to this,
a true fly in the ointment, so to speak—
how is it you arrive at a postulation
of an essence you cannot know?
This is the question, is it not?
How does the mathematician reach
the postulation numbers are actual and distinct?
How is it possible, given human capabilities,
to distinguish the number two

from the number one point nine repeating
 (1.9999999...) in practice?
 How is it possible to distinguish two
 from one point nine repeating?
 How does mathematics attempt to lay any claim
 to physical space—
 to attempt to claim the ability
 to leave the theoretical—
 when it's impossible for us
 to distinguish the number two
 from the number one point nine repeating
 (1.999999999999999999999999...), in practice?
 It seems impossible for us to know
 that the number two is in fact the number two,
 and not the number one point nine repeating
 (1.999999999999999999999999...),
 and if we're unable to know the number two
 is in fact the number two
 then how could it be possible
 to assert that mathematics
 has any value outside
 of the purely theoretical?
 By instinct perhaps we feel as though
 the number two is the number two,
 and the number one is the number one, yes,
 the mathematical axioms may feel correct,
 yet the fact remains
 that we lack the perceptual faculties
 to distinguish two apples
 from one point nine repeating
 (1.999999999999999999999999...) apples.
 When we speak of
 the Essence of all things
 we don't speak any differently—
 with the exception that

our philosophy of an unknowable Essence
seeks to put a strict limit on knowledge
based on instinctive assumptions,
whereas the philosophy of mathematics
attempts to indefinitely expand our knowledge
based on nothing more
than an instinctive assumption,
the instinctive assumption
that we can successfully distinguish two apples
from one point nine repeating
(1.9999999999...) apples.

Canto V
363:468 .776

There's no doubt that we're
in the midst of something essentially mysterious,
that when we discuss the essence of life
we think we can make sense of it all,
that we're on the precipice
of making sense of ourselves and our surroundings,
yet there's still little doubt we remain
in the midst of something
essentially mysterious when we begin to think clearly.
Thinking is perhaps
the most mysterious act of all.
Thinking, which we generally believe
translates material and immaterial experience into
 language—
into modes that are communicable.
Thinking, which attempts to take something
such as consuming a juicy pear,
an experience that ultimately
is confined to personal experience,
and extrapolate it in a communicable format
to the general populace.
Sans thinking, consuming a juicy pear
would be something confined to the private sphere—
with thinking it's then presumably allowed to enter the
 public domain.
There is, in fact,
no remaining public domain sans thinking,
and there's in essence
no thinking sans a public domain.
Assuming we consume a juicy pear,
thinking Wow, this pear is juicy,
but refuse to write it down,

to verbally express it to our peers,
then the thought Wow, this pear is juicy
remains in the purely immaterial realm,
it's existence purely speculative,
both the thought and the physical experience
remain essentially purely speculative.
It's only when the thought
Wow, this pear is juicy enters the public domain
that it becomes, perhaps not real,
but at least apparent in a more material manner—
it's verified as a real experience
and subsequently verified as a real thought.
I too consumed a pear,
and wow it was also quite juicy!
There's no doubt
we're in the midst of something essentially mysterious
here.

Canto VI
546:775 .705

It was just a few months ago,
I dreamt an older female
engaged me in a liaison,
perhaps a sexual liaison—
at first she was an older black woman,
but then she became an older white woman,
and, as she was white,
as we sat in an automobile,
I entered a hotel room to pay
ninety two dollars for our room for the night,
then I returned to the car.
I was wearing a business suit
and she wore business casual attire,
there were two small dark, indecipherable forms
sitting in the backseat,
and she told me she had to go
south of the Missouri now,
and I replied
You mean south of the Mississippi, right?—
yet, even setting aside our geographical concerns,
her statement struck me as something
I already knew, that I knew she was leaving for good,
and that her leaving would mark
a new start for me, so to speak.
When I woke up I felt as though,
in an intensely odd and impalpable way,
my entire life had followed the path of Eastern
Orthodoxy—
in a profound manner I felt this,
I was wide awake in bed,
gazing at a wall thinking my entire life

has somehow tracked the tenets of the Eastern
Orthodox,
that this dream was equally corporeal
to any waking experience I've had,
and now, months later,
I remain curious with regard to the identity
of this multi-racial figure from my dream,
who it seems engaged me in a sexual liaison?
Despite affirming the mysterious nature
of what we're in the midst of,
I've never been a believer
in angels and demons, so to speak—
yet this figure from my dream, it seems to me,
shared many characteristics
with historical reports of so-called angels and demons.
Of course, assuming it's one of the two,
which one of the two is it?
An angel or a demon?
Who were the dark, nearly formless figures
in the backseat of the car?
A person engages me in a sexual liaison,
but at first is black, but then becomes white,
then tells me she now has to go quote-unquote
south of the Missouri,
I correct her, and then I wake up
with an intense feeling my life's
somehow followed the tenets of Eastern Orthodoxy—
then, this dream's intensity sticking with me
for weeks and even months on end,
I question if the figure from my dream
was perhaps a being of some metaphysical sort,
perhaps an angel or perhaps a demon.
I question whether perhaps
an angel or perhaps a demon entered my dream to,
in a quite serpentine way,

point me in the direction of something—
perhaps Eastern Orthodoxy.
And I question if this is in fact possible.
At almost any other time in my life
I would have considered it an impossibility,
something totally ludicrous,
I'd have considered it an embarrassing absurdity
to even suggest it.
Whereas previously I would have sat and said
I considered it to be an embarrassing absurdity
and utter impossibility, now, for one reason or another,
I actually consider it an embarrassing absurdity
to find it utterly impossible.

Canto VII
237:327 .725

Yet let me explain my thoughts on this issue
just a little further, if I may?
Because my thoughts on the topic expanded significantly
just recently, as a matter of fact.
It was just last Saturday,
at a backyard cookout where I sat at a nice enough
 glass table
next to a bottle of potato vodka imported from Poland,
I was drinking the potato vodka from Poland
in a small plastic glass with water and ice,
and the potato vodka was smooth,
quite smooth actually,
when the person sitting across from me made a
 remark—
he said that he just bought half a dozen
pre-rolled blunts from a state-sanctioned dispensary,
that he was planning to step on the sidewalk
and light up one of these blunts,
have a puff or two to relax,
to which he offered me a puff too,
if I wanted one.
Well, as it so happened, at the time,
despite my general ambivalence to marijuana,
I considered it a decent idea.
I figured I'd have one puff or two, tops,
that maybe it would relax me.
I figured, at the time, that a puff or two, tops,
would have a minimal to moderate effect,
yet when I went out to the sidewalk
with this person to take a puff or two
from his state-sanctioned blunt
I'd discover that this weed retained

a potency that perhaps I'd never encountered before.

Canto VIII
396:505 .784

The blunts were exquisitely rolled and tasted delicious,
the first hit went down fine—
yet as the blunt passed for a final time,
against my better judgment, deep down acknowledging
that the one hit was the correct amount of hits,
that any subsequent hit would be a wholly superfluous
hit,
I decided to take a second hit,
where immediately following my exhale I coughed
vociferously.
I coughed vociferously then just moments later time
began,
much to my surprise,
proceeding in a highly abnormal manner.
I found myself at a family cookout,
and time was proceeding in a manner
that struck me as entirely abnormal.
I was lounging in a nondescript lawn chair,
except now I found myself unable to experience
the procession of time in our rudimentary,
temperate manner. I jumped between disjointed scenes.
People began speaking
and it was almost as though a person
hit fast forward on their speech.
Then the speech would slow just momentarily.
Additionally, I seemed entirely restricted
from perceiving how people were perceiving me,
I felt like I was extremely high,
in fact I knew I was extremely high,
and it wasn't exactly the most appropriate venue
to be that high—at a family cookout—
yet I was restricted from perceiving

how high I seemed to the outside world.
At times it felt like I'd gained access to a cue
that suggested everyone knew
I was extremely high, yet this notion,
that everyone knew I was extremely high,
remained unproven, impossible to prove,
it seemed.

Because people
would at times seem to be treating me
as if I was hardly high at all,
despite the fact that I could
no longer experience time in a purely linear fashion.
Essentially my own actions became entirely foreign to
me—

more than just being extremely high,
I became disconcerted at the thought
of what actions I could possibly be taking
that caused the people around me to cease
to view me as extremely high.

Canto IX
404:534 .757

The only actions of my own I was still aware of
were actions that seemed to me to be
of a person clearly extremely high,
so how could these actions be seen by rational actors
to be coming from a person
who was still experiencing time linearly?
This was, at the time, a question sans an answer.
In short, it wasn't simply that I ceased to experience
time in a normative fashion—
it was the fact my exterior surroundings seemed
to continue to recognize I passed through time
in at least somewhat of a normative fashion.
This was disconcerting, because one would assume,
if you left the confines of normative time,
that the people in your vicinity would
recognize this fact—that you exited normative time.
But in this case it was almost as if, yes—
I was no longer present,
I was experiencing time
in an entirely asynchronous fashion,
yet my surroundings still found me to be there,
for the most part. I was,
to the best of my perceptual faculties,
existing in at least two places at once.
At the family cookout,
where most people were either slightly high
or not high at all, and then also
in a separate iteration of time,
where I was jumping from period to period,
indiscriminately.
There's little doubt now that time,
as we're exposed to it,

is only one of several iterations,
yet how many iterations are there?
It seems impossible for us to say—
perhaps iterations is the wrong mode
to discuss types of time.
It's entirely possible, in fact,
that time perceives us
inasmuch as we perceive it.
Yet once we acknowledge this fact,
that time has many iterations of producing itself,
that time may in fact
perceive us rather than us perceive it,
then we can no longer blindly state
that our dreams are just dreams,
because it would seem to me
that if time, in fact, takes many,
if not infinite, iterations,
then our dreams could in fact be entirely real,
that they may just exist in different
iterations of time.
Our dreams could be
entirely real experiences,
just experienced in separate iterations of time.

Canto X
458:632 .725

Of course, rationally speaking,
not that we should speak rationally,
but rationally speaking we could
question the merits of adhering
to Eastern Orthodoxy generally.
Of course we could reference the case
of Chrysostomos Kalafatis,
the Metropolitan of Smyrna,
who unceremoniously had his
beard ripped off by hand,
his eyes gouged out,
his nose and ears cut off
and was subsequently masqueraded around
the very city where he acted as a
Metropolitan until he died from his injuries,
from having his eyes, nose, and ears removed,
all of this during
the height of the Greco-Turkish war—
as it seems safe to say that
Eastern Orthodoxy, to some extent,
didn't fare Chrysostomos well in the end,
at least from a materialist point of view.
It's a small sample size
yet it's compelling to an extent,
and of course the sample is substantially larger
when we consider
the plight of the Orthodox population
of Anatolia as a whole.
The truth is the Orthodox haven't fared incredibly well
in the Near East over the past,
give or take, one thousand years or so,
we could even say that following the path

of Eastern Orthodoxy has perhaps
been extremely fraught with peril
in certain regions of the Eastern Mediterranean.
We shouldn't speak rationally or logically,
yet if we were to take the case of, say,
for example, the concept of The One,
the being that conceptually precedes being,
that exists in all aspects of time,
but also fundamentally must exist outside of time,
to a certain extent
we would almost need to entirely reconstruct
our conception of time
to even remotely be able to conceive
of a Being of that nature.
Not to say that we could ever conceive a Being
of that nature in its essence,
yet to even approach a conception—
if logic leads us to a First Principle
that exists within and outside of time,
then our conception of time is essentially absurdist.
We would need to reconstruct this conception
of time as something we exist exclusively within,
that contains us in a linear fashion,
that perhaps perceives us
in a so-called linear fashion,
because if we are in fact extensions of this One
who must by necessity exist both
within and outside of time,
then there must exist a portion of us,
as extensions of the One,
that experiences time in this fashion,
which is of course an essentially absurdist manner
of conceiving of time.

Canto XI
335:493 .679

I can't think of a thing more absurd
than conceiving time in a solely linear fashion.
It seems just—I don't know—
totally ridiculous to assume time
proceeds in a purely linear fashion,
that time wouldn't proceed in whatever fashion
it chooses,
that time, eternal as it is,
would need us to perceive it,
as opposed to vice versa,
or even to assume that time proceeds at all,
that, if it chose to proceed,
that it wouldn't proceed in the fashion of, say,
adding percentages as opposed to integers.
I engaged in a sexual liaison
with an older female,
who at first was black, then became white,
then informed me that she had
to go south of the Missouri,
after I'd paid ninety two dollars for a hotel room
for the two of us,
as we sat in the medium-sized sedan,
with two small and formless dark beings
sitting in the back.
I partook in the smoking of a sizable blunt
that a friend of mine purchased from a local dispensary,
and after taking a mere two hits
from this blunt I found myself
inadvisably high at a family function,
experiencing time in a spurious fashion,
in a fashion where I was,
on the one hand, apparently present at the party,

yet simultaneously engaging passively
in a form of time that wasn't present at the party—
so I suppose it to be possible
that at the time I existed at two places at once.
Yet as foolish as this may sound,
we should note that even Dionysius said,
and I quote, 'it may be said to be praising God for his
foolishness,
which in itself seems absurd and strange,
but this foolishness uplifts us to the ineffable truth
which is there before all reasoning.'
Because it would stand to reason
that if reason itself is incapable of ascertaining
these so-called divine notions,
then perhaps it's only idiocy
that remains capable of comprehending
these historically divine notions,
of time, of being,
of placement, of First Causes.

Canto XII
418:523 .799

Perhaps what we need is a rigorous idiocy.
It's entirely possible, as I'm now thinking about it,
that with regard to these notions
we should employ nothing except a rigorous idiocy,
that reason and sound logic
have absolutely no place here,
in the realm of metaphysics.
That in order to wrap our minds
around these ideas,
like being in two places at once,
of being both within and outside of time,
of time being essentially non-linear
as much as it's essentially linear,
of time perceiving us
as much as we perceive it,
that we must become more idiotic
than we've ever been,
that if we continue to attempt
to pass ourselves off as intelligent—
well, we'll continue to flounder in the stochastic breezes
that ripple around these concepts.
Sans idiocy, these concepts will continue
to exist in a shroud of mystery,
not that they can ever be known fully,
that's unlikely, it's more or less impossible,
but if we employ the proper amount of idiocy,
of rigorous idiocy, it's possible
that the mystery these concepts are shrouded in
could be ameliorated to a degree.
We conceptualize a First Cause,
a One, a concept that may, in fact,
be necessary for our species to exist,

at least socially,
it very well could be the case
that we can only exist logically
with this idea of First Cause or One preceding us.
Otherwise, sans First Cause,
sans a Beginning,
we hardly have an argument for linear time,
and if we're deprived of a
logical argument for linear time,
then how can we make sense of anything?
It's impossible to make sense of anything,
in the traditional sense, sans linear time.
If time fails to proceed linearly,
at least for us,
if we're hopping and skipping
willy nilly in the fabric of time,
in purely nonlinear manners,
then nothing can make sense for us.
We're literally senseless.
Sans a First Cause, we're literally senseless.
Time means nothing.
Time, it seems to me,
is something that one can only investigate idiotically.

Canto XIII
538:727 .740

Or am I just being silly?
Am I simply succumbing
to a specific type of silliness,
as I'm apt to do from time to time?
Most, it should be noted,
who know me know me to be prone
to succumbing to silliness from time to time?
Am I being melodramatic
by extrapolating my intense impression
following my waking up from my dream,
am I melodramatically extrapolating
that impression just a little too far
by implying this female,
who engaged me in a sexual liaison,
might have been an angel or a demon?
Yet on the other hand I should note this,
it was actually quite some time ago,
so long ago in fact that I was practically,
now that I think of it,
more or less an adolescent,
despite being a fully grown man.
At the time I was looking for apartments with my father—
the first apartment I'd lease on my own,
and we were downtown, the two of us,
looking at an apartment I didn't realize
at the time was rent-controlled,
meaning arbitrary caps
were placed on the income of the tenants
in order to retain eligibility,
which of course was the reason
why the apartments were such a great deal.
Luckily enough for me my salary

at that time was insufficient and paltry,
so I still managed to qualify for the apartment
despite the rent control requirements,
had I waited the time necessary
for one to become available,
but, while I did add my name to the waitlist,
I didn't wait the time necessary,
because I signed a lease
on an apartment three miles north of downtown
less than a week later.
I was standing in a quarter-empty parking lot
in an area of downtown
where no less than half a dozen
privately owned parking lots
sat side by side by side,
all with reasonable short-term rates.
This particular area of downtown,
at that point in time, was a fruitful area socially—
there were a plethora of vibrant bars and restaurants,
also side by side by side,
that myself and others enjoyed frequenting,
that were routinely packed
from afternoon to evening.
Now, by comparison,
if you walk through that same area of downtown,
by my count, more than half of those
bars and restaurants are shut down for good.
Whereas I used to frequent that part of downtown,
hopping between two or three or four venues,
having a fruitful experience socially—
now it's almost as if
that area of downtown has aged right along with me.
As my social activity has waned,
at least with regard to hopping from bar to bar,
the activity of this section of downtown

has waned as well.

As I've become less likely to pop out
on a Wednesday afternoon to two or three or four
places,

this area of downtown has been
unable to sustain businesses
that used to thrive on people popping out
on Wednesday afternoons,
hopping from two or three or four places.

Canto XIV
535:727 .735

There are, in fact,
hardly any bars or restaurants
that are still open on the block.
There's been a gargantuan
For Lease sign on the largest venue for years now,
and the places that should be open for business
on a late weekday afternoon
are no longer open for business
on late weekday afternoons,
whereas in previous years
every bar and restaurant
on the block would have been bustling
with businessmen, eccentrics, and alcoholics, now
these same venues don't even
open their doors until later at night,
if at all.
I've walked through that block multiple times
hoping to pop into just one old bar
or one old restaurant for just one drink,
and I've discovered every single bar
that's stayed in business on that block
closed to customers at that time.
A bar in a business district
really has no excuse for not being open
by four pm on a weekday.
It's absurd for a bar in a business district
to be closed for business at that time,
yet that's exactly what's happened
to this block, it's now a dead block,
it's a block that's more or less
officially deceased socially.
In any case, years ago,

when I was looking for my first apartment
with my dad, standing
in a quarter-empty parking lot
on this very block,
I sent a text message to a younger girl
I used to flirt with—
although we never engaged
in a sexual liaison,
but there was perhaps a shared interest
for a short period,
perhaps we both came to the conclusion
engaging in a sexual liaison,
although tempting, was ill-advised,
that for once in the course of human history
people should refrain from engaging
in any sort of ill-advised liaison,
so we developed a friendship of sorts.
It was a shallow friendship,
as most friendships that result from staved off
sexual liaisons tend to be,
these are of course the most shallow
and insipid friendships imaginable,
they're interminable and asinine,
but this particular friendship was rewarding
in its own way.
So sure, around this time,
in this parking lot, I sent her a text message to no reply,
and I knew then, somehow or another,
instinctually I suppose I knew
that I wouldn't get a reply,
that the friendship had run its course,
that it's purely shallow and insipid nature
was abundantly evident to the two of us,
and that the other party,
this younger girl, had taken it upon herself

to sever the friendship once and for all.
I've ceased to communicate with her since,
yet despite the ultimately shallow and insipid nature
of this friendship, despite the fact
we never crossed the line,
so to speak, for some reason
I felt a sort of nonsensical deep hurt,
a painful longing of sorts,
rooted in essentially nothing,
standing in that parking lot,
knowing I'd never hear from this person again,
who I had no physical relationship
with and who I had an entirely shallow and insipid
emotional relationship with.

Canto XV
337:449 .751

It wasn't that long ago
that I was reminded of this text message randomly—
I'd nearly entirely removed this person
from my memory, just as years prior
she'd similarly removed me from her memory,
and I felt an odd pang in my stomach
as I recalled this text message.
Wasn't the entire point of turning away
from engaging in these sexual liaisons
to avoid such pangs?
Don't we all just inveterately assume
that pangs in our stomachs almost exclusively result
from sexual liaisons?
And don't we all then avoid sexual liaisons
purely in attempts to avoid pangs
in our stomachs?
Yet in this case,
a person I maturely
avoided engaging with sexually, and vice versa,
of course, who I instead developed
a completely shallow and insipid friendship with,
ended up causing me a pang in my stomach,
all because I sent her a text message to no reply,
knowing the ankle deep friendship
we'd harbored had run its course
and come to a conclusion.
My point in all this is that the first objection
the average person would raise
to identifying the being in my dream
as an angel would be the fact
the two of us engaged in a sexual liaison,
yet what I've just described suggests

that perhaps there's no difference in our relationships
with people,
that we can't discriminate
between relationships based on
whether or not a sexual liaison occurred.
That perhaps distinguishing relationships based on
whether or not they feature a sexual exchange
has been a gross error on our part.
That perhaps we shouldn't a priori assert
that angels don't engage in sexual liaisons with us.
Because it's entirely possible they do,
and that there's really nothing wrong
with an angel engaging us in this type of liaison,
sexually.

Canto XVI
374:474 .789

So we can't rule out entirely
the possibility that this being—
despite engaging me in a sexual liaison,
in a small plethora of racial forms—
was still, in fact, an angel pointing me
toward the fact my life, in large part,
followed the path of Eastern Orthodoxy.
The mathematician, attempting to infinitely extrapolate
the massive assumptions that are real world integers, is,
in essence, a complete charlatan.
For eons we've assumed sexual relations taint
relationships,
that once a sexual line is crossed,
then the relationship will be irrevocably tainted,
yet we've never considered that tainting
can and will occur even sans sex.
Yet perhaps we're making too much of the alleged
distinction
between angels and demons as well.
That just as perhaps
we've made too much of the distinction
between sexual and non-sexual relations,
we're now making too much of the distinction
between angels and demons.
It should be noted that even Dionysius noted
that pure evil, if it were to exist,
would immediately cease to exist,
because everything that exists is derivative of the One,
which is incapable of producing pure evil,
and that even relative evil is simply
a function of pursuing aims inappropriate
to a being's proper function,

that even demons are only demonic in their distance
from the One,
not in a sense of representing pure evil,
because were they to be pure evil
they would cease to exist.
Essentially, this view purports
that there's no fundamental distinction
between an angel and a demon,
just a difference in the appropriateness of their aims.
Whereas an angel pursues the aims appropriate to it,
in the proper proportion to its being,
a demon pursues the aims
more or less inappropriate to it,
straying from its proper proportions.
Now as it regards my dream,
a being
took multiple racial forms
yet retained the same essence,
much like our dual yet monist formulation,
and then there were two dark
and formless beings in the backseat—
perhaps signifying the evil
that's impossible to exist,
that is stripped of being as soon
as it becomes so-called pure evil.
So perhaps these two dark formless beings
were the non-existent iterations
of myself and my companion, possibly an angel.

Canto XVII
449:620 .724

Now this being, perhaps an angel,
or perhaps a demon,
who took multiple racial forms,
eventually informed me,
in this car with the two small shapeless forms
sitting in the backseat,
that she had to go south of the Missouri,
to which I corrected her:
Don't you mean south
of the Mississippi?
Yet we should now consider
that perhaps my correction was,
in the context of the dream,
entirely incorrect.
By employing the phrase
South of the Missouri
this being was perhaps directly
implying that there are no neat distinctions—
that duality is an illusion,
that this idea that a state
can be neatly divided by
a Mississippi is a misguided approach,
that this being,
whether an angel or demon,
in fact wouldn't emerge on some other side
precisely because there is no actual other side,
there's only a separate relative place.
And when I woke up,
I felt as though my life had always
followed the path of Eastern Orthodoxy,
but in this embrace I was accepting
the non-dual nature of our existence

inasmuch as I was accepting anything else.
I embraced Eastern Orthodoxy
after engaging in a sexual liaison
with a being who took multiple racial forms,
who left me to settle,
not south of the Mississippi,
but rather south of the Missouri—
and opposite of the both of us
were two small dark forms
who completely lacked Being,
signifying the impossibility of pure evil.
My dream appropriately reproached
this idea of true duality,
of pure good and pure evil,
replacing this absolute duality
with a relative duality within the One,
of which all Good and all Being originates,
both in transcendence and immanence.
I then reconciled myself
with this being that went south of the Missouri—
and perhaps this being
wasn't leaving me
as much as guiding me,
giving me hints not on where to go,
no, she wasn't saying
where I should go or stay,
she was instead guiding me
on how to read a map.

Canto XVIII
415:582 .713

Even Dionysius stated outright,
'One says of God,
the cause of all good, that he is "inebriated"—
and with that in mind,
against my better judgment,
I poured myself a nice glass of vodka
last Saturday before my girlfriend
and I dined out,
knowing all too well that we planned
to go to the bar prior to our reservation,
for a cocktail.
My significant other agreed to act
as our designated driver for the night,
and I'd spent the entire week
abstaining from every consumable item
except water, coffee, hearty grains,
and frozen vegetables, and I felt as though
I deserved a nice, inebriated night.
I said to myself You know what?—
you've rigorously denied yourself pleasure this week,
and you deserve a night
where you go out and get white girl wasted.
So I imbibed a cocktail before the cocktail,
and when we arrived at the bar,
waiting for our friends to meet us,
we tried to prolong the cocktail
and make a perfect segway into the dinner—
unfortunately, I'd finished
my cocktail first,
and incorrectly assuming I had another ten to fifteen
minutes
before our friends arrived,

so I ordered a second cocktail,
yet as soon as the second cocktail arrived
our friends also arrived,
and then we were sat at the table where,
needless to say, we immediately ordered
a nice bottle of red wine.

So rather than savoring my second cocktail
at the bar and then beginning our bottle of wine,
I was concurrently finishing my second cocktail
while also starting our bottle of wine.

Before I knew it I was thoroughly drunk,
I became enthusiastically inebriated,
and I felt as though I deserved it—

I felt as though I deserved to be inebriated,
to comment upon a small handful of topics
that I probably should have remained silent about,
to babble about and upon a potpourri of issues
that perhaps would have
been better left unaddressed.

But sometimes it's important to do things
solely out of abundance,
to become completely inebriated,
to lose all touch with coherency and restraint,
and to engage in a completely misguided conversation
purely out of abundance.

The First Cause, no matter what form we give it,
no matter how its extensions
may or may not communicate with us—
is if nothing else superabundant.

LARRY ISOSCELES
Theories of the Western World

Mode: >.667
12,279:16,742 .733

Canto I
523:741 .706

As a matter of fact,
I was just telling Demo
as we walked up to your flat,
I've been just a tad preoccupied of late
with a night I actually just remembered today,
from years ago actually,
completely non-descript,
entirely inconsequential at face value,
yet it was a night that nonetheless,
now thinking it through,
is essentially indicative of my true character.
It was a night, via pure instinct,
I allowed my true colors to show,
and of course I was ashamed at first,
who isn't disgusted
at first sight of their true colors,
but as the years have passed
I've come to the conclusion that
there's actually nothing a priori wrong
with my true colors—
actually, if anything,
it's quite the contrary.
My true colors,
of course I can't change them,
but even if I could I wouldn't.
Because even though my true colors
require a prerequisite,
a perhaps unappetizing prerequisite,
a prerequisite that, yes,
that I loathe certain people for no reason.
But even though that may in fact be the case,
I believe it's actually proper to loathe

certain people for absolutely no reason,
with no justification whatsoever,
that hating people sans pretext
is in fact entirely necessary,
and I may even leap further
and state outright that these certain people,
whom we loathe sans pretext,
may actually deserve this intense loathing
and unprovoked hatred,
but let me begin, please.
Because to begin with,
it was an era where I found myself
spending an inordinate amount of time
at social events that I loathed—
I loathed both contemplating
my future attendance of these events
and then my actual attendance of these events.
People, ultimately, have no couth—
to this day, for example,
I often find myself present
at social gatherings where a quote-unquote vegetable
plate,
along with a vegetable dip,
is presented as an hors d'oeuvre,
and I'm almost always a little let down
by the quality of the celery.
At that particular stage in my life, in fact,
the era I'm speaking of, I'd reconciled myself
to the fact that I had intrinsically higher standards
than most when it came to celery,
cucumbers as well—
I analyzed produce with an acuity, frankly,
most of my peers would never achieve.
Having said that,
to this day the majority of hosts

in our country have next to no couth
when it comes to serving celery or cucumbers.
Forced to attend a so-called post wedding brunch
just a few months
prior to the events I'm about to relay,
I was appalled at the quality of cucumbers served—
a cucumber, above all else,
should be refreshing.
A piece of celery, ideally,
is similar to sipping a fresh glass of ice water
on a zesty summer day.
The source of this regrettable degradation
in the quality of our celery and cucumbers
undoubtedly stems from
America's overreliance on dip.

Canto II
570:752 .758

Dip, in our era,
has literally and figuratively
become the hors d'oeuvre,
it's become culturally acceptable
to utterly ignore
the quality of the celery and cucumbers,
two of the most refreshing yet delicate
vegetables known to our species,
at social gatherings
because it's assumed consumers' attention
will be focused almost solely on the dip.
Yet it's precisely the dip
that negates the nutritional benefits
of the celery, as well as the cucumbers.
Americans no longer consume vegetables—
they consume vegetables
with dips and sauces
that obliterate all possible
nutritional benefits of a vegetable.
These dips and sauces
annihilate the intrinsically
refreshing essences of our vegetables.
Guests attending these parties
could relieve themselves
all over these quote-unquote vegetable plates
and not miss a beat nutritionally—
they'd probably even fail
to notice a difference in taste,
with the amount of sour cream currently
found in the median American dip.
During this era of my life,
almost every week I would spend

two to five minutes in the produce section
arduously selecting only the finest celery
stalks and most concrete cucumbers,
touching all the cucumbers indiscriminately,
with no regard for the customers
who inevitably would touch these
same cucumbers after I'd
finally made my selection—
because, to this day,
there's nothing more deflating
than a stalk of celery gone flat
by mid-week,
yet there's nothing more
uplifting than a freshly chopped
stalk of celery,
and the same can be said
for cucumbers.

Yet, as so-called Greek-Americans,
none of us should be surprised
at this state of affairs,
with a vegetable dip masking
the refreshing essence
of the genuine article, so to speak—
and this brings me
to a much larger point,
a more grandiose issue,
if you'll allow me
to digress just slightly
before I begin my anecdote,
the anecdote I've admittedly
been obsessing over for weeks now,
which will inevitably,
I believe, become the crux
of my argument here.
Because there's endless discussion today

with regard to our so-called world,
our alleged Western world,
but it's imperative
we define our terms with rigor
as opposed to carelessness—
because it's too often
that we throw terms into the ether willy-nilly.
In short, it's entirely possible
we're confusing extension
with interpretation
as it relates to our Western world.
There's endless talk
of this Western world,
but let's be specific,
this Western world is, in fact,
little more than an Anglo world,
it's not simply a nondescript Western world,
it's also an actual Anglo world—
our civilization, so to speak,
is nominally considered Western,
nominally considered Graeco-Roman,
yet there's a barbarism at play here,
there's a nefarious vegetable dip
burying the genuine article here.

Canto III
635:866 .733

In actuality,
the Western world
is little more than a misnomer
for the Anglo world,
which is essentially
the American world,
and the Anglo world,
in actuality,
is not an extension
of Graeco-Roman Antiquity, no,
it's simply an interpretation of that world—
and even then that interpretation
was a purely subsequent interpretation,
an interpretation
in response to an interpretation.
Because the primary interpretation
of Antiquity came from Constantinople
and Antioch and Alexandria,
in the so-called Byzantine world,
and only then
did this Anglo world indulge
in a subsequent interpretation
of the Graeco-Roman Antiquity,
based on the Byzantine era's
interpretation but also of course
based on their interpretation
of the so-called Byzantine world.
This should be understood,
that the Anglo world,
in a very tangible sense,
is little more than
an elaborate vegetable dip itself,

a subsequent interpretation,
and it's perhaps
the most pervasive iteration
of so-called vegetable dip
our planet has yet to see—
beneath it we discover the genuine article,
the primary interpretation,
so to speak.

As for us, within this Anglo world
we remain more or less glossed over,
a sub-optimal fit over here
and sub-optimal fit over there,
as Diamanda Galas aptly put it:
America is fixated on multiculturalism
yet remains remiss
with regard to Middle Eastern cultures,
which include Greek cultures—
but how is this possible?

Yet we should note,
we should finally admit to ourselves
that the modern center of the Anglo world,
America, for all of its melting pot mythology,
has never assimilated, not quite,
because instead it's simply annihilated—
in America we love discussing ethnicities,
people wear hyphens like name-tags,
but all of these ethnicities
are at bottom false ethnicities,
just as the so-called modern Greek,
the Hellenic baboon,
is a fictional ethnicity,
all of our other
ethnicities are essentially fictional ethnicities,
they're ethnicities
at best as simulacra, and,

subsequently, what's inevitably
true but will remain perpetually untouched upon
is that there is no real race
or ethnicity within America with the exception of the
Anglo.

Everyone is Anglo in America,
this is obvious.

Every person in America,
insofar as they've adopted American hyphenations,
is essentially Anglo—

as Catholicism washed over the third world,
the third world became essentially Anglo,
the Puritanism of North America
mixed with the Catholicism
of South America
and resulted in a milieu
where everyone is essentially Anglo.

Magic Johnson, at bottom,
is essentially Anglo.

Endless ethnicities have been properly identified,
systematically assimilated
into this Anglo-American framework,
and subsequently annihilated,
and we peruse their coming-of-age narratives,
penned in the classic New Yorker style,
and we think to ourselves,

"Wow, that's nice,
what a nice little coming-of-age story,
I never knew Vietnam was so nice in Autumn—"
when the reality is
these people have been essentially annihilated.

Canto IV
618:845 .731

The coming-of-age narrative
of the Vietnamese immigrant tickles
the recesses of our soul,
yet it never occurs to us
that this Vietnamese person,
writing in the classic New Yorker style,
has been essentially annihilated.
We marvel at the ethnic traits
of coming-of-age
narratives penned in the classic
New Yorker style,
yet these ethnicities are entirely fictional,
they've been essentially annihilated,
just as we, the Hellenic baboons,
have also been essentially annihilated.
The Vietnamese-American
who penned
your favorite coming-of-age story is,
in fact, entirely Anglo.
The so-called Orthodox,
the last of the so-called Byzantines,
remain unassimilated
and therefore unannihilated,
perhaps only because they've clung
to their metaphysical distinctions—
through varying crusades and occupations,
various capitalisms and communisms
they've clung to their metaphysical distinctions,
to the metaphysical framework
of the Patriarch of Constantinople.
In any case, this Anglo world
is no extension of Antiquity,

it's no New Rome,
because its interpretations
have inevitably been filtered
through the so-called Byzantine,
through the Second Rome
of Constantine.
But for the Orthodox, Christ symbolized the true,
verified immanence of God,
to correspond with the transcendence of God—
just as the so-called Socratic Idea
was at once transcendent and immanent,
just as Love as an Idea
was out of reach in-itself
(in its transcendence),
yet interactive in a relative sense
(in its immanence),
God was now the same,
not transcendent or immanent,
but instead transcendent and immanent.
God as an Essence was unknowable,
unapproachable, and wholly transcendent,
yet, through Christ,
God was proven to be wholly immanent,
in addition to being entirely transcendent,
God's Energies were Energies
we could approach and interact with,
to become one with God,
even momentarily,
was deemed a possibility.
Christ was brilliantly grafted onto centuries
of Greek thought in a system
that found its expression
from Alexandria to Antioch to Constantinople,
yet the subsequent Anglo interpretation,
by restricting God and Person to the intellect,

the conceptual to the transcendent,
essentially ushered in the secular atheism
that's become our monoculture par excellence.
This subsequent Anglo interpretation
was markedly different—
because now to be
transcendent and immanent
was now deemed decadent and oriental.
The so-called Byzantine interpretation
envisioned a God who,
through His superabundance,
was both wholly immanent and entirely transcendent,
whereas the Anglo interpretation
viewed that interpretation
as both wholly decadent and entirely oriental,
the Anglo interpretation,
just as the Hebrew God
banished Adam and Eve from the Kingdom of God,
subsequently banished God from the Kingdom of Man,
to His eternal transcendence.
No, the so-called Greeks
never killed their God
because they never stopped
merging with their God.
The Greek world never chose to kill their God,
they never murdered their God
in cold blood because,
in this Greek world,
within this silly Byzantine milieu,
to kill their God would be akin
to committing suicide.

Canto V
522:715 .730

Whereas the Anglo world
divorced itself from the Energies,
became the transcendent world
par excellence,
and left itself
no choice but to kill its God
ruthlessly and expeditiously.
The transcendent world par excellence
almost ipso facto becomes
the secular atheist world
par excellence.
Transcendence divorced
from immanence
is the primary formula of the secular.
The Western world
is the Anglo world
which is nothing more than
a subsequent interpretation
rather than a primary interpretation.
In America, everyone is Anglo,
Vietnamese immigrants
write coming of age stories
that are nothing if not holistically Anglo,
transcendently Anglo.
And we sit,
portrayed as absurdly Hellenic,
as Athenian baboons,
yet of course we have perhaps
that "Byzantine look,"
our musk is perhaps Byzantine,
yet the Byzantine, we're told,
was wholly decadent

and entirely oriental
and no longer exists.
The Afro-American Man
is the Anglo Man,
Larry Bird in addition to Magic Johnson
are both essentially Anglo,
the Italian-American Man
is the Anglo Man,
the Greek-American Man,
despite playing the role of Athenian Baboon,
is also essentially Anglo.
The Greeks, ultimately, have sunk themselves,
which is why they're no longer even Greek,
we can't blame anyone more than ourselves,
we were placed in an impossible position
between East and West,
and we acted in an impossible fashion,
and now we're no longer even ourselves.
But how did we get onto us anyway,
the Greeks—have I gone overboard here at all?
Am I exaggerating at all?
It's definitely possible,
yet I feel completely appropriate,
I actually feel like, if anything,
I'm being too reserved,
that if anything I'm actually lacking
in hyperbole at the moment!
I feel like, right now,
I'm actually being too kind,
that if anything I'm being a tad too reserved.
I feel as though there's vitriol
that I still owe,
that I own considerable debt,
and it's all vitriol,
that there's no choice

but to pay it back
to the general populace of this country.
It's possible that I'm filled to the brim with vitriol,
it's possible that I owe all this vitriol
to the general populace.
It's almost as if I'm leaving loads of vitriol
on the table.
The Anglo world lectured us
that the authentic Greeks
made anal love to teenage boys,
and then when Greeks moved past penetrating
high school aged men in the rear-end,
when they instead subscribed
to the metaphysics of the Patriarch of Constantinople,
it was only at that point
that Greek culture
became depraved and decadent.
Wholly oriental.
This is what I've been personally taught
by the Anglo so-called scholastics—
and that I can tell you is
absolutely no exaggeration.

Canto VI
528:719 .734

Only the Greeks
would accept two sets of ancestors
of this sort then shrug their shoulders
and go get drunk at a saloon.
That's what I did.
It's just audacious,
that's what it is.
If nothing else I respect the audacity,
because I actually have
the highest respect for the audacity
of the Anglo world.
Our ancestors have spent
hundreds of years in obscure mountains,
forbidden to read or write,
while the entire Anglo world
has spread this misinformation about us,
this slander, this character assassination,
so it's no wonder
pedophiles run rampant
in every Western polity—
look who comprise the idols of the West!
The Athenian
with the beautiful boyfriends
traversing puberty,
as if these were the only Greeks,
as if there were no other Greek eras,
as if the alphabet
became obsolete after Antiquity!
But I digress.
In any case, before I enter
into this whole anecdote
I should say this—

namely, that I was at a restaurant
across the street from my apartment
for a small gathering
just the other night,
my good friend's cousin was in town,
and she and her father invited me
to an informal dinner
across the road from my apartment,
so I decided it would be a little rude
for me not to go,
considering I lived within spitting distance
of this restaurant,
within minimal walking distance,
and had nothing else to do.
I essentially had to go
but also had no issue with attending.
In addition, I was aware
the meal would in all likelihood be paid for,
and although I didn't particularly think highly
of the restaurant across the street,
I knew there was at least one decent meal,
or maybe even two decent meals,
that I could order and feel relatively satiated.
Personally, I was a big fan of the Spicy Maki Platter,
where you received eighteen pieces of tuna,
salmon, and yellowtail sushi
for just sixteen dollars.
It's a great meal,
and because of the economical price-point
you don't feel like a complete asshole
ordering it on someone else's tab.
In any case, we arrive,
my friend and I,
perhaps we're actually lovers,
but I don't want to go into a great deal of detail

about my private life here,
we might even live with each other
in my apartment,
but I'm not going into that now,
we're in love with each other in a way
that just feels profound,
that's possible, but in any case we're there,
at the restaurant, when my friend's cousins
from out of town arrive,
and almost immediately the conversation turns
to the much discussed COVID-Nineteen vaccine,
and being wholly sober as well as extremely hungry
I decide to have no part of it,
I don't mention anything about nonlinear distributions,
the inherent dishonesty of all large governments
over the course of human history.

Canto VII
546:721 .757

I choose to refrain from
mentioning Elliot Abrams
receiving a fifty dollar fine for trafficking
crack cocaine into every black community
in America in the Nineteen-Eighties,
I choose to refrain from mentioning any of this,
as it wasn't the right time to discuss
nonlinearities and Elliot Abrams,
this was my conclusion at the time.
I wasn't going to get caught up
in the nature of probability distributions
and Elliot Abrams' fifty dollar fine
for selling large swathes of crack cocaine
at the behest of the first Bush administration
at that time. It would have been uncouth,
ill-advised, as well as completely inappropriate.
But in keeping my mouth shut
I felt just a momentary tinge of agitation,
in hearing these opinions I inveterately disagreed with,
in refraining from uttering the phrases
nonlinearity distributions and Elliot Abrams
I became slightly agitated,
the only antidote to my agitation
would be to say the word nonlinearity aloud,
which I had no intention of doing.
I couldn't bring myself to say the word nonlinearity,
and I had absolutely no intention
of uttering the phrase Elliot Abrams
at this restaurant,
I couldn't do either without embarrassing myself,
and I knew it.
The fact of the matter is when an opinion

I disagree with is expressed
within my general proximity,
and I act socially appropriately
and refrain from sharing my true feelings
on the matter, then I often
feel this tinge of agitation,
as if I was put on this Earth
for the sole purpose
of behaving inappropriately and expressing
my honest opinions,
no matter the cost socially.
Instead I found myself
glancing intermittently at my friend's older cousin,
just shamelessly speculating
on his racial makeup—which I hate.
I've been on the receiving end of this despicable
behavior,
and I'm sure you've experienced similar,
and I despise people
who just shamelessly speculate
as to my racial makeup,
I'm sure you despise them just as much,
yet sitting across from
this distant cousin of my friend,
my lover perhaps,
I sat in this silent hypocrisy,
I sat there and shamelessly,
continuously speculated on his racial makeup to myself,
going so far as to take specific facial features
into account and speculate
on a geographic area of origin.
It was grotesque.
But that's unfortunately
what I found myself doing in place of

sharing my sincere opinions on nonlinear probability
distributions
and Elliot Abrams distributing crack cocaine
to the black communities of the United States
in the Nineteen Eighties—
but of course no one can mention
nonlinear distributions
or Elliot Abrams selling crack anymore.

Canto VIII
501:685 .731

Governments have lied to us
almost without pause
since the invention of the nation-state,
in just America alone
we've seen the large-scale oppression
of African-Americans
over the course of centuries,
the state-sanctioned poisonings
of African-American communities
with crack cocaine,
of lower class Caucasian communities
with prescription pills,
we have pop stars
named Little Xanax,
millions of children
in this country fantasize
about abusing prescription narcotics
before they go to sleep at night
and the FDA,
a regulatory body with ample funding
for regulating just this sort of behavior,
apparently thinks nothing of it.
We have one pop star
named Little Xanax
and zero pharmaceutical executives
who've been prosecuted for producing
this lurid state of affairs,
and that's just scratching the surface
in America,
confining our inquiry to a single side
of the Atlantic we haven't
even mentioned the Turkish occupation,

the genocides of Pol Pot,
Hitler and the National Socialists,
the Gulag, the famine of Mao,
or the preponderance
of other occupations,
genocides, famines, and general debauchery
which have occurred all across
the globe more or less incessantly—
yet now the United States government
informs its citizens
without a trace of irony
that a fast-tracked vaccine
is beyond reproach for any and everyone,
with no long-term empirical evidence available,
and if we question
that then we're essentially
excommunicated from decent society.
We've become charlatans par excellence
if we dare mention
the nature of nonlinear probability distributions,
if we mention the fact that
Elliot Abrams was fined fifty dollars for selling crack,
if we utter the phrases
nonlinear probability distribution
or Elliot Abrams was a crack cocaine dealer
we've apparently become fascists in this country.
So I had no inkling of the racial makeup
of this man sitting so innocently
across from me,
and eventually I just said to myself—
you're disgusting, this is grotesque,
take out your smartphone
and dick around on that,
for the sake of Christ Himself,
just please remove your smartphone

from your pocket this second.
So we order our meals.
My friend, who I may or may not
be in love with,
who orders right before me,
orders the Spicy Maki Platter,
so we both end up
ordering the exact same meal,
the Spicy Maki Platter,
and I just shot her a look,
I looked at her like
Are you kidding me?
We could have at least
discussed this before the waitress
asked for the orders,
now we're ordering
the same exact meal back to back.

Canto IX
483:668 .723

But then I think to myself
Well, if she doesn't eat all eighteen pieces,
which she won't,
then I'll at least have the option
to snag a sushi piece or two
if I'm not completely full after my eighteen.
I guess I can be a bit gluttonous
when it comes to sushi, but I also—
in true Greek Orthodox fashion—
tend to fast for
significant portions of the day,
so by the time dinner arrives I'm
always prepared to stuff my face.
I've read modern medicine
is beginning
to recognize value
in this fast and feast
regimen of eating,
that the body perhaps
functions more efficiently
when it's deprived
for a period of time.
But in any case
we both order the Spicy Maki Platter,
and her dad,
who's sat next to me,
orders a shrimp noodle dish
that has no appeal to me,
not that I care,
because I had no plans
on sharing the meal with him,
and when this shrimp noodle dish

is served his initial reaction is
Wow, this is big—and it is, it's huge.
The portion is immense.
And the noodles, it should be noted, are thick—
it would be nearly impossible
for one person to finish a plate
of that magnitude,
save for the morbidly obese,
in just one sitting.
So immediately,
and only with the best of intentions,
because her dad
is one of the most well-intentioned individuals
you'll ever come across,
her dad starts to offer me
some of his dish, and initially
I refuse not only because
I find the dish unappealing
but primarily because I'm eating my own meal.
But this changes eventually.
Famished as I found myself,
I obviously finished my meal
not only before anyone else
at the table
but considerably prior
to anyone else
at the table cleaning their plate—
I'm sitting there
with a completely clean plate
while everyone else
is at most halfway through their meal.
And my friend is hardly eating
her Maki Platter at all,
instead she's busy munching her cousin's
General Tso Shrimp,

yet her dad, of course
meaning well and noticing my empty dish,
for the second time asks
if I want some?
No, no thank you, I'm full,
I say, not thinking at all.
Without a single thought in my skull
I reply that I'm full—
yet in retrospect what else could I say?
How can you refuse
a bite of someone's meal,
especially on a second offer,
without saying you're full?
It's probably
the only acceptable excuse,
feigning fullness,
but now I've placed myself
in a bit of an imbroglio,
because her dad thinks I'm full,
but I'm actually the furthest possible thing from full—
because sushi never fills you.
You finish a plate of sushi
and the first thing you think is
I could go for a little more sushi.

Canto X
441:639 .690

Eighteen pieces of fish-filled sushi
and I'm not even remotely close
to full.

All my thoughts revolve around
consuming more sushi,
of which I see plenty,
because my companion,
my lover,
is barely even touching her
Spicy Maki Platter.

So now I'm trying to devise
a method of clandestinely sneaking a few pieces
of said sushi into my mouth without
my companion's dad noticing,
not that he would care,
but just on principle.

I already inhaled my meal,
eighteen pieces of fish-filled sushi,
and now I'm claiming,
to my friend's father, that I'm full,
but then remorselessly consuming
the sushi sitting next to my plate?
That just wasn't a palatable option
in my mind at the time.

I wanted to avoid that scenario if possible.
Yet as I'm concocting a plan
to surreptitiously extract
this foreign sushi into my mouth
my friend's cousin takes her fork
and starts eating her sushi—
potentially my sushi.
I'm watching my friend's father

struggle to finish his
gargantuan shrimp lo mein on my left,
then watching my friend's cousin
methodically eat each leftover piece
of this Spicy Maki Platter on my right.
Then I look across the table
and begin shamelessly racially speculating
again, just to momentarily get
my mind off this whole Spicy Maki-lo mein imbroglio.
As the meal concluded there were
two or three sushi pieces left,
my companion says Have one,
and I shake my head,
realizing the entire endeavor,
this mission to obtain more Spicy Maki,
was doomed to failure.
I considered asking her to take the pieces home, but
no—
this urge for more Maki is misguided,
I thought, it's already doomed to failure,
it's too late for that.
The Spicy Maki Platter was delicious,
but to take home the leftover sushi
wasn't a palatable option to me at the time.
And a funny thing occurred,
I actually began to feel full
as everyone else began
to conclude their meals,
despite remaining hungry immediately
after finishing my eighteen pieces of sushi,
by the time everyone else concluded their dinner
I, somehow, no longer felt hungry,
despite eating nothing in the interim,
for the above said reasons.
But, in any case, onto this anecdote,

so it was a few years ago
at this point, Horatio
was probably there,
it was a more or less
nondescript night,
absolutely nothing of note
was occurring,
and I think all of us
were at that point
questioning why we were even out,
why we weren't at home
sleeping like young children.

Canto XI
469:700 .670

We were at the Dean Hotel
on Washington Street
in a dark back bar
called the Magdalena Room
where nothing much of note
was going on,
nearly nothing of note
was ever going on
within the walls
of this hotel bar,
never mind in the back room,
which was dimly lit
in an almost abrasive way
and usually at half capacity
at best. But maybe
that's what the venue intended,
maybe the main goal
of the venue was abrasive iterations
of dim lighting
and half capacities.
In any case,
I'm with a few friends,
Horatio may have been there,
and two well-to-do
Anglo girls are there,
and one of us—not me—
attempts to co-mingle with
the two Anglo girls,
and a conversation ensues.
One of our friends
is without a doubt aiming to engage
in consensual sexual encounters

with these girls in the near future,
at least if the encounter
goes according to his plan,
however, his plan is about to go
unexpectedly awry,
things are in no way about to go
according to his plan, and, inadvertently,
I'm about to ensure his plan
is foiled in an irreversible manner.
Not in the slightest
are things going according to his plan,
and I'm inadvertently about to be
the cause of the foiling.
Inevitably both girls
live in the plush part of the city,
they don't have jobs,
or they have jobs they clearly received
due to statuses of being young and opulent,
they inevitably begin to discuss
the various properties their families' own,
in San Francisco I believe,
perhaps some other
outrageously opulent areas of the US,
maybe even overseas.
I forget the specific locales,
I actually paid little
to no attention to anything
either of these Anglo girls said,
there were a few locales
where their fathers' owned this property
or that property,
they'd summer here
or they'd summer there,
but it was all opulent in any case,
some area where only

the most egregious dickheads live.
It didn't particularly offend me,
yet their tone was condescending
in a way that almost made you believe
they viewed you as an equal,
which infuriated me.
When people inveterately believe
themselves to be superior,
yet still have the audacity
to condescend as if you're almost equals,
it's infuriating.
As it so happened,
I'd been studying an extended documentary
on the internet at work that afternoon,
it was a slow afternoon that afternoon,
regarding the mating habits of dolphins,
in fact this video went into great detail
regarding the specific mechanics
of how dolphins perform sex,
and I proceeded to share
this information regarding the specific
mechanics of dolphin sexual intercourse
with the group.

Canto XII
520:719 .723

Apparently this was a bit of a faux paus on my part,
Demo—

it was clear these young females,
although innocent enough,
were just of a separate class,
and they believed it,
and they knew it,
and they had no respect
for the well verified intelligence of dolphins
and their sexual mating mechanics.
It was true to them that they were superior—
their ancestors were having pebble wars
and eating medium-rare squirrel,
while our ancestors
were writing extensive commentaries
on metaphysics
and enforcing complex systems of taxation,
but in our current milieu
they were both undoubtedly
of superior stock
to anyone else in the room,
especially myself.

That much could not be disputed,
and I don't dispute it to this day.
Yet to discuss
the intricacies of dolphin intercourse
was, in their eyes, something revolting,
something for lack of a better word classless.
It was essentially a Marxist anecdote,
noting specifically how dolphin penis penetrates
dolphin vagina in the Magdalena Room that night.
I grew up inundated with Anglo-Saxons, Demo,

and I know when I'm being viewed
as an Other, in fact
I know it instinctively,
it's something that essentially
runs in my blood,
and this was a particularly egregious case.
And it became particularly egregious
following my monologue
illuminating the mechanics
of dolphin intercourse.
I may have made a few subsequent
off-color comments once the conversation
was clearly going completely downhill,
once this discussion was clearly irreparable.
I probably raised my voice
to an inadvisable decibel level.
But in any case
I came to despise
these two innocent young females.
And in retrospect,
if I'm holding myself
to the highest standard of honesty,
I despised them at first sight.
The second our friend—
Horatio may have been there—
made the acquaintance
of these two females
I immediately despised them.
Instinctively I knew
the three of us could never be cordial,
that perhaps the sacking of Constantinople
in Twelve Oh Four still divided us
in an immutable manner.
I believe in the perpetuating characteristics
of blood, Demo, I don't

care what the scientists say.
Spirits are always among us
and where better to bury
themselves than within our bloodstreams?
If the spirits of ancestors
are buried anywhere
it's without a doubt
in our bloodstreams.
If the tortured souls of our mutilated ancestors
are buried anywhere in the world
it's within our bloodstreams, Demo.
From the second I saw
these two innocent, decent-looking girls
I despised them,
and I never questioned it.
Instinctively I knew
discussing dolphin boners
would be abhorrent
to these innocent young females,
and I relayed the anecdote
without hesitation.

Canto XIII
448:606 .739

The second their faces filled with disgust
at my anecdote I was satiated.
If they walked into this room right now
I'd immediately start to,
yet again,
discuss the mechanics
of dolphin intercourse.
Dolphins are highly intelligent mammals—
why shouldn't we learn,
in-depth, about their mating habits?
It seems entirely logical to me,
even now.
Yet we should be honest with ourselves,
we shouldn't mince words,
we shouldn't cower to euphemism,
because everyone is Anglo.
Maybe I haven't made
that abundantly clear yet,
but we're all essentially Anglo,
we contain residual
amounts of the Hellenic,
we're direct descendants
of the so-called Byzantine,
the ρωμιούνη,
but essentially
everyone is Anglo,
us included.
You may sit here
and propose that,
say, Puerto Ricans are somehow
distinct from the median white,
when in actuality

Puerto Ricans are Anglo.
But Dominicans are different, right?—
no, Dominicans
are actually Anglo as well.
Afro-Americans
are incredibly Anglo,
in fact.
The Portuguese are definitely Anglo,
they're the apex of Anglo,
the Spanish
are also totally Anglo,
and the Italians
are as Anglo as anyone,
Filipinos—we can't deny
their essential Anglicism,
because we're
all essentially equally Anglo,
wherever Catholicism
and its metaphysics
has spread,
the Anglo world
without a doubt has followed,
wherever the sordid metaphysics
of the Catholic church
has planted its roots,
Anglicism has proliferated
unabridged.
Anglos, Franks,
Venetians, Italians,
the Germanic tribes,
we shouldn't lose much sleep
in distinguishing these terms,
because they're all subsets
of each other essentially,
we shouldn't

lie to ourselves about that.
These terms encompass
the entire world
and for that reason
subsequently mean
essentially nothing.
We all attempt to
quarry groups of people
off by the tint of their skin,
the shapes of their eyes,
the contours of their noses,
the thickness of their lips,
when the reality is
everyone is essentially Anglo.
Michael Jordan is incredibly Anglo.
As are Larry Bird
and Shaquille O'Neal.
Caitlyn Jenner is nothing if not Anglo,
and the Kardashians
are the spitting image of Anglicism.

Canto XIV
448:651 .688

The world is incredibly complex,
but at times
it can be divided
evenly into two—
the Anglo world
and the so-called Greek world,
which no longer exists.
The world is incredibly complex,
but at certain times
it can be easily
split down the middle,
at times the world
reduces to essentially
two dimensions,
in some ways the world
only exists two dimensionally,
the schism between
the Catholicism
that overtook the world
and the Orthodoxy
that eventually
became more or less extinguished,
maybe that's one instance
of binary simplicity,
the idea of a God
who wants to hear your petty sins,
who wants to speak with you
and have some type of relationship.
A personal relationship with God—
it's the most absurd thing.
It's essentially atheism.
There's only one end-game

to believing the alleged Creator
of the Universe wants to hear
about how you stole a bag of Lays chips
from your University
convenience store
as an eighteen year old—
the only end-game
to that sort of metaphysics is atheism.
It's ruthlessly dualist
but also delightfully atheist.
If you truly believe God
wishes to speak with you
about the young man
you viciously threatened
with violence when you were
only nineteen years old
then you're essentially an atheist.
That's how we could best describe it.
An idea that
the experience of God is summarized verbally,
and that all spiritual experience
must defer to an intellectual understanding of it—
we're all Anglo now.
Of course I despised
those two innocent Anglo girls,
because I saw myself in them—
in so many ways
I've become an innocent Anglo girl
just by dint of living in the world
in a continuous fashion.
Why haven't I retired
to an obscure mountain somewhere,
to become *ρωμιοσύνη* again?
But that's why I have no qualms
about despising certain people

for no particular reason—
because, at bottom,
we're all essentially Anglo.
Yet, if we're being honest
with ourselves,
it's only the homeless
who truly recognize
the absurdity of our
alleged individualism—
a poor guy sleeps in the street,
and we act as if he murdered a man.
Someone falls on hard times,
begins drinking heavily,
probably does a decent amount of drugs,
he loses his job, his home,
his wife leaves him,
he's reduced to begging people
on street corners
for dollar bills and sleeping
in alleyways, and we act as if
his hardship is an inconvenience for us—
we're offended at his poverty.
I've experienced more malice
directed at bums
in the past decade
than any previous decade
I can recall,
the malice toward bums
seems to be increasing
in this country
at an almost exponential rate.

Canto XV
553:720 .768

They view it
as a severe affront
to their liberty that a bum—
who sleeps in alleys and
remains parked essentially
at death's door day and night—
should ask them for spare change.
Our society abjectly fails people,
and people with alleged moral standing
within our society can hardly
be bothered to even witness a bum,
to gaze at a bum for a brief period of time,
if they're forced to even
minimally interact with a bum
they view it as a sort of sacrilege.
Viewing a person sans a domicile
is considered an affront to good taste.
But who wouldn't toss a couple extra back
if they no longer had
a home?
There's no doubt that to some extent we,
all of us, have failed these people
in some way that's probably material.
It's one thing to be down and out,
but to be on the street drinking
a half-filled Coca-Cola bottle
filled with illicit substances,
asking strangers for money,
clearly only partially aware of where
you are, that should, frankly,
be shameful for all of us.
Anyone can become a crack addict.

If the history of crack in this country
has taught us anything
it's that anyone can become a crackhead.
We're all capable of becoming crackheads,
given the appropriate circumstances.
The whites of America
laughed at the blacks
of America
during the crack era,
as the United States government
pumped crack into black neighborhoods,
only to, decades later,
find entire lower-class white communities
turned into junkies,
backed by the United States government,
backed by the pharmaceutical companies,
who indiscriminately tossed heroin equivalents
at any lower-class white
with a sprained ankle
that went to their physician.
An entire generation of white junkies
emerged seemingly overnight,
the laughter of whites
cackling at crack cocaine
undoubtedly resounding in the background.
Yet just as the black population of America
essentially had no choice
but to become black crackheads,
the white population of America
has similarly involuntarily transformed
into white junkies.
Pharmaceutical companies
have attained multi-billion dollar market caps
almost exclusively
by turning poor whites into white junkies.

Yet no one wants to deal with white junkies
while they're drinking wine
and having appetizers.
The servers and the customers converse
about what steps the city
should take to counteract
the white junkies and the black crackheads
who invade the lines of sight
of people who've driven tens of miles
to stuff their faces with calamari
and mozzarella sticks and jalapeno poppers,
to drink craft beers
and suck down wine spritzers.
These people just can't get enough trans fat,
and they hate bums.
These people spend hours a day
examining the intricacies
of craft beer
but completely lack
the temerity to even speak
with a bum.

Canto XVI
516:676 .763

It never occurs to any of these people
that their own latent malice
is directly responsible for the dilapidated state
of their fellow citizens,
that their complicity,
their myopic and enduring idiocy
has directly resulted in a state
that's shamelessly produced
white junkies and black crackheads
at alarming rates.

It's a shame that the city isn't
doing more,
these people
say without a trace
of irony,

and then they discuss
the tangerine aftertaste
in an overpriced craft beer.

Do you taste tangerine at all?—

No, I was getting a bit of a Bartlett pear
aftertaste!

The people who drink craft beer,
it seems to me,
despite their advantageous
and calculated poses of liberalism,
are the most unapologetically
capitalist criminals we have in
this country.

I've never heard a craft beer
enthusiast apologize
for the idiocy
of his calculated liberal poses.

The craft beer drinkers
instead maintain a transparent pose
of benign liberalism,
yet spend all of their time trying to
detect the slightest trace
of Bartlett pear in a Coconut India Pale Ale—
as opposed to even attempting to help
any of their fellow human beings.
These people who support craft beer choose
to buy brands that allegedly donate
to Good Causes,
they post to social platforms
to make people they don't know aware
that they buy The Socially Responsible Beers,
knowing entirely well that
all of these donations are essentially criminal,
that none of this money
ever reaches the people
it needs to reach,
which is readily apparent,
because when they sit down to order
said craft beer all they see are bums.
Only a craft beer drinker
would conclude the most efficient way
of helping his fellow human being
is buying more craft beer.
The reality is none of us know
what to do with bums,
we're privy to no bum solutions,
no solution to our bum problems,
yet we know all of these bums
are essentially Anglo.
The white junkie and black crackhead
are both at bottom entirely Anglo.
We know how to produce bums,

but we have no idea
what to do with these bums
once we've produced them.
We produce bums shamelessly,
and then even more shamelessly
we shun these bums
from acceptable society.
You'll never meet a person
at a restaurant downtown
who used to be a bum.
It's impossible for bums to re-enter into society,
there's a wall,
an insurmountable wall that's constructed around
every bum in this country,
between the streets of a downtown
and the restaurants of a downtown.
A restaurant-goer can become a bum,
but a bum will never again become a restaurant-goer.

Canto XVII
500:689 .726

The harsh reality is that there's little we can do
for our fellow citizens
who've reached such dilapidated states
more than simply talking to them,
and this is something anyone who's been
in a dilapidated state
knows to be profoundly true.
The entire industry of strippers
and whores, in fact,
should be rehabilitated based
on this point alone,
because no one in our society
gives the dilapidated person
more time of day than the exotic dancer.
It's undoubtedly true that, this century,
the exotic dancing community
has done more for the dilapidated person community
than the Catholic church community.
Because strippers and whores
innately give the dilapidated person
the time of day,
any stripper worth her salt
instinctively knows how to speak to the dilapidated soul,
the dilapidated person
just needs someone to listen to a sob story
for a second of time,
for someone to care for a fraction
of an iota of their day,
to pretend to care in a way
that's not grossly condescending
in the classic bureaucratic manner.
Yet there's this misguided notion

that the stripper only talks to customers,
when in fact the stripper speaks
to infinitely more potential customers
than actual customers—
the successful stripper, in fact,
has no more than a small handful
of customers that pay her bills,
and, by contrast,
it's these potential customers
who are infinitely more likely to be dilapidated.
The actual customer is more likely to be opulent and
jovial,
unrestrained and decadent,
while the potential customer
is almost always entirely dilapidated.
Giving this potential customer the time of day
is almost a religious act on the parts of the strippers and
whores.

And it's for precisely this reason
I have so much more respect
for strippers and whores than I do
for the median craft beer drinker.
We believe craft beer drinkers
are laudable members of our society,
while we denigrate strippers and whores,
but I actually find strippers and whores
to be laudable members of our society,
while I denigrate craft beer drinkers.
There's only so much you can do
for a guy who's become a bum on the street,
one particular bum approached me
on a second date in an alleyway
and referred to the girl
I was with as my wife,
and I gave him ten dollars,

but even that ten dollars wasn't sincere,
that ten dollars was a disingenuous ten dollars,
it was obviously for the benefit of the girl I was with.
You need to speak to people
in dilapidated states,
largely because it's the only thing
you can do that will, at bottom,
have a palpable effect.

Canto XVIII
506:657 .770

What happens to them
will largely be fatalistic,
it will be a matter of fate
statistically speaking,
but it's just utter cruelty to ignore them,
to treat them as people
who don't deserve the time of day,
not even an iota of your afternoon,
to complain to your waiter
because a white junkie in your line of sight
is ruining the Bartlett pear aftertaste
of your ten dollar IPA.
But this is what's happened
to so many downtowns,
these same downtowns
I still go to,
these downtowns that have my memories
folded into them,
maybe a decade or more folded into them—
they've become inundated
with craft beer drinkers.
It's not the bums who offend me, no,
it's the craft beer drinkers who offend me.
It's the people who believe twelve dollars
for a beer is an appropriate price to pay
for a beverage.
It's the people who think discussing
the aftertaste of hops
is an appropriate conversation
to have in public.
It's the people who believe strippers
and whores are people

we should look down upon a priori—
it's the people who maintain
all the socially appropriate opinions
but display all of the most cowardly tendencies.
Our downtowns are being ruined by these people,
who have the correct opinions
on every issue—
at bottom all these people care about
is maintaining the correct opinion
on any issue at hand.
Our downtowns were once great places
to grab a slice of pizza,
filled with bums and strippers and whores,
but now our downtowns are inundated
with craft beer drinkers
and fried calamari and mozzarella sticks
and jalapeno poppers
and people who have socially acceptable opinions
on everything. It's disgusting
really. But of course all rationalism
is little more than absurdist propaganda.
It's only via rationalism,
an essentially Anglo concept,
that we find ourselves within a prism
where everything is Anglo,
where every white junkie and black crackhead
are equally Anglo.
It's only when we attend the funerals
of close friends who die
absurdly young that we realize this,
that all rationalism
is little more than lurid absurdist propaganda.
Only people who attend these funerals
understand this from experience.
We realize not just the absurdity

of these conversations
but the absurdity of ourselves,
and, even in my case,
it was only a few years ago
when a good friend of mine finally,
after years of seemingly ceaseless suffering,
gave in to late stage brain cancer.
The entire ordeal was criminal,
and to be clear I was probably
one of the most criminal.

Canto XIX
434:601 .722

My social criminality has perhaps
never been more acute
than during this period of my life.
My friend was diagnosed
with late stage brain cancer
and moved back in with his parents where,
not long after,
he suffered a seizure while driving,
totaled his car,
and was from then on forbidden to drive.
So naturally, being a good friend,
being actually a better friend to him
than even a few of the friends
he'd had for decades,
a better friend at least
in terms of time spent,
I took it upon myself to drive
to his parents' house multiple times per week,
after work, where I already had a decent commute,
which wasn't an insignificant drive,
to his parents' house,
to hang out with him,
to pick him up and then drive him
to other places where we'd hang out
for a reasonable amount of time,
where afterward I'd drive him back
to his parents' house.
This was a difficult ordeal for my friend,
as you can imagine,
and there were various series of ups and downs—
had I been born into wealth
I'd have done whatever he asked,

but being a working stiff
there was only so much that I could do,
there were times he wanted to get
an ice cream cone and I,
unfortunately, had to do laundry.
A young man with late stage brain cancer,
essentially a death sentence,
wanted to buy me a mint chocolate chip waffle cone,
but I had to politely decline
because I needed to wash my boxer briefs.
In any case his girlfriend,
who was younger than the two of us
yet still young, dumped him not long after,
and from this we concluded
that apparently waiting for him
to die was too much of a burden for her,
which in retrospect I suppose is fair enough,
not everyone has the patience to wait for someone to
die,
a terminal illness, for some people,
can just be a bit too inconvenient,
a tad too cumbersome.
At the time, I didn't think much of it,
my friend was fairly torn up about it,
and who could blame him?—
but, again, with the exception of consoling a person
in a more or less generic way
there's not much we can realistically do.
We can tell our dying friend
that his ex-girlfriend is a terrible person,
a tawdry whore,
that he deserves better,
but the reality is there's nearly nothing
you can tell a young person who,
in all likelihood, will die a slow death,

there's next to nothing
you can tell him that will comfort him
when his attractive girlfriend ruthlessly leaves him.

Canto XX
483:709 .681

It's great to say,
it's an appealing idea to think
that we can arrive at the door of a dying
young man and alter his life
for the better,
but it's significantly more difficult
than you might think,
in practice it's more or less an impossibility.
You imagine at the time
that you're saying something uniquely enlightening
when in reality you're just mindlessly spewing
generic condolences—
generic condolences that are hardly of any help at all.
Having said that, during my day-to-day routine
I thought almost nothing of his ex-girlfriend,
I left it at that,
I thought she was taking the easy way out,
there's no doubt about that,
but I didn't necessarily curse her name
in my personal time,
I felt like it was her decision,
and ultimately if she felt as though
my friend wasn't the person
she wanted to wait for,
in a terminal sense,
then I respected that as her decision,
that there was little any of us could do
besides respect her decision
and speak poorly of her behind her back.
I didn't think much of it at all actually
until the following weekend when I was at a bar
around closing time with a close friend,

and I felt a tap on my shoulder,
only to find this ex-girlfriend
of my dying friend.
She said
she just wanted to say hi,
and subsequently I said hello,
yet only a few moments later
I received yet a second tap on the shoulder.
Now this ex-girlfriend's friend,
who accompanied her to the locale,
was standing in front of my person,
and she proceeded to inform me
that I was quote-unquote "kind of rude"
to my dying friend's ex-girlfriend,
that I could have said hello
just a little more cordially,
this friend of my dying friend's ex-girlfriend
actually had the audacity
to stand there and with in a state of sincerity
speak these exact words to me,
to proclaim that it was actually me,
that I was the person who was committing
the faux pas here,
that I was the one just a little out of line,
that my less than enthusiastic hello
was the true affront to good taste here.
Given the circumstances,
my tendency toward the intemperate
took hold of me,
and I informed them both
of my feelings on the matter,
that I perhaps informed them of my feelings
in an acerbic manner,
in perhaps the most acerbic manner
I could imagine

at the time.
I let them know in no uncertain terms
who I believed was committing
the true faux pas at this bar,
late in the evening,
where we were all inebriated.
In any case, just moments later
I received an additional tap on my shoulder.
The bouncer of the bar
stood in front of me,
rather apathetic,
and informed me that I needed
to leave
the premises because
“the girl over there,” quote-unquote,
was claiming I physically hit her.

Canto XXI
596:752 .793

A girl who just dumped my dying friend
said hello to me then had her friend
verbally assault me for allegedly
not being enthusiastic enough
when I returned her reprehensible hello,
then I subsequently verbally assaulted
both her and her friend
for concerning themselves
with enthusiastic greetings
as opposed to people dying arduous deaths,
then she falsely accused me
of physically hitting her
in a public place.
Luckily enough for me,
this notion that a person
punched a female in a venue
densely packed at that capacity,
yet managed to land a punch
so clandestinely no one in the venue noticed,
that no eye witnesses emerged
was absurd to all parties involved,
yet I still vigorously plead my case,
because I'd never plead guilty when innocent,
so I vigorously defended
my name against what I correctly
interpreted to be a total defamation
of my character,
against this tasteless
character assassination,
a legitimate assassination attempt,
all, unbelievable as it may seem,
as a subsequent result

of me refusing to return
an enthusiastic hello.
An unenthusiastic hello
nearly turned me into an alleged felon,
and as I'm defending
myself vigorously,
perhaps even excessively vigorously,
the ex-girlfriend ambles over
with her degenerate friend
and admits that her claim
was entirely fabricated,
that it had absolutely no basis in reality—
and then the ex-girlfriend
and her degenerate friend,
the true Nazi of enthusiastic greetings,
drive right off,
admitting in so many words
that they were in the business of assassinating
the character of anyone who failed to say hello
to them enthusiastically,
that they equated a less than enthusiastic
greeting with physical violence.
The next morning I received
a call from my sick friend,
and as he addressed
the situation from the previous night,
it became relatively clear to me
that he was,
for lack of a better phrase,
taking her side.
In my mind at the time this defense
of this person
was synonymous
with taking her side,
which, as you can imagine,

led to a bit of a falling out between us,
as he found himself
attempting to work things out
with a girl who now
hated every aspect of my being
and vice versa.

It was a bit of an imbroglio,
because now I found myself
essentially abandoning my dying friend
as well.

I gave his ex-girlfriend
an extended harangue
regarding her ruthless abandonment
of my dying friend,
then just days later
I found myself also ruthlessly abandoning him.
Eventually we'd see each other again,
my dying friend and I,
we'd spend limited time together
here and there, of course,
our friendship didn't cease completely,
and it was fine,
there was no bitterness per se,
but our friendship,
frankly, was obviously never the same.

Canto XXII
522:679 .769

His ex-girlfriend abandoned him,
then she felt as though
I gave her an insincere hello
at a bar, then I disclosed
my true thoughts on her character,
her despicable character,
her ruthless abandonment
of my dying friend,
then just days later
I also ruthlessly abandoned
my dying friend.
It took quite a long time for him to die—
he lost his sight,
and he was almost entirely blind,
he was admitted to hospitals
in a terminally intermittent fashion,
visiting with high-priced specialists
that brought nothing other than
utter financial ruin to his family,
and eventually he was enclosed
in his bedroom from sunset to dawn to dinner,
in his parents' house,
an only child, abandoned by both
his girlfriend and his good friend.
Four years later I heard
that he'd entered hospice,
that he laid on his deathbed,
and I arranged to pay him
a visit the subsequent morning
with my cousin, but he died overnight.
Days later, his mother noted
to a mutual friend

that she'd prefer his impending funeral
to be a small ceremony,
that she didn't want it to be a big crowd,
and I considered not attending
before being ultimately convinced
by a mutual friend to attend.
Against my better judgment
I attended the funeral,
yet the second I saw my dead friend's
made-up corpse in the coffin,
the second I stepped in sight of the coffin,
a bout of intense regret came over me,
and I realized I had no business attending this funeral,
that I abandoned my dying friend,
and then I had the audacity to attend his funeral,
essentially against his own mother's wishes—
not explicitly against his mother's wishes
but implicitly against his mother's wishes.
There was no doubt his mother most likely
would have preferred I not attend.
There was no doubt, if pressed,
she would have at least been agnostic
vis-a-vis my attendance, which,
considering her preference
was a small ceremony,
is tantamount to preferring my absence.
Via the procession line,
it was clear his parents clearly either
didn't remember me or deliberately forgot me.
In my seat I ceaselessly
speculated whether they didn't remember me
or deliberately forgot me.
Me—the guy who used to always go pick up their son,
what a great guy,
I used to go pick their son up

more frequently than even his childhood friends,
I was such a nice guy,
yet eventually of course
I stopped coming around,
I abandoned their dying son
like we all eventually abandon the terminally ill,
and subsequently his parents forgot about me,
and rightfully so.
It would have actually been
distasteful for them to remember me.

Canto XXIII
549:733 .749

The moment I witnessed,
in my dead friend's father's eyes,
that he either intentionally
or unintentionally forgot my identity
I knew attending this funeral
was a grave mistake.

I sat back down in my black
fold out chair and said to myself
This is the last funeral I'll attend,
because attending a funeral
is always a mistake,
it's the most insipid mistake
we can make.

Attending a wedding may be
a faux paus but attending a funeral
is always an inane mistake.

We all gather around,
all friends and family,
to gaze idiotically at a stiff corpse,
then we go eat at a local restaurant—
we all mindlessly stare at a dead body,
then we have a nice meal.

There's nothing more disingenuous
than a funeral, and the most disingenuous funerals
are those held for the young.

An essentially interminable disease,
but the medical professional made
a significant fortune in the process.

A career's worth for the working class, no doubt.

They extended his suffering,
the suffering of his family,
the suffering of everyone around him,

then allowed him to die.
How many hundreds of thousands of dollars,
if not millions of dollars,
were spent, only to extend
a man's suffering and still allow him
to perish prematurely?
But of course they still accepted payment,
because you never get
an A for effort in this country,
unless you're a medical professional.
It's only doctors who have the audacity
to extend a son's suffering,
watch him die, and still ruin the family financially.
We think so highly of doctors in this country,
yet it seems to me that doctors are greater charlatans
now than they've ever been.
But of course I attended the reception as well,
where the disingenuous nature
of the entire event really came into focus.
The disingenuous nature
of the entire ordeal naturally reached
its apex at the reception,
as it became just another social event.
It's impossible to have an iota of respect for yourself
or the society you participate in
after attending an event of that magnitude.
Sitting in that black fold-out chair,
staring at my dead friend's heavily made up corpse,
it failed to occur to me then—
I was too consumed with disgust for myself—
but in retrospect
my only conclusion from that day is just that,
that rationalism is nothing more
than the most lurid form of absurdist propaganda.
We've constructed a rationalist Anglo world

that hasn't consumed everything,
not quite yet, but that still remains essentially
objectionable,
just as the mystic Byzantine world,
it's natural opposite, was,
in its essence, also entirely objectionable.
And the doctors who treat our dead friends,
prolonging their suffering and buying homes
in the Hamptons with the criminal proceeds,
they're objectionable in every way.

Canto XXIV
368:499 .737

And the people
who assassinate our characters
because they feel as though
we're not enthusiastic enough
when we say hello to them at bars,
they're criminals of the highest magnitude.
But we ourselves
are just as objectionable
as any of these actors,
we're also criminals
of the highest magnitude,
we're perhaps the most objectionable.
We astutely recognize
our opposites as criminal
because we exist as parts
of the same criminal whole.
We don't know how to deal
with death anymore.
We think our scientists
and our doctors are progressing,
that they'll eventually progress
to a state where they'll once
and for all understand death,
once and for all
when the sad reality
is we remain at the apex
of the primitive with regards
to quote-unquote dealing with death.
We're essentially
an indigenous population
when it comes to interacting with death.
We're zealots of progress,

and as such we're
ill-equipped to interact
with any sort of profundity,
because we're suspended in progress,
we're stuck waiting for our scientists
and doctors to give us the word,
to give us the word
that they've finally gotten
to the so-called bottom of death.
Previous generations spoke profoundly
in the face of death,
while our generation serves cole slaw
and chicken parmigiana at funeral receptions,
the images of corpses
still fresh in our mind.
Previous generations understood death
in a profoundly general sense
if hardly at all in a specific sense.
We consume mozzarella sticks
in the face of death,
we eat jalapeno poppers
in the face of death,
we drink craft beer with idiotic tangerine aftertastes
in the face of death.
It's, frankly, only the homeless of our era
who truly recognize the ills of the private sphere—
'by examining the nature of sensible things,
these people have arrived at a certain concept of God,
but not at a conception truly worthy of Him.'

Diagrams

ADAM METROPOLIS
The Number 1.99999 Repeating
8,809:11,704 .753

Canto 01—614:793 .774

We hadn't [b]een there n[i]nety [s]e[c]onds, [b]e[c]ause it
[w]as r[i]ght as [w]e [w]al[k]ed in the [b][a][ck]yard of the
h[i]gh [s][c]hool [g]r[a]du[a]tio[n] [p]arty th[a]t her [c]ousin
a[p]proached u[s] and, wi[th]out [th]e [s]i[i]ghte[s]t
hesit[a]tio[n], a[s]ked my [g]irl[f]riend r[i]ght to her
[f][a][c]e—D[i]d you br[i]ng my [t]u[p]per[w]are [w]i[th]
you? It [t]oo[k] [p]erha[p]s longer than I [c]are to
[c]on[f]e[s]s to [f]ully [r]e[c]ognize [w]hat exa[c]tly it
[w]as sh[e] [w]as [r]e[f]e[r]en[c]ing. Oh, the oxt[ai]l, I
[r]e[f]l[i]e[c]ted, a [s]e[c]ond or [s]o [i]a[ter], as I
[r]e[c]alled there [b]eing a [b]eauti[f]ul,
[w]ood-[c]overed, [p]ie[c]e of gla[s]s of tu[p]per[w]are
[s]i[t]t[i]ng i[n] ou[r] [r]e[f]r[i]gerato[r] [f]lo[r] ove[r] a
[w]ee[k], i[n]cub[a]ti[n]g a[n] oxt[ai]l dish th[a]t h[a]d,
u[n]f[or]tunate[l]y, [t]o[t]a[l]l[y] ex[p]ired—it was so [f]ar
gone I was h[e]si[t]a[n]t [t]o eve[n] o[p]e[n] the [t]o[p] of
the [t]u[p]per[w]a[r]e [c]on[t]aine[r], [d]es[p]ite the [f]lac[t]
the [t]o[p] of the [c]on[t]ainer was a bea[ut]i[f]ul, wood
[f]i[n]i[sh]ed [p]iece. There was [n]o [d]oubt in [m]y
[m]i[n]d [th]at [th]is oxtail was, [a]t th[a]t [p]oint, [n]ot just
[c]om[p]l[e]te[l]y [e]x[p]ired but [e]ssential[l]y a ty[p]e of
m[eat] sou[p], a ty[p]e of l[i]q[u]i[f]ied [c]o[r]p[s]e,
wh[i]ch of [c]ou[r]s[e] di[s]gu[s]ted m[e] [s]ev[er]el[y].
[C]lea[n]ing it out [s]t[r]u[ck] m[e] as a gr[ote]s[que]
idea. I [c]an't [s]ay for [c]ertain, but it's more [i]i[k]e[l]y
[th]an not [th]at I [th]r[ew] i[t] i[n]to the
[t]r[ash]—[t]u[p]per[w]are, [w]ood [t]o[p], and [o]x[t]ail.
'O'h, [s]o [s]orry, I'll [d]ef[i]n[i]tely [b]r[i]ng i[t] [b]ack
[s]oon!' she [s]aid, [a]nd I gl[a]n[c]ed [a]t her [a]nd
a[t]t[e]m[p]t[ed] [t]o [d]e[c]i[ph]er i[f] she had [a]ny

[i][d]ea the [t]u[pp]er[w]are [a]nd the ox[t]ail [w]ere [b]oth
 l[o]ng g[o]ne, th[a]t [b]oth now [s][a]t in a gar[b]age
 hea[p], a [p]ile of tr[a]sh [s]omewhere, at the [b]ottom of
 a [p]u[b]li[c] [d]um[p], [s]t[i][ll] f[i][ll]ed w[i]th [d]e[c]ayed,
 gro[t]e[s][q]ue ox[t]ail, [a]nd th[a]t her [c]ousin would
 ne[v]er again [o]wn the [p]r[i][v]i[l]e of [p]l[a]cing her
 l[e]f[t]o[v]ers in[t]o that [p]ie[c]e of [t]u[pp]er[w]are [w]ith
 the beauti[f]ul [w]ood [c]o[v]er. That [t]u[p]per[w]are [w]as
 f[i]n[i]shed. Having [s]aid that, [e]v[e]n the f[in]e[s]t
 [p]ie[c]e of [t]u[pp]erware—how [p]r[e]c[i]ous i[s] i[t]
 r[e]a[l]l[y]? [C]ouldn't we [r]e[p]la[c]e it [f]or [f]ive do[l]lars
 or l[e]ss? My thin[k]ing at the [t]ime was ye[s], [th]at
 [th]e [t]u[pp]er[w]are [w]as en[t]irely f[un]gible, yet as
 [s]oon as we [s]tepp[ed] f[oot] in[t]o this [h]igh [s]ch[oo]l
 g[r]aduation [p]arty [h]er [c]ousin in[q]uired a[b]out the
 [t]u[pp]er[w]are—as i[f] th[i]s [t]u[pp]er[w]are [p]erha[p]s
 b[e]longed to [s]ome [s]ort of rare [s]p[e]c[ie]s of
 [t]u[pp]er[w]are, [p]erha[p]s a [s]p[e]c[ie]s of
 [t]u[pp]erware on the verge of ex[t]i[n]c[t]i[on], [p]erha[p]s
 this [w]as [s]ome [k]ind [o]f [o]ne-[o]f-a-[k]ind
 [t]u[pp]erware I non[ch]a[ntly] t[ho]s[ed] in[t]o a [p]ile
 of [t]ra[sh]. [S]o[m]e [p]eo[p]le h[a]ve [m]a[ssive]
 a[m]o[un]ts [o]f re[s]p[e]ct for tu[pp]er[w]are, [b]ut I've
 n[e]ver [b]een [o]ne of them, It al[w]ays e[l]u[d]ed [m]e
 [w]hy a[n]yo[n]e [w]ould i[n]vest [m]ore than [o]ne
 [d]o[l]lar i[n] t[ho] a [p]ie[c]e of [t]u[pp]er[w]are,
 [p]er[s]ona[l]ly. [T]o [m]y [m]i[n]d, if a [p]iece of
 tu[pp]erware, no [m]a[tt]er the level of
 cr[a]fts[m]a[nshi[p], is [p]ri[c]ed ab[o]ve [o]ne dollar, then
 it's an over[p]ri[c]ed [p]ie[c]e of tu[pp]erware. It's ju[s]t
 not an i[t]em I've [p]er[s]ona[lly] e[v]er [v]iewed [a]s [a]n
 i[n]v[e]stme[n]t of [a]ny kind. In [m]y [m]i[n]d, [p]l[ates]
 and bowls are re[l]ati[v]e[l]y [w]orth[w]hile
 i[n]v[e]stme[n]ts, [w]hile tu[pp]er[w]are is e[ss]entiall[y] a
 [c]a[p]ita[l]i[s]t [p]l[oy] to i[n]c[rea]se the [p]rofit margin on

[p][l][a][s]ti[c] [b][a]gs—to [c]on[v]in[c]e [p]eo[p]le they shouldn't [o]n[l]y [i][n][v]e[s]t [i][n] [p][l]ates and b[o]wls, [b]ut al[s]o [i][n]ve[s]t [i][n] the highe[s]t [q]ual[ity] [p][l][a][s]tic [b][a]gs ([t]u[p]perware), [t]hat in [t]heory [t]hey'll use [a]g[ai]n and [a]g[ai]n, [b]ut [i][n] [p]ra[c]ti[c]e they'll [l]ose [i][n][c]e[ss]ant[l]y and [c]on[s]tant[l]y have to re[p][l]a[c]e.

Canto 02—696:817 .852

'She's n[e]v[e]r g[e]tting that [t]upp[er]ware b[a]ck,' I [s]aid. 'Y[ou] th[r]ew it in the [t]r[a]sh?' she [s]aid. 'You g[a]ve the o[k][ay]?' I [s][ai][d], to which [sh]e [sh]oo[k] [h]er [h][ea][d], [c][l]ear[l]y [m]i[s][r]e[m]e[m]b[er]ing the [p][l]e[tho]ra of [t]imes [w]e've thrown out [t]u[p]per[w]are in the [p]a[s]t, the [c]oun[t]l[e]s[s] [t]i[m]es [l]ve [s][ee]n a [p]ie[c]e of [w]ell-[w]orn [t]u[p]per[w]are [t]a[k]ing u[p] [s][p]a[c]e i[n] our [r]e[f]r[i]ge[r]ator, a[s]ked her i[f] I [c]ould th[r]ow [s]aid [t]u[p]per[w]are out, [r]e[c]eived a [p]r[oi]val to th[r]ow [s]aid [t]u[p]per[w]are [ou]t, and th[r]own [ou]t [s]aid [t]u[p]per[w]are. It's n[o]t a [p]r[o]b[lem], I [s]aid, we can [p]r[o]b[a]bly ju[s]t [b]uy her a [r]e[p]la[c]e[m]ent or [s]o[m]ething. Sh[e] ag[r]ee[d [b]ut [s][ee]med du[b]i[ous], and I [f]elt the [s]ame, I [f]ound [m]y[s]elf a[g]r[ee]ing with [b]oth [m]y[s]elf and [m]y [g]irl[f]riend, [d]e[s]p[ite] the [f]a[c]t we had [d]ia[m]e[t]r[i]cally o[pp]o[sed] views on this [t]u[p]perware. My [g]irl[f]rie[n]d a[n]d I di[s][a]g[r]ee[d on our [a][b]i[l]ity to re[p][l]a[c]e this tu[p]per[w]are, and I [a]g[r]ee[d [w]ith [b]oth of u[s]. I [s]at i[n] a [l]awn chair a [s]e[c]o[n]d or [s]o [l]ater, drin[k]ing a g[l]a[s]s of [S]oju, [e]x[p]l[i]c[i]tly [a]t[t]em[p]t[ing] [t]o [a]void a[n]y u[n]ne[c]e[s]s[a]r[y] i[n]te[r]a[c]t[i]on [a]t thi[s] [h]igh [s]chool g[r]adua[t]ion until [l]d im[b]ibed at [l]ea[s]t [h]alf this [b]ottle of [S]oju, doubt[ing] my [a][b]i[l]ity to [c]ome off [a][pp]ro[p]riate[l]y [c]ordi[al] in a [s]oci[al]

[s]etting [s]an[s] a [m][i]n[i][m][u]m [o]f half [o]f [a]
[b][o]ttle [o]f thi[s] [S]oju [r][u]th[i]e[ss][i]y [p]er[c]o[l]ating
thr[ou]gh my [b][i]ood[s]t[r]eam. I [s]at there,
[c]on[t]em[p]l[i]a[ti]ng h[i]gh [s][c]hool [g]radu[a]tions,
[c]on[t]em[p]l[i]a[ti]ng my own h[i]gh [s][c]hool
[g]r[adu]a[ti]on, [r]e[c]allin[g] nothin[g] of m[y] h[i]gh
[s][c]hool [g]r[adu]a[t]i[on], [c]ontem[p]l[i]a[ti]ng the
[p]erv[a][s]i[ve] i[di]o[c]y of or[g]anized edu[c]a[t]i[on],
[c]on[s]idering how more or l[e]ss [e]ver[y] u[n]i[que]
thin[k]er—from [S]o[c]r[a]t[es] [s]t[on]ed by the
[A]the[n]ians to Giorda[n]o [B]ru[n]o [b]urnt a[l]l[i]ve
[b]y the [C]athol[i]c [ch]ur[ch] to [N]ietzs[ch]e
un[r]ea[d a]n[d i]n a[n] i[n]sane a[s]y[l]um as he
[r]o[t]ted [a]way—y[e]s, [e]ve[r]y u[n]i[que] thin[k]e[r]
ove[r] the [c]our[s]e of [h]uman [h]i[s]to[r]y was either
inten[s]e[i]y o[s]t[r]a[c]ized or [s]impl[y]
a[ss]a[ss]in[a]ted by the [s]y[s]temati[c] edu[c]a[t]ors of
[h]is or [h]er d[a]y. In short, I was vo[c]i[f]er[ou]sly
dr[i]n[k]i[n]g th[i]s gla[ss] of [S]oju when I thought to
m[y]s[e]l[f]—[i]t po[ss]i[ble] [th]at we [th]ink of [th]e
[th]eo[l]o[g]i[c]al [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ers as the
[c]o[n]s[er]vatives, as the ones [r]e[s]t[r]ained by thi[s]
[s]o-[c]alled [c]o[n]c[e]ption of God, yet it's a[c]tually the
[c]a[s]e [th]at [th]e [th]eo[l]o[g]i[c]al [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ers,
over the [c]our[s]e of [h]u[m]an [h]i[s]to[r]y, are the [m]o[s]t
au[d]acious, the [b]ol[d]est [ph]iloso[ph]ers we [h]ave
and [h]a[v]e e[v]er [h]ad? How [e]l[se] can we [e]xp[l]ain
[B]er[k]e[l]ey, I thought—[ea]sil[y] the [m]o[s]t ra[d]i[c]al
s[k]e[p]t[i]c the [m]o[d]ern W[es]t h[a]s [p]r[odu]c[ed],
yet al[s]o a [C]athol[i]c [p]r[i]e[s]t? [D]iony[s]i[u]s, for
ex[a]m[p]le, was [a]ctually [q]uite v[i]gorou[s] i[n] h[i]s
[s]k[e]p[t]i[c]i[s]m of our [a]b[i]l[i]ty to k[n]ow a[n]ything,
his [c]ir[c]um[l]o[c]utions were [a]c[tua[l]l[y] [q]uite
r[ati]o[n]al. [W]hereas our typi[c]al [s]e[c]ular athei[s]t
[ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]er, [w]hile [a]ssured of our [a]b[i]l[i]ty to

k[n][o]w the[r]e a[r]e [n][o] Gods, is rather neutered [i]n h[is] [ph][i][l][o][s]o[ph][i][c]al [s][p]e[c]u[l]ations [i][f] the [f][a]ct th[at] God [d]oesn't ex[ist] [i]s le[f]t to the si[d]e. [I]sn't [i]t [p]o[ss]i[ble] [th]at [th]e [s][o]-[c]alled theo[l][o]g[i][c]al [ph][i][l][o][s]o[ph]ers are the m[o][s]t [a]udacious [a]mong [u]s? The [o]nes who are [w]illing [t]o [t]a[k]e the [p]ro[p]er[l]y [r]a[d]i[c]al [l][ea][p]s ne[c]e[ss]a[r]y [w]hen [d][ea][l]ing [w]i[th] meta[ph][y]s[i][c]s, I thought [w]hile vo[c][i][f]er[ou][s][l]y dr[i]n[k]i[ng] th[i]s bottle of [S]oju, un[w]i[l]ling to [s][p]ea[k] to [a]nyone [a]t this high [s][c]hool gradu[a]t[i]on un[t]il I had [th]orough[l]y [c]on[t]em[p][l]at[ed] the [t]rue n[a]ture of [th]e [th]eo[l][o]g[i][c]al [ph][i][l][o]so[ph]er.

Canto 03—889:1181 .753

"How [e]lse can we [e]xplain [K]i[e]r[k]e[ga]ard? The [s]e[c]u[l]ar [ph][i][l][o][s]o[ph]ers tal[k] our ears [o][ff] a[n]d [m]ore [o]f[ten] than [n][o]t [s]ay [n]othing [b]ey[on]d what [th]eir [th]e[s]is a[d]visors [d]e[m]and [t]o [b]e [p]r[in]t[ed], I thought, vo[c][i]fero[u]sly d[r]i[n]k[i]ng th[i]s bottle of [S]oju, while [th]e a[p]ex of [th]e [th]eo[l][o]g[i][c]al [ph][i][l][o][s]o[ph]er tru[l]y e[n]a[c]t[s] the [n]otion of [ph][i][l]o[s]o[ph]izing with a h[a]mmer? Y[e]t, in ou[r] [e]r[a], it [s][ee]ms w[e] more or [l]e[ss] di[s]mi[ss] all [ph][i][l]o[s]o[ph]ers wh[o] ch[oo]se t[o] be[l]i[e]ve in God, I thought. [I]s [i]t then po[ss]ible, [I] thought, dr[i]n[k]i[ng] m[y] [S]oju, vo[c][i]fero[u]sly, that [b]e[c]ause [th]e [th]eo[l][o]g[i][c]al [ph][i][l][o][s]o[ph]ers have [b]een e[ss]en[t]ia[l]ly [sh]unned from the [m]o[d]ern a[c]a[d]e[m]y, that the [m]ere [m]en[t]ion of God is [a]n[a]the[m]a to the [m]o[d]ern a[c]a[d]e[m]y, that [b]e[c]ause [th]e [th]eo[l][o]g[i][c]al [ph][i][l]o[s]o[ph]er [h]as [b]een [h]o[l]i[s]t[i]c[a]lly [b]anned from parta[k]ing in the [m]o[d]ern [s]o-[c]alled a[c]a[d]e[m]y, our [m]o[d]ern

organized e[d]ucators, [th]at [th]ey've [th]erefore
 [m]a[n]aged to [m]a[n]eu[v]er out[s]i[i]de of the [s]t[i]fling
 bu[r]eau[c]r[a]c[y] of the uni[v]er[s]it[y]—[a]nd
 [a]c[tuall[y] engaged with o[r]i[g]i[n]al thought? Should
 we [c]on[s]i[de]r that po[ss]i[b]le? [Th]at [th]ey [e]c[ho]
 [e]ar[l]y [C]h[r]istia[n] [th]eo[l]ogia[n]s, [p]erse[c]uted by
 [p]aga[n] [R]oma[n] autho[r]iti[e]s, who [c]r[ea]t[e]d
 e[l]aborate [f]a[m]ewor[k]s that [f]ormed the [s]ui
 gene[r]i[s] [m]eta[ph]y[s]i[c]al [f]ounda[t]i[o]n of early
 Ch[r]istian thought, a [s]ui ge[n]eri[s] [s]ynthe[s]i[s] of the
 [c]a[n]o[n]i[c]al G[o]s[p]els with [N]eo[p]lat[on]i[c]
 [th]o[ught], [th]at [o]ur [m]o[d]ern [th]eo[l]ogia[n]s,
 [a]lmo[st] r[e]gardless of de[n]o[m]i[n]atio[n],
 [p]ro[s]e[c]uted [b]y the athei[s]t univer[s]ity
 bu[r]eau[c]rats, are [w]ork[i]ng [w]i[th]i[n] [p]erh[a]p[s]
 [s]i[m]il[ar]l[y] r[e]a[di]c[a]l [f]r[ame]w[or]k[s]? [A]fter all,
 [s]e[c]u[l]ar [a]c[ademi]c [ph]i[l]o[s]o[ph]ers are [l]oath to
 [s]p[e]c[u]late on m[u]ch [o]f [a]nything in ou[r] [e]ra. In
 their [p]r[a]c[tice we have theoret[i]c[a]l [ph]y[s]i[c]i[s]ts
 who em[p]loy [c]om[p]lex [m]athe[m]ati[c]s to [p]rove
 the [s]u[pe]r[n]at[ur]al of [c]om[p]lex [m]athe[m]atics
 to almo[st] an[y] ty[p]e of [s]o[ph]i[st]r[y]. [F]ra[n]k[ly],
 I've n[e]ver r[e]s[p]e[c]ted [m]athe[m]ati[c]ians, I
 sh[ould] ad[m]it that [m]uch [u]p[f]r[ont]. I [s]u[p]po[se],
 in my [o]wn [w]a[y], I've alw[a]ys viewed
 [m]athe[m]ati[c]ians as e[ss]e[n]tia[l]l[y] ch[ar]at[er]ans. I
 view the art of [m]athe[m]ati[c]s as [n]ot only
 [d]e[c]a[d]ent, but I al[s]o view the [c]on[c]e[pt] of [n]umber
 as a[n] e[ss]e[n]tia[l]l[y] [m]eta[ph]y[s]i[c]al [d]o[m]ain.
 The [m]athe[m]at[i]c[i]an's [f]or[m]ulas [a]re [a]lways
 de[r]i[v]at[i]ve of the nu[m]e[r]i[c]al axio[m]s of
 [m]eta[ph]ysi[c]s—it's always [s]t[r]u[c]k me as e[n]tirely
 [p]o[s]si[b]le that [n]u[m]bers are an [i]m[p]o[s]si[b]ility.
 [Th]at [th]e [i]ntro[d]u[c]ti[o]n [o]f the [d]ecimal [p]oint, of
 the fra[c]ti[o]n, e[ss]e[n]tia[l]l[y] [s]a[n]k [m]athe[m]at[i]cs

right [i]n [i]ts [p]la[c]e, in m[y] e[y]es at [l]ea[s]t. Of [c]ourse, I'm at [b]ottom a [d]i[s]ci[p]le of [P]a[l]amas, for [c]e[r]tai[n], I was ina[d]ve[r]te[n]t[ly] [b]a[p]tized as a [d]i[s]ci[p]le of [P]a[l]a[m]as, of [c]our[s]e, I [f]un[d]a[m]entally [d]i[s]agree w[i]th th[i][s] [m]o[d]ern i[d]ea th[at] we [c][a]n [c]om[p]reh[e]nd [e]verything in a [p]ure[ly] inte[l]le[c]tual [f]ashion, [th]is [n]o[t]ion [th]at [th]ere's, [i]n pra[c]tice, [n][o] [l]i[m]it to the hu[m]an [i]nte[l]le[c]t. I f[i]nd that [i]dea to be [o]ne [o]f the mo[s]t [a]b[s]o[l]ute[ly] [a]b[s]urd. Sure, of [c]our[s]e, we [c]an r[ea][d], [s]ay, [P]arme[n]i[d]es and, while [i]t's [i]m[p]re[ss]ive, it's [a]lso entire[ly] [a]b[s]urd, and I [p]er[s]o[n]a[l]ly enjoy [i]t [i][mm]e[n]se[ly], [b]ut on those [m]e[ri]ts. [I]'m not sure [I]'d [b]a[s]e my [s]c[i]ent[i]fic thought on it. I'm at [l]ea[s]t [l]e[s]s than [c]ertain it'd [b]e[c]ome the [c]orner[s]tone of my [s][e]c[u]lar inte[l]le[c]tual p[ur]suits. [P]armen[i]d[e]s is one of the [p]e[r]f[e]c[t wo[r]k[s] of ab[s]u[r]d[i]t[y] [f]i[t]t[on] wr[i]t[te]n [i]n any lang[u]age—and if w[e] [i]nd[e]e[d] ma[d]e it a [c]or[n]er[s]tone of our [s][e]c[u]lar [i]nte[l]le[c]tual p[ur]suits, then at [l]ea[s]t w[e]'d [n]ee[d to [r]e[c]og[n]ize our ab[s]u[r]d[i]st or[i]g[i]ns, as [D]io[n]y[s]ius [r]i[gh]tfull[y] [d]oes. Y[e]t we've [e]m[p]loyed [P]ar[m]e[n]i[d]e[s] for [c]entur[ie]s as a funda[m]e[n]tal co[m]m[un]e[n]tar[y] on a[l]l [e]g[e]d[ly] ra[t]io[n]a[l]i[s]t [n]o[t]ions. A[l]l [e]g[e]dly ra[t]io[n]a[l]i[s]t [n]o[t]ions—[i]s th[i]s not [w]hat [w]e find our[s]elves [s]teeped in, mo[r]e o[r] le[s]s [n]ight and [d]ay? When I [c]o[m]ment on [m]eta[ph]ys[i]c[s] I [d]o [s]o in a [c]o[n]s[c]iously ab[s]urd [f]a[sh]ion, be[c]ause I re[c]og[n]ize the [l]i[m]its of [l]anguage, the [l]i[m]its of [l]anguage th[at] a[t] [b]ottom are in[c]a[p]a[b]le of [c]o[m]muni[c]a[ti]ng [m]eta[ph]ys[i]c[s] i[n] li[n]ear [a]nd/or [a]rtic[ul]a[l] [f]a[sh]io[n]s. It [s]ee[m]s [s]o[m]ewhat obv[i]ou[s] [th]at [th]ere's a ne[ce]ssa[r]y [l]ite[r]a[r]ism

at pl[a]y here, I th[i]n[k] [i]t's [s][a][f]e to [s][ay] that. Ever [s]in[c]e grade [s][c]hool I was [p]os[i]t[i]ve that I [s]tood in the [p][r]esen[c]e of a nefa[r]io[u][s] [l][i]tera[l][i]sm. Even as a young [b]oy, [i]nst[i]n[c]t[i]ve[l][y], I k[n]ew [n]um[b]ers were, in all [l][i]k[e]l[i]hood, im[p]o[s]s[i][b][l][i]t[i]es, and th[at] my [s]y[s]tem[a]ti[c] edu[c]ation was high[l][y] [s]u[s]ce[p][t]ib[l]e to, i[f] [n]ot e[n]t[i]re[l][y] [c]om[p][l][i]t i[n], a [n]ef[a]r[i]ous [l]ite[r]a[l]ism. The [e]du[c][a][ti]on of my youth [d]i[d]n't [e]xa[c]tly [e]n[c]ourage aud[a]c[i]ous thought.

Canto 04—805:1077 .747

[l]n a[n]y [c]a[s]e, we [c]an't [c]om[p]ose [m]etaph[y]s[i]c[s] i[n] a rational [s]en[s]e, [c]an [w][e]? [l]sn't [i]t al[w]ays in a bet[w][e]n-the-lines [s]en[s]e that [w]e [c]om[p]ose [m]eta[ph]y[s]i[c]s, [i]n [w][i]n[k]s and nods that we write [m]eta[ph]y[s]i[c]s, be[c]ause we [c]an't w[r]ite [m]eta[ph]ysi[c]s [i]n a [l]i[n]ear [a]nd/or [r][a]t[i]o[n]al [f][a]sh[i]o[n]? We [t]a[ke] [f]ar [t]oo much at [f]a[ce] value. Our [l]i[t]e[r]a[l]i[s]m [i]s [i]ntentio[n]a[l][y] or un[i]ntentio[n]a[l][y] [n]ef[a]r[i]ous. [B]e[c]ause the rea[l]it[y] is [n]ear[l][y] [n]othing [c]an [b]e t[a]k[en] at f[a]c[t]e va[l]ue. [D]o you r[e]a[l]ly [b]e[l]i[e]ve the gr[ea]test minds of An[t][i]q[u]i[t]y [i]n[t]en[d]ed [t]o [b]e [t]a[k]en at f[a]ce value? The [B]y[z]a[n]tines r[e]ad [P]l[a]to the [s][a]me [w][ay] [w]e r[e]ad Do[s]toyev[s]k[y], [w]hereas [w][e] r[e]ad [P]l[a]to the [s][a]me [w][ay] the B[y]z[a]nti[n]es r[e]ad the Go[s][p]els. [P]erha[p]s [b]oth are a[b]su[r]d. Now, su[r]e, I'm with[ou]t a [d][ou]b[t], from a [c]ertain vantage [p]oint at lea[s]t, a [d]i[s]ci[p]le of [P]alama[s], I won't a[t]t[e]m[p]t to d[e]n[y] that, but we [c]an't [t]a[k]e eve[r]ything [P]a[l]amas [p]ut to [p]a[p]y[r]u[s] at fa[c]e va[l]ue either. Although [P]ala[m]a[s] under[s]tood the short[c]o[m]ings of An[t][i]q[u]i[t]y better than [e]ven the [m]o[s]t

[p]rogre[ss]ive [m]odern [s][c]holar, I'd [b]e the la[s]t one
 to [s][ay] I t[a]k[e] every[th]ing [th]e [s][ai]nt wrote at
 [f][a][c]e va[l]ue, be[c]ause I'm [f]ar [f]rom a
 [l]ite[r]a[l]i[s]t. The m[o]de[r]n [s][c]h[o]la[r], in[s]o[f]ar as
 [h]e [k]eeps [h]is [f]aith i[n] ratio[n]a[l]ism, will m[o]s[t]
 [l]i[k]e[l]y [n]eve[r] c[o]me [t]o [t]he[r]ms with the [n][a]tu[r]e
 of An[t][i][q]u[i]t[y]—is that fair to s[a]y? H[e]'ll r[e]ad
 Parmen[i]d[e]s and ta[k]e eve[r]ything [l]ite[r]a[l]i[y], a[n]d
 i[n] ta[k]in[g] eve[r]ythin[g] [l]ite[r]a[l]i[y] he'll
 [i]nev[i]tabl[y] ta[k]e everything [i]d[i]ot[i]c[a]l[i]y. [I]sn't
 [i]t the [c][a]s[e] [th]at [th]e [th]eologians are the
 gr[ea]te[s]t [s][k]e[p]ti[c]s am[o]ng [u]s? We view [f][ai]th
 as [p]oison as we [r]et[ai]n [f]anatical levels of [f][ai]th in
 ou[r] [s]en[s]o[r]y o[r]ga[n]s. We [p]e[r]use a [v]a[r]iety of
 em[p]i[r]i[c]al [s]tudies that [v]i[v]i[s]e[c]t the
 [g]rote[s]q[ue] fi[c]tions of ou[r] [s]en[s]o[r]y
 o[r]g[an]s—did you k[n]ow it's [n]ow [s]pe[c]u[l]ated
 human [b]e[i]ngs didn't s[ee] the [c]o[l]or [b]l[u]e until the
 [l]atter [B][C] [c]enturie[s] at ear[l]ie[s]t? [A]ll [a]r[ound]
 u[s] ou[r] [s]en[s]o[r]y o[r]ga[n]s [e]xcrete [e]viden[c]e of
 their [u]tter [u]n[r]e[l]iab[i]l[i]ty, yet we view [f][ai]th as
 idiocy while [r]et[ai]n[i]ng th[i]s [f]a[n]at[i]c[a]l [n]otio[n]
 that ou[r] [s]en[s]o[r]y o[r]ga[n]s can and should and
 m[u]s[t] be tr[u]s[t]ed—[w]h[i]ch [i]s [w]hy [w]e're [n]ot
 [q]uite [r]adi[c]al e[n]ough. The [m]o[d]ern [a]ge [r]et[ai]ns
 [r]a[d]i[c]al [f][ai]th [i]n [i]ts [s]en[s]ory o[r]ga[n]s in a
 [m]o[r]e [f]an[at]i[c]a[l] [f]a[sh]ion tha[n] a[n]y
 hi[s]to[r]i[c]al [r]el[i]gi[on] k[n]own to man. [N]othing
 [c]an [b]e t[a]k[e]n [a]t [f]a[ce] v[a]lue, th[at] [m]uch we
 should ag[r]ee on, wh[i]ch [b]r[i]ngs [m]e to this, a
 t[r]ue [f]ly i[n] the oint[m]e[n]t, [s]o to [s]p[ea]k—how [i]s
 [i]t you [a]rrive at [a] po[s]tulation of a[n] e[ss]e[n]c[e] you
 ca[n]n[o]t k[n]ow? Th[i]s [i]s the question, [i]s [i]t [n]ot?
 How [d]oes the [m]athe[m]a[t]i[c]ian reach the
 po[s]tula[t]ion num[b]ers are [a]c[t]ual [a]nd [d]i[s]t[i]n[c]t?

a[s]sum[p]t[i]on, the in[s]t[i][n][c]t[i]ve a[ss]umpt[i]on that we [c]an [s]u[cc]e[ss]fully di[s]t[i]n[gu]ish two a[pp]les fr[o]m [o]ne [p]oint nine re[p]eating (1.999999999999...) a[pp]les.

Canto 05—363:468 .776

There's no doubt that we're [i]n the [m][i]d[s]t of [s]omething e[ss]ent[i]a[l]ly [m][y][s]teriou[s], that [w]hen [w]e di[s][c]u[ss] the e[ss]en[c]e of [l]ife [w]e thin[k] [w]e [c]an [m]a[k]e [s]en[s]e [o]f it [a]ll, that we're on the [p]re[c]i[p]i[c]e of [m]a[k]ing [s]en[s]e of [o]ur[s]elves and [o]ur [s]u[r]roundings, yet there's [s]t[i]ll [l]i[t]tle doubt w[e] [r]e[m]ain [i]n the [m][i]dst of [s]omething e[ss]ent[i]a[l]ly [m][y][s]te[r]iou[s] [w]hen [w]e beg[i]n to th[i]n[k] [c]l[ear]ly. Th[i]n[k]i[n]g [i]s [p]erha[p]s the [m]o[s]t [m]y[s]te[r]ious a[c]t [o]f [a]ll. Th[i]n[k]i[n]g, [w]h[i]ch [w]e gene[r]al[ly] be[l]ie[ve] trans[lates] [m]ate[r]ial and i[m]mate[r]ial exp[er]ien[c]e i[n]to [l]anguage—i[n]to [m]odes that are [c]o[m]uni[c]able. [Th]i[n]k[i]n[g], wh[i]ch a[t]t[em]p[t]s [t]o [t]a[k]e [s]ome[th]i[n]g [s]uch as [c]on[s]u[m]i[n]g a j[ui]c[y] [p]ear, an ex[p]erien[c]e that ult[i]m[a]tely [i]s [c]onfined to [p]er[s]onal ex[p]er[ien]c[e], and [e]xt[ra]p[ola]te [i]t [i]n a [c]o[m]muni[c]a[ble] [f]ormat [o]f the gene[r]al [p]o[p]ula[c]e. [S]ans thin[k]i[n]g, [c]o[n]s[u]m[i]n[g] a j[ui]c[y] [p]ear would be [s]omething [c]o[n]fined to the [p]rivate [s]p[h]ere—w[i]th th[i]n[k]i[n]g [i]t's then [p]resuma[b]l[y] a[l]lowed to enter the [p]u[b]l[i]c [d]o[m]ain. [Th]ere [i]s, [i]n fa[c]t, no re[m]ai[n]i[n]g [p]u[b]l[i]c [d]o[m]ai[n] sans [th]i[n]k[i]n[g]—and [th]ere's i[n] e[ss]e[n]c[e] n[o] thin[k]i[n]g [s]ans a [p]u[b]l[i]c [d]o[m]ain. A[ss]u[m]i[n]g [w]e [c]on[s]u[m]e a j[ui]c[y] [p]ear, thin[k]i[n]g [W]ow, this [p]ear is j[ui]c[y], [b]ut [r]ef[u]se [t]o w[r]ite it down, to ver[b]ally ex[p]r[e]s[s] it to our [p]ee[r]s, [th]en [th]e [th]ought Wow, th[i]s [p]ea[r] [i]s

jui[c]y [r]e[m]ains in the [p]urely i[m]m[ate]rial [r]eal[m],
 [i]t's ex[i]s[ten]c[e] [p]ure[l]y [s][p]e[c]u[l]ative, both [th]e
 [th]ought and the physi[c]al [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]e [r]e[m]ain
 [e]ssentia[l]l[y] [p]ure[l]y [s][p]e[c]u[l]ative. It's on[l]y
 [w]hen [th]e [th]ought [W]ow, th[i]s [p]ear [i]s jui[c]y
 enters the [p]u[b]li[c] do[m]ain that it [b]e[c]omes,
 [p]erha[p]s not real, [b]ut [a]t lea[s]t [a][pp]are[n]t i[n] a
 [m]ore [m]ate[r]ial [m]anner—it's [v]e[r]i[f]ied as a [r]eal
 ex[p]erien[c]e and [s]ub[s]e[qu]e[n]tly [v]e[r]i[f]ied as a
 [r]eal thought. I t[oo] c[on]s[um]ed a [p]ear, and [w]ow it
 [w]as al[s]o q[ui]te jui[c]y! There's n[o] doubt we're i[n]
 the [m]i[d]st of [s]ometh[i]ng e[ss]ent[i]ally
 [m]y[s]teriou[s] here.

Canto 06—546:775 .705

It was just [a] [f]ew [m]onths [a][g][o], I dreamt a[n] [o]lder
 [f]e[m]ale e[n]g[a]ged [m]e i[n] a [l]i[a]ison, [p]erha[p]s
 a [s]exual [l]i[a]ison—at fir[s]t she [w]as an [o]l[d]er
 [b]la[ck] [w]o[m]an, [b]ut then she [b]e[c]ame an [o]l[d]er
 [w]hite [w]o[m]an, [a]nd, [a]s she [w]as [w]hite, [a]s [w]e
 s[a]t i[n] a[n] auto[m]o[b]ile, I en[t]ered a ho[t]el room [t]o
 pay [n]i[n]e[t]y [t]wo dollars [f]or our [r]oom [f]or the
 [n]i[gh]t, then I [r]e[t]urned [t]o the [c]ar. I [w]as [w]earing
 a [b]us[i]n[e]s[s] s[ui]t and she [w]ore [b]us[i]n[e]s[s]
 [c]asu[a]l [a]t[t]ire, there were [t]wo [s]mall [d]ar[k],
 in[d]e[c]i[ph]era[b]le [f]orms [s]i[t]t[i]ng i[n] the
 [b]a[ck]s[e]at, and [sh]e t[ol]d me [sh]e had to g[o] [s]outh
 of the [M]issou[r]i now, and [I] [r]e[p]l[i]ed You [m]ean
 [s]outh of the [M]i[ss]i[ss]i[pp]i, [r]ight?—yet, even
 [s]etting a[s]ide our geo[g]raphi[c]al [c]on[c]e[r]ns, he[r]
 [s]t[ate]ment [s]t[ru]c[k] me as [s]omething I already
 k[n]ew, [th]at I k[n]ew sh[e] was [l]i[ea]ving for [g]ood, and
 [th]at her [l]i[ea]ving would [m]a[r]k a [n]ew [s]ta[r]t for
 [m]e, [s]o to [s][p]e[a]k. [W]hen I [w]o[k]k[e] u[p] I [f]elt
 as th[ou]gh, i[n] a[n] i[n]te[n]sely odd and [i]m[p]al[p]able

way, my [e]nt[i]re l[i]f[e] had [f]ollowed the [p]ath of
 Ea[s]tern Orthodoxy—in a [p]ro[f]ound manner I [f]elt
 this, I [w]as [w]i[d]e a[w][a][k]e in be[d], g[a]zing at a
 [w]all thin[k]ing m[y] ent[i]re l[i]f[e] has [s]omehow
 [t]ra[ck]ed the [t]enets of the [E]a[s]tern Ortho[d]ox, [th]at
 [th]is [d]r[ea]m was [e][q]uall[y] [c]or[p]o[r]eal to any
 wa[k]ing ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e I've h[a]d, [a]nd now, [m]onths
 later, [I] [r]e[m][ai]n [c]u[r]iou[s] with [r]egar[d] to the
 [i]d[e]ntity of this [m]ulti-[r]a[c]ial [f]igure [f]rom [m]y
 [d]r[ea]m, who it [s][ee][m]s eng[a]ged [m][e] in a
 [s]exual li[a]ison? De[s]pite affir[m]ing the
 [m]y[s]teriou[s] nature of [w]hat [w]e're i[n] the [m]i[d]st
 of, I've never [b]een a [b]el[ie]ver in a[n]gels a[n]d
 d[em]ons, [s]o to [s]p[ea]k—yet this [f]igure [f]rom [m]y
 dr[ea]m, it s[ee][m]s to [m][e], shared [m]any
 [c]hara[c]te[r]i[s]t[i]c[s] w[i]th h[i]stor[i]c[al] r[e]p[re]s[en]t[ati]o[n]s of
 [s]o-c[al]led angels and d[em]ons. Of cou[r]s[e],
 a[ss][u]m[ing] it's [o]ne [o]f the [t]wo, [w]hich [o]ne of the
 [t]wo [i]s [i]t? A[n] a[n]gel or a [d]emon? Who were the
 [d]ar[k], near[l]y [f]orm[l]es[s] [f]igures in the [b]a[ck]s[e]at
 of the [c]ar? A per[s]o[n] e[n]g[a]ges me in a [s]exual
 li[a]ison, [b]ut at [f]ir[s]t is [b]l[a]ck, [b]ut then
 [b]e[c]omes white, then tells [m]e she now has to g[o]
 [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote] south of the [M]issou[r]i, I [c]o[rr]e[c]t
 her, and then I [w]a[k]e up [w]ith a[n] i[n]t[e]n[s]e
 [f]lee[ing] my l[i]f[e]'s [s]omehow [f]o[l]lowed the [t]e[n]ets
 of Ea[s]tern Or[th]odoxy—[th]en, [th]i[s] dr[ea]m's
 in[t]e[n]s[it]y [s]t[i]c[k]ing [w]ith [m][e] for [w]ee[k]s and
 [e]ve[n] [m]onths on e[n]d, I [q]uestio[n] i[f] the [f]igure
 [f]rom [m]y dr[ea]m was [p]erha[p]s a b[e]i[n]g of
 [s]ome [m]eta[ph]y[s]i[c]al [s]ort, [p]erha[p]s a[n] a[n]gel
 or [p]erha[p]s a d[em]on. I [q]u[e]s[tion] wh[e]ther
 [p]erha[p]s a[n] a[n]gel or [p]erha[p]s a [d]e[m]on
 en[t]ered my [d]r[ea]m to, in a [q]uite [s]er[p]en[tine]
 way, [p]oint [m]e i[n] the [d]irectio[n] of

[s]o[m]e[th]ing—[p]erha[p]s Ea[s]tern Or[th]o[d]oxy. And I
 [q]uestion [i][f] th[i]s [i]s [i]n [f]a[c]t [p]o[s]s[i]ble. [A]t
 almo[s]t [a]ny other [t][i]me in m[y] l[i]fe I would have
 [c]on[s]i[d]ered [i]t an [i]m[p]o[s]s[i]b[i]l[i]t[y],
 [s]omething [t]otall[y] lu[d]i[c][r]ous, I'd have
 [c]on[s]i[d]ered it [a]n [e]m[b]a[r]ra[ss]ing a[b][s]ur[d]it[y]
 to [e]ven [s]uggest it. [W]hereas [p][r][e]v[i]ou[s]ly I
 [w]ould have [s]at and [s]aid I con[s]i[d]ered it to [b]e an
 e[m]b[a]r[ra]ssing a[b][s]ur[d]it[y] and utter
 i[m]p[ro]b[i]l[i]t[y], [n]ow, for [o]ne [r]eason or
 a[n]other, I [a]c[tua[l]l[y] [c]on[s]i[d]er it [a]n
 e[m]b[a]r[ra]ssing [a]b[s]ur[d]it[y] to find [i]t utterl[y]
 i[m]p[ro]b[i]le.

Canto 07—237:327 .725

Y[e]t l[e]t [m]e ex[p]l[i]ain [m]y thoughts on th[i]s [i]ssue
 just a l[i]ttl[e] f[ur]ther, i[f] I [m]ay? Be[c]ause my
 th[ou]ghts [o]n the t[o]p[i]c ex[p]anded
 [s]i[n]gl[y] i[n]t[er]est[ing] ju[s]t re[c]entl[y], [a]s a m[at]ter of
 f[a]c[t. It was ju[s]t l[a]st [S]a[turday, [a]t a
 [b]a[ck]yard c[oo]k[ou]t where I [s]a[t [a]t a [n]ic[e
 e[n]ou[gh] gl[a]ss ta[b]le [n]ext to a [b]ottle of [p]otato
 vod[k]a im[p]orted [f]rom [P]o[l]and, I was drin[k]ing the
 [p]otato vod[k]a [f]rom [P]o[l]and in a [s]mall [p]l[a]stic
 gl[a]ss [w]ith [w]ater and i[c]e, and the [p]otato vod[k]a
 was [s]m[ooth], [q]uite [s]m[ooth] a[c]tually, when the
 [p]er[s]on [s]itting [a]c[r]oss from [m]e [m]ade [a]
 [r]e[m]ark—[h]e [s]aid that [h]e j[u]st [b]ought [h]alf [a]
 [d]ozen [p]r[e]-r[ol]led [b]u[n]ts f[r]om a
 [s]tate-[s]anctioned [d]i[s]p[en]s[a]r[y], that [h]e was
 [p]lanning to [s]te[p] on the [s]idewalk and l[i]ght u[p]
 one of th[e]se b[u]n[t]s, have a [p]uff or [t]wo [t]o
 re[l]ax, [t]o [w]hich [h]e o[ff]ered m[e] a [p]uff [t]oo, i[f]
 I [w]anted [o]ne. [W]ell, [a]s it so h[a]ppened, [a]t the
 time, [d]e[s]p[i]te my general [a]mbivalence to

m[a]rijuana, I con[s][i][d]ered [i]t a [d]e[c]ent [i][d]ea. [I] [f]igured [I]'d have [o]ne [p]u[ff] or [t]wo, [t]o[p]s, that [m]aybe it [w]ould relax [m]e. I [f]igured, at the [t]ime, that a [p]u[ff] or [t]wo, [t]o[p]s, would have a [m]ini[m]al to [m]odera[t]e e[ff]ect—yet [w]he[n] I [w]e[n]t out to the [s]ide[w]alk [w]ith thi[s] [p]e[r]s[on] [t]o [t]a[k]e a [p]u[ff] or [t]wo [f]rom his [s][t][a]te-s[an]c[t]ioned blunt I'd di[s][c]over [th]at [th]i[s] weed re[t][ai]ned a [p]o[t]e[n]c[y] th[at] [p]e[r]h[a][p]s I'd n[e]ver [e]n[c]ountered before.

Canto 08—396:505 .784

The [b][l]unts were exqu[i]s[i]te[l]y rolle[d] and ta[s]ted [d]e[l]i[c]iou[s], the [f]ir[s]t hit went [d]own [f]ine—yet as the [b]unt pa[s]sed [f]or a [f]i[n]al t[i]me, again[s]t my [b]etter jud[g]ment, [d]eep [d]own a[ck][n]owled[g]ing [th]at [th]e one [h]it was the [c]orre[c]t amount of [h]its, that a[n]y [s]ub[s]e[que]n[t] [h]it would [b][e] a w[h]o[l]l[y] [s]uper[f]l[u]ous [h]it, [I] [d]e[c]i[d]ed [t]o [t]a[k]e a [s]e[c]ond [h]it, where imme[d]iate[l]y [f]o[l]lowing my ex[h]ale I [c]ou[gh]ed vo[c]i[f]erou[s]l[y]. I [c]ou[gh]ed vo[c]i[f]erou[s]ly then ju[s]t [m]o[m]ents later time began, [m]uch to [m]y [s]ur[p]r[i]se, [p]ro[c]eed[i]ng [i]n a highly ab[n]or[m]al [m]anner. I [f]ound mysel[f] at a [f]amily [c]oo[k]out, and [t]ime was p[r]o[c]eedi[n]g in a [m]anner that [s][t]r[u]ck [m]e as en[t]irel[y] ab[n]or[m]al. I was [l]ounging in a [n]on[d]e[s]cri[p]t [l]aw[n] chair, ex[c]e[p]t [n]ow I [f]ound mysel[f] unable to ex[p]e[r]ie[n]c[e] the [p]ro[c]ession of [t]ime in our [r]u[d]i[m]en[t]a[r]y, [t]e[m]p[er]ate [m]anner. I [j]um[p]ed [b]e[t]w[ee]n di[s]joi[n]t[ed] [s]c[e]nes. [P]eo[p]le [b]egan s[p]ea[k]ing and [i]t was almo[s]t as though a [p]e[r]s[on] h[i]t [f]ast [f]orward on their [s][p]eech. [Th]en [th]e [s][p]eech would [s]l[o]w ju[s]t [m]o[m]en[t]a[r]i[l]y. Add[i]t[i]o[n]al[l]y, I [s]eemed en[t]irel[y] [r]e[s]t[r]i[c]t[ed] from [p]e[r]c[e]i[v]ing how [p]eo[p]le were

[p]er[c][ei]ving m[e], I [f]elt [l][i]ke [l] was [e]xtr[e]me[l][y] h[i]gh, in [f]a[c]t [l] knew [l] was [e]xtr[e]me[l][y] h[i]gh, and it wasn't [e]x[a][c]t[l][y] the m[o]st a[pp][r][o][p][r]iate ven[u]e to be th[a]t h[i]gh—[a]t a [f]ami[l][y] [c]oo[k]out—[y]et I was [r]e[s]t[r][i]ct[e]d from per[c][ei]ving [h]ow [h][i]gh [l] [s][ee]med to the out[s][i]de world. At t[i]mes it felt l[i]k[e] [l]'d gained a[cc][e][ss] to a [c][ue] that [s]ugg[e]s[t]ed [e]ve[r]yone kn[ew] [l] was [e]xt[r][e]mel[y] h[i]gh, yet thi[s] [n]otion, that [e]very[o]ne k[n]ew [l] [w]as [e]xt[r][e]mel[y] h[i]gh, [r]emained un[p][r]oven, [i]m[p]o[ss]i[b]le to [p][r]ove, it [s]eemed. [B]ecause [p][eo]p[le] would at [t]imes [s][ee]m to [b][e] [t]r[ea]ting m[e] as if [l] was [h]ardl[y] [h][i]gh at all, de[s]p[ite] the [f]a[c]t that I [c]ould no [l]onger [e]x[p]erien[c]e time i[n] a [p]ure[l]y [l]inear [f]a[sh]ion. [E]s[s]en[t]iall[y] [m]y own a[c]tions [b]e[c]ame [e]ntirel[y] foreig[n] to [m][e]—[m]ore than ju[s]t [b][e]ing [e]xtr[e]mel[y] high, I [b]e[c]ame di[s]c[o]n[c]erted at [th]e [th]ought of what a[c]tions I [c]ould [p]o[ss]i[b]l[y] [b][e] ta[k]ing that [c]aused the [p][eo]p[le] around m[e] to [c][ea]s[e] to view [m][e] as extr[e]me[l][y] high.

Canto 09—404:534 .757

The [o]nly a[c]tions of my [o]wn I was [s]till [a][w]are of [w]ere a[c]tions that [s][ee]med [t]o m[e] [t]o b[e] of [a] per[s]on [c][l][ea]r[l][y] ext[r][e]me[l][y] [h]igh, [s]o [h]ow [c]ould th[e]se [a][c]tions [b][e] s[ee]n [b]y [r][a]t[i]onal [a][c]tors to [b]e [c]oming from a [p]er[s]on who was [s]till ex[p]erien[c]ing [t]ime [l]inear[l]y? Thi[s] was, [a]t the [t]ime, a que[s]tion [s][a]ns [a]n [a]n[s]wer. [I]n [sh]ort, [i]t wasn't [s]im[p]ly that I [c]ea[s]ed to ex[p]erien[c]e time in [a] norm[a]t[i]ve [f]a[sh]i[o]n—it was the [f]a[c]t my exte[r]ior [s]u[r]roundings [s]eemed [t]o [c]on[t]inue [t]o re[c]og[n]i[ze] [l] pa[s]sed through [t]i[m]e in at lea[s]t [s]o[m]ewhat of [a] [n]ormat[i]ve [f]a[sh]i[o]n. Thi[s] was

di[s][c]o[n][c]erting, be[c]ause [o]ne [w]ould a[ss]ume, if
 you le[f]t the [c]o[n][f]i[n]es of [n]ormative t[i]me, [th]at
 [th]e [p]eo[p]le [i]n your v[i][c][i][n]i[ti]ty would re[c]og[n]ize
 thi[s] [f]a[c]t—that you ex[i]t[e]d [n]orma[t]i[ve] time. But
 [i]n th[i][s] [c]a[s]e [i]t was almo[s]t as [i]f, ye[s]—I was no
 longer [p][r]esent, I was [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]ing [t][i]me i[n]
 a[n] [e][n][t]i[re]ly a[s]ynch[ron]ou[s] [f]ashion, yet [m]y
 [s]u[r]roundings [s]till [f]ound [m][e] to [b][e] [th]ere, [f]or
 [th]e [m]o[s]t [p]art. I was, to the [b][e][s]t of my
 [p]e[r]c[e]p[t]ual [f]a[c]ulti[es], exi[s]ti[n]g i[n] at [l]ea[s]t
 two [p]l[a]ces at on[c]e. At the [f]a[m]i[l]y [c]o[k]out,
 where [m]o[s]t [p]eo[p]le were [ei]ther [s]l[i]ghtl[y]
 h[i]gh or not h[i]gh at [a]ll, and then [a]l[s]o in a
 [s]e[p]a[r]ate ite[r]ation of time, [w]here I [w]as j[u]m[p]ing
 f[r]o[m] [p]e[r]iod to [p]e[r]iod, [i]n[d]i[s]cr[i]m[i]n[a]te[l]y.
 There's [l]ittle [d]o[ub]t [n]o[w] that time, as we're
 exp[o]sed to it, is [o]nly one of s[e]veral [i]te[r]a[t]ions, yet
 how many [i]te[r]a[t]ions are there? It [s]eems
 [i]mpo[ss]ible for u[s] to [s]ay—[p]erha[p]s [i]te[r]a[t]ions
 [i]s the w[r]ong mode [t]o di[s]cu[s]s [t]h[e] [p]res of [t]i[m]e.
 [I]t's e[n]t[i]rely [p]o[ss]ible, [i]n fact, that [t]i[m]e
 [p]e[r]c[e]ives [u][s] inasm[u]ch as w[e] [p]e[r]c[e]i[ve] it. Yet
 [o]nce [w]e a[ck]nowledge [th]is [f]a[c]t, [th]a[t] t[i]me
 has [m]any [i]te[r]ations of [p]r[odu]c[i]ng [i]t[s]e[l]f, that
 t[i]me [m]ay in [f]act [p]e[r]c[e]ive u[s] [r]ather than u[s]
 [p]e[r]c[e]ive [i]t, then we can no [l]onger b[l]indl[y] [s]tate
 that our [d]r[ea]ms are ju[s]t [d]r[ea]ms—be[c]ause it
 would s[e]em to [m][e] that [i]f time, [i]n [f]a[c]t, ta[k]es
 [m]any, i[f] [n]ot [i]n[f]i[n]i[t]e, [i]t[e]rations, then our
 [d]r[ea]ms [c]ould in [f]a[c]t b[e] en[t]irel[y] [r]ea[l], [th]at
 [th]ey m[a]y ju[s]t ex[i]s[t [i]n [d]i[f]fe[r]ent [i]te[r]a[t]ions
 of [t]ime. Our d[r]ea[m]s could b[e] en[t]irel[y] [r]ea[l]
 [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]es, ju[s]t [e]x[p]e[r]ien[c]ed in [s]e[p]a[r]ate
 ite[r]ations of [t]ime.

Canto 10—458:632 .725

Of [c]our[s]e, [r]a[ti]onal[l]y [s][p][ea][k]ing, not that w[e]
[sh]ould [s][p][ea][k] [r]a[ti]onal[l]y, but [r]a[ti]onal[l]y
[s][p][ea][k]ing we [c]ould [q]u[est]i[on] the m[e][r]i[t]s of
adh[e]ring to [Ea][s]tern Orthodox[y] gene[r]a[l]l[y]. Of
[c]our[s]e we [c]ould [r]e[f]e[r]en[c]e the [c]a[s]e of
[C]hry[s][o][s]t[o]m[o]s [K][a][l][a][f][a]ti[s], the
[M]et[r]opo[l]itan of [S][m]yrna, who un[c]ere[m]oniou[s]ly
[h]ad [h]is [b]eard [r]i[pp]ed o[ff] [b]y [h]and, [h]is eyes
g[ou]ged [ou]t, his nose and ears [c]ut o[ff] and was
[s]u[b][s]e[que]ntly [m]a[s][q]ue[r]aded a[r]ound the ve[r]y
[c]ity where he a[c]ted as a [M]et[r]o[p]olitan until he
[d]ied from h[i]s [i]nju[r]ies, from [h]aving [h]is [e]yes,
nose, and ears [r]emoved, all of this during the [h][ei]ght
of the G[r]e[c]o-Tur[k]ish war—as it [s]eems [s][a][f]e to
[s]ay that Ea[s]tern Ortho[d]ox[y], to [s]ome e[x]tent,
[d]i[d]n't [f]are Chry[s][o][s]t[o]m[o]s well in the [e]nd, at
[l]ea[s]t fro[m] a [m]at[er]ia[l]l[i]s[t] [p]oint of view. It's a
[s][m]all [s]am[p]le [s]ize yet it's [c]om[p]e[ll]ing to a[n]
[e]xte[n]t, and of [c]ourse the [s]am[p]l[e] is
[s]ub[s]tantia[l]l[y] [l]arger [w]hen [w]e [c]on[s]i[d]er the
[p]light of the Ortho[d]ox [p][o][p]ulation of [A]nat[o]lia
[a]s a wh[o]le. [Th]e tru[th] is the Or[th]o[d]ox haven't
fared i[n][c]re[d]ibly [w]ell i[n] the N[ea]r [Ea][s]t o[ver] the
pa[s]t, give or t[a]k[e, o]ne thousand y[ea]rs or [s]o, we
could [e]ven [s]ay that [f]ollowing the [p]a[th] of
[Ea][s]tern Ortho[d]ox[y] has [p]erh[a]p[s] been
ext[r]e[m]e[l]y [f]r[au]ght with [p]e[r]il in [c]ertain
[r]e[gions of the [Ea][s]tern Me[d]ite[r]ra[n]ea[n]. W[e]
[sh]ouldn't [s]p[ea]k [r]a[ti]ona[l]l[y] or [l]ogi[c]a[l]l[y], yet
if [w]e [w]ere [t]o [t]a[k]e the [c][a]s[e of, [s]ay, for
exam[p]le, the [c]on[c]e[p]t of The One, the [b]e[ing] that
[c]on[c]e[p]tua[l]l[y] [p]r[e]c[e]des [b]e[ing], that ex[i]s[t]s
[i]n [a][ll] a[s]pect[s] of [t]ime, but [a][ll]s[o]
fun[d]a[m]en[t]ally [m]u[s]t exi[s]t out[s]i[d]e of [t]ime, [t]o

a [c]ertai[n] ex[t]e[n]t [w]e [w]ould al[m]o[s]t n[ee]d to en[t]irel[y] [r]e[c]o[n]s[tru]c[t] our [c]o[n]c[ep]tion of [t]ime to [e]ven [r]emotel[y] [b][e] [a][b]le to [c]o[n]c[ei]ve of a [B]e[ing] of that [n]a[t]ure. [N]ot to [s]ay that we [c]ould ever [c]onc[ei]ve a B[e]ing of that [n]a[t]ure [i]n [i]t[s] e[ss]en[c]e, yet to [e]ven a[pp]roach a [c]onc[e]p[t]ion—if [l]ogi[c] [l]e[ad]s us to a Fir[s]t [P]rin[c]i[p]le that ex[i]s[ts] w[i]th[i]n and out[s]i[de] of t[i]me, then our [c]onc[e]p[t]i[on] of t[i]me is e[ss]en[t]ially ab[s]urdi[s]t. [W]e [w]ould n[ee]d to r[e]c[o]n[s]tru[c]t thi[s] [c]o[n]c[ep]t[i]on of time as [s]omething [w]e [e]xi[s]t [e]x[c]lu[s]ively [w]ithin, that [c]o[n]tains u[s] i[n] a li[n]ear f[a]shio[n], th[at] [p]erh[a]p[s] [p]er[c]eives u[s] i[n] a [s]o-[c]alled li[n]ear [f]ashio[n], [b]e[c]ause i[f] we are i[n] [f]a[c]t exte[n]sions of thi[s] [O]ne who m[u]s[t] [b]y ne[c]e[ss]ity exi[s]t [b]oth w[i]th[i]n and out[s]i[de] of t[i]me, [th]en [th]ere mu[s]t [e]x[i]s[t] a [p]or[t]i[on] of u[s], as [e]x[ten]sions of the One, that [e]x[p]eriences time [i]n th[i]s fa[sh]ion, wh[i]ch [i]s of [c]our[s]e a[n] e[ss]e[n]tially ab[s]urdi[s]t manner of [c]onc[e]iving of time.

Canto 11—335:493 .679

I [c]an't [th]i[n]k of a [th]i[n]g more ab[s]urd [th]an [c]onc[e]iving time i[n] a [s]ole[ly] [l]i[n]ear fashio[n]. It [s]eems ju[s]t—I [d]on't kn[o]w—[t]o[t]a[l]l[y] ri[d]icu[l]ou[s] to [a]ssu[m]e [t]ime [p]ro[c]eeds i[n] a [p]ure[ly] [l]i[n]ear [f]ashio[n], that time [w]ouldn't [p]roc[eed] in [w]hatever [f]ashion it chooses, that [t]ime, e[t]ernal as [i]t [i]s, would n[ee]d u[s] to [p]er[c]eive it, as o[pp]osed to [v]i[c]e [v]er[s]a, or [e]v[en] [t]o a[ss]u[m]e that [t]ime [p]ro[c]eeds at all, that, [i]f [i]t ch[o]se to [p]ro[c]eed, that it wouldn't [p]ro[c]eed i[n] the fashio[n] of, [s]ay, [a]dding [p]er[c]e[n]t[a]g[e]s [a]s o[pp]o[s]ed to [i]n[t]e[g]ers. I eng[a]ged in a [s]exual [l]i[a]i[s]on with an

older [f]emale, who at [f]ir[s]t [w]as [b][l]a[ck], the[n] [b]e[c]ame [w]hite, the[n] i[n] [f]ormed [m]e th[at] she h[ad] to go south of the [M]issou[r]i, a[ft]er I'd paid ninety [t]wo dollars [f]or a ho[t]el [r]oom [f]or the [t]wo of u[s], [a]s we [s][a]t in the [m]e[d]ium-[s]ized [s]e[d]an, with two [s][m]all and formle[s]s [d]ar[k] [b]eings [s]itti[n]g i[n] the [b]a[ck]. I [p]artoo[k] in the [s]mo[k]ing of a [s]iza[b]le [b]lunt that a [f]r[i]end of mine [p]urchased [f]r[om] a lo[c]al di[s][p]en[s]a[r]y, [a]nd [a]ft[er] [t]a[k]ing a [m]ere [t]wo h[i]ts from th[i][s] [b][l]unt I [f]ound [m][y][s]el[f] inadv[i]sa[b][l]i[y] h[i]gh at a [f]ami[l]y [f]unc[t]io[n], ex[p]erien[c]ing t[i]me in a [s][p]uriou[s] [f]a[sh]io[n], in a [f]a[sh]ion [w]here I [w]as, on the one hand, a [p]a[r]ent[l]y [p]r[es]ent at the [p]art[y], yet [s]imult[ane]ou[s]l[y] eng[a]ging [p]a[ss]ive[l]y in a [f]orm of [t]ime that wasn't [p]resent at the [p]arty—[s]o I [s]u[pp]ose it to [b]e [p]o[ss]i[b]le th[at] a[t] the [t]ime I exi[s]t[ed] at [t]wo [p]l[a]ces at on[c]e. Yet as foo[l]i[s]h as th[i]s may [s]ound, we should n[ot]e that [e]ven Dion[y][s]i[u]s [s]aid, and I qu[o]te, 'it may [b]e [s]aid to [b]e praising God [f]or his [f]oolishne[ss], wh[i]ch [i]n [i]t[s]el[f] [s]eems a[b]surd and [s]trange, [b]ut thi[s] [f]ool[i]shne[ss] [u]p[l]i[f]ts [u][s] to the ine[f]fa[b]le truth wh[i]ch [i]s there [b]e[f]ore all [r]easoning.' [B]e[c]ause it would [st]and to [r]ea[son] that i[f] [r]ea[so]n [i]t[s]el[f] [i]s [i]n[c]a[p]a[b]le of a[s]certaining these [s][o]-[c]alled [d]ivine n[ot]ions, then [p]erha[p]s [i]t's onl[y] [i]d[i]o[c]y that remains [c]a[p]a[b]le of [c]om[p]r[e]h[en]d[ing] these [h]i[s]to[r]i[c]ally [d]iv[i]ne notions, [o]f t[i]me, [o]f [b]eing, [o]f [p]l[a]c[ement], [o]f Fir[s]t [C]auses.

Canto 12—418:523 .799

[P]erha[p]s [w]hat [w][e] n[ee]d is a [r]i[go]r[o]u[s] [i]d[i]o[c]y. [I]t's entirel[y] po[s]s[i]b]le, as I'm [n]ow thinking a[b]out it, that with [r]e[g]ard to th[e]se [n]otions

w[e] should [e]m[p]loy [n]othing [e]x[c]e[p]t a [r][i][g]o[r]o[u][s] [i]d[i]o[c][y], that [r][ea]son and [s]ound [l]ogi[c] [h]ave ab[s]o[l]ute[l]y no p[l]a[c]e [h]ere, in the [r]ealm of [m]etaph[y]s[i][c]s. That in or[d]er to w[r]a[p] our [m][i]nds a[r]ound these [i]deas, [l][i]ke [b]eing in two [p][l]a[c]es at on[c]e, of [b]eing [b]oth w[i]th[i]n and out[s]i[de] of [t][i]me, of [t][i]me [b]eing e[s]sential[l]y [n]on-[l]i[n]ear [a]s much [a]s it's e[s]sential[l]y [l]i[n]ear, of time [p]er[c]ei[ving] [u][s] as [m][u]ch as w[e] p[er]c[e]i[ve] it, that we [m][u]st [b]e[c]o[m]e [m]ore [i]d[i]oti[c] than we've e[v]er [b]een, that [i]f we con[t]inue [t]o a[tt][e]m[p]t [t]o [p]a[ss] our[s]elves off as in[t]e[l]lig[e]nt—[w]ell, [w]e'll [c]on[t]inue to [f]l[ou]n[de]r in the [s]to[c]h[a]s[tic] b[r]eezes that [r]i[p]ple a[r]ound th[e]se [c]o[n]c[e]p[t]s. [S]ans [i]d[i]o[c]y, these [c]o[n]c[e]pts will [c]o[n]tinue to ex[i]st in a shroud of m[y]s[t]ery, not [t]hat [t]hey [c]an ever [b]e known fu[l]ly, that's un[l]ikely, i[t]'s mo[r]e o[r] [l]e[ss] [i]m[p]o[ss]i[b]le, [b]ut if we em[p]lo[y] the p[ro]p[er] amount of [i]d[i]o[c]y, of [r][i]go[r]o[u][s] [i]d[i]o[c]y, it's p[o]ss[i]ble [t]hat [t]he m[y]ste[r]y these [c]onc[e]p[t]s are sh[rou]d[e]d in [c]ould b[e] am[e]l[i]o[r]ated to a [d]eg[r]ee. We [c]o[n]c[e]p[tua]lize a [F]ir[s]t [C]ause, [a] One, [a] [c]o[n]c[e]p[t that may, in [f]a[c]t, be ne[c]e[ss]ary [f]o[r] ou[r] s[up]e[c]i[e]s to exi[s]t, at [l]ea[s]t [s]o[c]ia[l]ly, it very well [c]ould be [t]he [c]a[s]e [t]hat we [c]an only exi[s]t [l]ogi[c]a[l]ly w[i]th th[i]s i[d]ea of [F]ir[s]t [C]ause or One p[re]c[e]d[ing] u[s]. Otherwise, [s]ans [F]ir[s]t [C]ause, [s]ans a Be[g]inning, we [h]ardly [h]ave an ar[g]ument [f]or linear time, and i[f] we're deprived of a [l]ogi[c]al argu[m]ent [f]or [l]inear time, then how [c]an we [m]a[k]e [s]e[n]s[e] of a[n]ything? [l]t's [i]m[p]o[ss]ible to [m]a[k]e [s]e[n]s[e] of a[n]ything, i[n] the [t]rad[i]t[i]onal [s]e[n]s[e], [s]a[n]s linear [t]ime. I[f] [t]ime [f]ails to p[ro]c[ee]d [l]inear[l]y, at

[l][ea][s]t [f]or u[s], i[f] we're ho[pp]in[g] and [s][k]i[pp]in[g]
w[i][l][y] n[i][l][y] in the [f][a]bri[c] of time, i[n] [p]ure[l]y
[n]on[l]i[n]ear [m][a][nn]e[r]s, then [n]othing [c]an [m]a[k]e
[s]en[s]e [f]or u[s]. We're [l]itera[l]y [s]en[s]e[l]e[ss].
[S]an[s] a [F]ir[s]t Cause, we're [l]itera[l]y
[s]en[s]e[l]e[ss]. [T]i[m]e [m]ea[n]s [n]othing. [T]ime, it
[s]e[e]m[s] to [m]e, is [s]ome[th]ing [th]at one can
on[l]y [i]nve[s]tigate [i]d[i]oti[c]al[l]y.

Canto 13—538:727 .740

Or am I just b[e]ing [s][i][l][y]? Am I [s][i]mp[l]y
[s]uccu[m]bing to a [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c] [t]y[p]e of
[s][i][l]i[ne]ss, [a]s I'm [a]p[t] to do [f]rom [t]ime [t]o
[t]ime? [M]o[st], it should b[e] [n]o[t]ed, who k[n]o[w
[m]e k[n]o[w [m]e to b[e] pr[o]ne to [s]uccu[m]bing to
[s]i[l]i[ne]ss from [t]ime [t]o [t]ime? Am I [b]eing
[m]e[l]l[o]d[r]a[m]atic [b]y [e]xt[r]a[p]o[l]at[i]ng [m]y
[i]ntense [i]m[p]r[ess]io[n] [f]ollowing [m]y waking [u]p
[f]r[o]m [m]y [d]r[eam], am I [m]e[l]l[o]d[r]a[m]aticall[y]
[e]xt[r]a[p]o[l]at[i]ng th[at] [i]m[p]r[ess]ion just a [l]ittle too
[fla]r b[y] [i]m[p]l[y]ing this [f]e[m]ale, who e[n]g[a]ged
me i[n] a sexual [l]i[a]ison, [m]ight have bee[n] a[n]
[a]ngel or a de[m]o[n]? Yet on [th]e o[th]er hand I should
note [th]is, it was a[c]tually [q]ui[t]e [s]ome t[i]me [a]go,
[s]o long [a]go in [f][a]c[t] th[at] I was [p]r[a]c[t]ic[a]l[l]y,
now [th]at I [th]in[k] of it, [m]o[r]e o[r] [l]e[ss] a[n]
a[d]o[l]e[s]ce[n]t, [d]e[s]p[i]te being a [f]u[l]ly grown
[m]an. At the t[i]m]e [I] was looking [f]o[r] a[p]art[m]ents
with [m]y [f]athe[r]—the [f]i[r]s[t] a[p]art[m]ent I'd lea[s]e
on [m]y own, and [w]e [w]ere [d]o[w]n[t]o[w]n, the [t]wo of
us, [l]oo[k]ing [a]t [a]n [a]partme[n]t I [d]i[d]n't [r]ea[l]i[ze]
at the t[i]me was [r]ent-[c]ont[r]olled, mea[n]ing
ar[b]it[r]a[r]y [c]a[p]s were [p]l[a]ced on the in[c]ome of
the [t]e[n]ants in order to re[t]ai[n] e[l]i[g]i[b]l[i]ty,
[w]hi[ch] of [c]ou[r]se [w]as the [r]eason [w]hy the

[a]pa[r]tments [w]ere s[u][ch] [a] g[r]eat deal. [L]ucki[l][y]
 enou[gh] [f]or [m][e] [m]y [s]a[l]a[r]y [a]t th[at] time was
 [i]n[s]u[f]f[i]cient and [p]altr[y], [s]o I [s]till [m]anaged to
 [q]ua[l]ify [f]or the a[p]art[m]e[n]t de[s]p[ite] the [r]e[n]t
 [c]ont[r]ol [r]e[q]uire[m]ents, had I waited the time
 ne[c]e[ss]ary for [o]ne to [b]e[c]o[m]e availa[b]le, [b]ut,
 wh[i]le I [d]id add my [n]a[m]e to the w[ai]tli[s]t, I
 [d]idn't wait the time [n]e[c]e[ss]ary, [b]ecause I [s]igned
 a [l]ea[s]e on an apart[m]ent thr[ee] [m]iles [n]orth of
 [d]o[w]nto[w]n [l]e[s]s than a w[ee]k [l]ater. I was
 [s]tand[i]ng i[n] a q[uarter-em]p[ty] [p]ar[k]ing [l]ot i[n] a[n]
 area of [d]o[w]nto[w]n where n[o] [l]ess than half a
 [d]ozen [p]r[i]vate[l]y [o]wned [p]ar[k]ing [l]ots [s]at [s]ide
 [b]y [s]ide [b]y [s]ide, all with [r]easona[b]le
 short-[t]erm [r]ates. This [p]ar[t]i[c]ular a[r]ea of
 do[w]nto[w]n, [a]t th[at] p[oint] in [t]ime, was a [f]ruitfu[l]
 [a]re[a] socia[l]—there were a [p]l[e]tho[r]a of vi[b]r[ant]
 [b]ars and [r]e[s]tau[r]ants, al[s]o [s]ide [b]y [s]ide
 [b]y [s]ide, that m[y]s[e]l[f] a[n]d others e[n]joyed
 [f]re[qu]enting, that were [r]outi[n]e[l]y [p]a[ck]ed
 [f]rom a [f]tern[o]on t[o] e[venin]g. Now, [b]y
 [c]om[p]a[r]i[s]on, i[f] you wal[k] [th]rough [th]at [s]ame
 a[r]ea of [d]o[w]nto[w]n, [b]y [m]y [c]ou[n]t, [m]ore th[a]n
 h[a]lf of those [b]ars and [r]estau[r]ants are shut
 [d]o[w]n [f]or good. Whereas I [u]sed t[o] [f]requent that
 [p]art of [d]o[w]nto[w]n, ho[pp]ing be[t]w[ee]n [t]wo o[r]
 thr[ee] o[r] [f]lou[r] [v]enues, ha[v]ing a [f]ruitfu[l]
 ex[p]erience [s]ocia[l]ly—now [i]t's [a]lm[o]s[t] [a]s [i]f
 th[at] a[r]ea of do[w]nto[w]n has aged [r]ight [a]long with
 me. As my [s]ocia[l] a[ct]i[v]i[ty] has waned, [a]t least with
 rega[r]d to hopping from [b]a[r] to [b]a[r], the a[c]t[i]v[i]ty
 of th[i]s [s]e[c]tion of do[w]nto[w]n has [w]aned as [w]ell.
 As I've be[c]ome [l]ess [l]ike[l]y to [p]o[p] out on a
 Wednes[d]ay a[ft]ern[oo]n [t]o [t]wo o[r] three o[r]
 [f]lou[r] [p]l[a]ces, this area of [d]o[w]nto[w]n has [b]een

una[b]le to [s]u[s]t[ai]n [b]usine[ss]e[s] [th]at u[s]ed to
[th]rive on [p]eo[p]le [p]o[pp]ing out on Wednesd[a]y
a[f]ternoons, ho[pp]ing [f]rom two o[r] three o[r] [f]ou[r]
[p]laces.

Canto 14—535:727 .735

There a[r]e, in fa[c]t, ha[r]dly any [b]a[r]s or
[r]e[s]tau[r]ants that are [s]till open on the [b]lo[ck].
There's [b]een a [g]ar[g]antuan [F]or [L][ea][s]e [s]ign on
the [l]arge[s]t ven[u]e [f]or [y][ea]rs now, and the
[p]la[c]es that should [b]e o[p]en for [b]usi[n]e[s]s on a
[l]a[te] [w]eekd[a]y a[f]ter[n]oon are [n][o] [l]onger o[p]en
for [b]usi[n]e[s]s on [l]a[te] [w]eekd[a]y a[f]ter[n]oons,
whereas in p[r]e[v]ious y[ea]rs eve[r][y] [b]ar and
[r]e[s]tau[r]ant o[n] the [b]lo[ck] would have [b]een
[b]u[s]t[li]ng with [b]usi[n]e[s]smen, e[cc]entri[c]s, [a]nd
[a]ll[c]ohol[i]c[s], [n]ow th[e]se s[a]me [v]enues [d]o[n't]
[e]v[e]n [o]pe[n] their [d]oors until l[a]ter at night, if at all.
I've [w]al[k]ed [th]rough [th]at [b]lo[ck] mul[t]i[p]le [t]imes
ho[p]ing [t]o [p]o[p] in[t]o ju[s]t [o]ne [o]ld [b]ar or [o]ne
[o]ld [r]e[s]tau[r]ant for ju[s]t [o]ne [d]r[in]k, and I've
[d]is[c]o[v]ered e[v]ery [s]ingle [b]ar that's [s]tayed in
[b]usiness on that [b]lo[ck] [c]lo[s]ed to [c]u[s]tomers [a]t
th[at] time. A [b]ar [i]n a [b]usin[e]s[s] [d]i[s]t[ri]c[t]
[r]ea[l]l[y] has [n]o ex[c]use [f]or [n]ot [b]eing o[p]en [b]y
[f]our [p]m on a w[eek]d[a]y. It's a [b]u[s]ur[d] for a [b]ar
[i]n a [b]usin[e]s[s] [d]i[s]t[ri]c[t] to [b]e [c]lo[s]ed for
[b]usine[ss] [a]t th[at] time, yet th[at]'s ex[a]c[t]l[y] what's
h[a]ppened to this [b]lo[ck], it's now a [d]ead [b]lo[ck],
it's a [b]lo[ck] that's more or [l]ess officia[l]l[y]
[d]e[c]l[a]s[s]ed [s]ocia[l]l[y]. I[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, years
ago, [w]hen I [w]as [l]oo[k]ing [f]or my [f]ir[s]t apart[m]ent
with [m]y d[a]d, st[a]nding in a [q]uarter-em[p]ty
[p]ar[k]ing [l]o[t] on this very b[lo]ck, I [s]e[n]t a t[e]xt
m[e]ssage to a younger g[i]rl I u[s]ed to fl[i]rt

with—although we n[e]ver [e]ng[a]ged in a [s][e]xual li[a]ison, but there was [p]e[r]ha[p]s a [sh]ared inte[r]e[s]t fo[r] a [sh]ort [p]e[r]iod, [p]erha[p]s we both [c][a]me to the [c]on[c][l]usio[n] e[n]g[a]gi[n]g i[n] a sexual li[a]ison, although [t]em[p][t]ing, was ill-advised, that for on[c]e in the [c]our[s]e of [h]uman [h]i[s]to[r]y [p]eo[p]le should [r]e[f]i[r][ai]n [f]i[r]om eng[a]ging in any [s]ort of ill-ad[v]ised li[a]ison, [s]o we de[v]e[l]o[p]ed a [f]riendshi[p] of [s]orts. It was a [sh]a[ll]ow [f]riend[sh]ip, as mo[s]t [f]riend[sh]ips that [r]e[s]ult [f]i[r]om [s]i[t]a[ve]d o[ff] [s]exual li[a]i[s]ons t[en]d to b[e], th[e]se are of cour[s]e the [m]o[s]t [sh]allow and in[s]i[p]id friend[sh]i[p]s i[m]agi[n]a[b]l[e], they're inter[m]i[n]a[b]l[e] [a]nd [a]si[n]ine, but th[i]s part[i]cular f[ri]endsh[i]p [w]as [r]e[w]arding i[n] i[t]s own [w]ay. [S]o sure, a[r]ound [th]i[s] t[ime], in [th]i[s] [p]arking l[ot], I [s]eent her a [t]e[xt] m[e]ssage t[o] no re[p]l[y], and I k[n]ew then, [s]omehow or a[n]other, in[s]ti[n]ctua[l]ly I [s]u[pp]ose I k[n]ew that I wouldn't get a [r]e[p]l[y], [th]at [th]e friend[sh]i[p] had [r]un i[t]s cour[s]e, that it's [p]urel[y] [sh]a[ll]ow and i[n]s[i]p[i]d nature was [a]bun[d]antl[y] evi[d]ent t[o] the [t]w[o] of us, [a]nd [th]a[t] [th]e o[th]er [p]arty, [th]is younger girl, had taken it u[p]on her[s]e[l]f to [s]e[ver] the [f]riendshi[p] on[c]e and [f]or all. I've [c]ea[s]ed to [c]o[m]muni[c]a[te] with her [s]in[c]e, yet de[s]p[ite] the ulti[m]atel[y] sha[ll]ow and i[n]s[i]p[i]d n[atu]re of th[i]s friendsh[i]p, [d]e[s]p[ite] the [f]a[c]t we never [c]ro[s]sed the l[i]ne, [s]o to [s]p[ea]k, [f]or [s]ome r[e]ason I f[e]lt a [s]ort of [n]on[s]en[s]i[c]al [d]ee[p] hurt, a [p]ainful l[ong]ing of [s]orts, rooted i[n] e[ss]entia[l]ly [n]othing, [s]tand[i]ng i[n] that [p]ar[k]ing l[ot], k[n]o[wing] I'd n[ever] hear [f]rom thi[s] [p]e[r]son again, who I had [n][o] [ph]ys[i]c[al] rela[t]ion[sh]i[p] w[i]th and who I had a[n] e[n]tirel[y]

[sh]a[l]low a[n]d i[n]si[p]id [e]mo[t]ional re[l]a[t]ion[sh]i[p]
w[i]th.

Canto 15—337:449 .751

It wasn't [th]at lon[g] a[g]o [th]at [I] was [r]e[m]i[n]d[ed] of
thi[s] t[e]xt [m][e][s]sage [r]an[d]om[l]y, I'd n[ea]r[l]y
entire[l]y [r]e[m]oved thi[s] [p]er[s]on f[r]om [m]y
[m]e[m]o[r]y, ju[s]t as y[ea]rs [p]r[i]or she'd
[s]i[m]i[l]ar[l]y [r]e[m]oved [m][e] from her [m]e[m]o[r]y,
[a]nd I felt [a]n odd pang in [m]y [s]to[m]a[c]h as I
re[c]alled thi[s] t[e]xt [m][e][s]sage. Was[n]'t the e[n]t[ire]
[p]oint of [t]urning [a]w[ay] from [e][n]g[a]ging i[n] these
[s]exual li[a]iso[n]s to [a]void [s]uch [p]angs? Don't we
[a]ll ju[s]t inveterat[e]ly [a][s]s[u]me that [p]angs in our
[s]to[m]a[c]hs [a]l[m]o[s]t ex[c]l[u]sive[l]y res[ul]t
fr[o]m [s]exual li[a]isons? And don't we [a]ll then [a]void
[s]exual li[a]isons [p]ure[l]y in [a]tt[em]p[t]s [t]o [a]void
[p]angs in our [s]to[m]achs? Yet [i]n th[i]s ca[s]e, a
[p]er[s]on I [m]atu[r]e[l]y avoi[d]ed engag[i]ng w[i]th
[s]exual[l]y, and [v]i[c]e [v]er[s]a, of cour[s]e, who I
in[s]t[ea]d dev[e]lo[p]ed a [c]om[p]l[e]te[l]y [sh]a[l]low
and [i]ns[i]d[er] frie[n]d[sh]i[p] with, e[n]ded u[p]
[c]aus[ing] [m]e a [p]ang in [m]y [s]to[m]a[c]h, all
be[c]ause I [s]e[nt] her a t[e]xt [m][e][s]sage [t]o [n][o]
re[p]ly, k[n]o[w]ing the an[k]le d[ee]p f[r]iendship w[e]d
[h]arbored [h]ad [r]un its [c]ourse and [c]ome to a
[c]on[c]lusion. My [p]oint [i]n all th[i]s [i]s [th]at [th]e
f[r]i[en]dsh[i]p the ave[r]a[g]e [p]er[s]on would [r]aise
to [i]denti[f]y[ing] the [b]e[ing] in my [d]r[e]am [a]s [a]n
an[g]el would [b]e the [f]act the two of u[s] e[n]g[a]g[ed]
i[n] a [s]exual li[a]ison—yet what [I]’ve ju[s]t
[d]e[s]c[r]i[b]ed [s]u[g]ge[s]ts that [p]erha[p]s there's no
[d]ifferen[c]e in our [r]ela[t]ion[sh]i[p]s with [p]eo[p]le, that
w[e] c[an]’t dis[c]rimin[a]te [b]etw[ee]n [r]el[a]t[ion]sh[i]ps
[b]a[s]ed o[n] whether or not a [s]exual li[a]iso[n]

o[cc]urred. Th[a]t [p]erh[a]p[s] d[i][s]t[i]ngu[i][sh]i[ng]
 rel[a][ti]on[sh]i[ps] [b][a]s[ed] on whether or not they
 feature a [s]e[x]ual [e][x]ch[a]nge has [b]een a g[r]o[s]s
 [e][r]ror on our [p]art. Th[a]t [p]erh[a]p[s] we shoul[d]n't
 [a] [p][r]io[r]i [a][ss]ert that [a]ngels [d]on't [e]ng[a]ge in
 [s]exual [l]i[a]isons with u[s]. [B]ecause it's [e]ntire[l]y
 [p]ossi[b]le they do, and [th]at [th]ere's really nothing
 wrong with a[n] an[g]el e[n]g[a]g[i]ng u[s] [i]n th[i][s]
 ty[p]e of [l]i[a]ison, [s]exua[l]y.

Canto 16—374:474 .789

[S]o we can't rule out entire[l]y the [p]o[ss]i[b]i[l]i[t]y
 [th]at [th]i[s] [b][e]ing—de[s][p]ite e[n]g[a]g[i]ng m[e] i[n] a
 [s]exual [l]i[a]ison, in a [s]mall [p][r]etho[r]a of [r][a]cial
 [f]orms—was still, i[n] [f]a[c]t, a[n] angel [p]ointing me
 toward the [f]a[c]t my [l]i[f]e, in [l]arge [p]art, [f]o[l]lowed
 the [p][a]th of [Ea]stern Or[th]odox[y]. The
 [m][a]th[e]m[at]i[c]ian, [a][tt]e[m][p]t[i]ng [t]o
 [i]nf[i]n[itely] ext[r][a]p[ol]ate the [m][a][ss]ive
 a[ss]um[p]t[i]ons that are [r][ea]l world [i]ntegers, [i]s, [i]n
 e[ss][e]n[c]e, a com[p]l[e]te [ch]ar[act]er. For [e]ons
 w[e]’ve a[ss]umed [s]exual [r]e[l]a[t]ions t[ai]nt
 [r]e[l]a[t]i[on]sh[ips], that on[c]e a [s]exual [l]ine is
 [c]r[oss]ed, [th]en [th]e [r]e[l]a[t]i[on]sh[ip] will [b][e]
 i[r]revo[c]a[b]l[y] [t]ainted, yet w[e]’ve never
 [c]on[s]idered that [t]ainting [c]a[n] a[n]d will o[cc]ur
 [e]ven [s]a[n]s [s]ex. Yet [p]erh[a]p[s] we’re [m]a[k]ing [t]oo
 [m]uch of the all[e]ged [d]i[s]t[i]n[c]tio[n] be[t]w[ee]n angels
 and [d]e[m]ons as w[e]ll. Th[a]t just [a]s [p]erh[a]p[s]
 we’ve [m]a[de] too [m]uch of the [d]i[s]t[i]n[c]tio[n]
 be[t]ween [s]e[x]ual and [n]on-[s]e[x]ual rel[a]tio[n]s,
 we’re [n]ow [m]a[k]ing [t]oo [m]uch of the
 [d]i[s]t[i]n[c]tio[n] be[t]w[ee]n angels and [d]e[m]ons. It
 should be [n]o[t]e[d] that [e]v[en] [D]io[n]y[s]i[u]s
 [n]o[t]e[d] that pure [e]v[il], [i]f [i]t [w]ere to [e]xist,

[w]ould imm[e][d][i]atel[y] [c][ea][s]e to [e]xi[s]t, because [e]ve[r]y[th]ing [th]at [e]xi[s]ts is [d]e[r]i[v]ati[v]e of the One, wh[i]ch [i]s [i]nca[p]able of [p][r]o[d]u[c]ing [p]ure [e][v]il, and that [e][v]en re[l]ati[v]e [e][v][i]l [i]s [s][i]m[p]l[y] a [f]un[c]tion of [p]ur[s]uing aims ina[pp][r]o[p][r]i[ate] to a b[e]ing's [p][r]o[p]er [f]un[c]tion, that [e]ve[n] [d][e][m]o[n]s are onl[y] [d]e[m]on[i]c [i]n their [d]i[s]tan[c]e fr[o]m the [O]ne, not in a [s][e][n]se of re[p]res[e]n[ti]ng [p]ure [e]vil, [b]e[cause] were they to [b]e [p]ure [e]vil they would [c][ea][s]e to [e]xi[s]t. [E]ssentially, this view [p]ur[p]orts [th]at [th]ere's no [f]und[a]m[e]ntal [d]i[s]t[inct]ion betw[ee]n a[n] angel a[n]d a [d]e[m]on, ju[s]t a [d]i[ff]ere[n]ce in the a[pp][r]o[p]r[i]a[te]n[e]ss of their [ai]ms. Whereas an [a]ngel [p]ursues the [ai]ms a[pp][r]o[p]r[i]a[t]e to it, in the [p][r]o[p]er [p][r]o[p]ortion to its being, a de[m]on [p]ur[s]ues the [ai]ms [m]o[r]e o[r] le[s]s ina[pp][r]o[p]r[i]a[t]e to i[t], [s]t[r]aying from its [p][r]o[p]er [p][r]o[p]ortions.

Canto 17—449:620 .724

Now as it [r]egards [m]y d[r]ea[m], a b[e]ing [t]ook [m][u]ltiple [r]a[c]ial [f]o[r]ms yet [r]e[t]ai[n]ed the [s][a]me e[ss]e[n]ce, [m][u]ch like our [d]ual yet [m]oni[s]t [f]o[r]mu[l]a[t]ion, and [th]en [th]ere were two [d]ar[k] and [f]orml[e]ss [b]ei[n]gs i[n] the [b]a[ck]s[eat]—[p]erha[p]s [s]igni[f]ying [th]e evil [th]at's im[p]o[s]sible to exi[s]t, that [i]s [s]tr[i]pp[ed] of [b]e[ing] as [s]oon as it [b]e[c]omes [s][o]-[c]alled [p]ure [e]vil. [S][o] [p]erha[p]s these two dar[k] [f]orml[e]ss [b]e[ings] were the non-exi[s]te[n]t iter[a]tions of [m][y]s[e]l[f] and [m][y] [c]om[p]anion, [p]o[s]sibl[y] an [a]ngel. Now thi[s] [b]e[ing], [p]erha[p]s an [a]nge[l], or [p]erha[p]s a de[m]on, who [t]ook [m]ultiple r[a]cial [f]o[r]ms, eventuall[y] [i]n[f]o[r]med [m]e, [i]n this [c]ar with the two

[s]mall [sh]a[p]e[l]e[ss] forms [s][i]tt[i]ng [i]n the
ba[ck][s]eat, that [sh]e had to go [s]outh of the
[M]issou[r]i, to which I [c]o[r]re[c]ted her: Don't you
[m]ean [s]outh of the [M][i][ss][i][ss][i][pp]i? Yet we should
now [c]o[n]si[d]er that [p]erha[p]s my [c]o[r]re[c]tion was,
i[n] the [c]o[n]text of the [d][r]eam, [e][n]tire[l]y
i[n][c]o[r]re[c]t. By [e]m[p]l[oy]ing the ph[r]ase South of
the Missou[r]i this b[e]ing was [p]erha[p]s [d]i[r]e[c]t[l]y
im[p]l[y]ing [th]at [th]ere are [n]o [n]ea[t
[d]i[s]tin[c]tions—that [d]ua[l]ity is an i[l]lusion, [th]at
[th]i[s] i[d]ea that a [s]tate can [b][e] n[eat[l]y
[d]iv[i]d[ed] [b][y] a [M][i][ss][i][ss][i][pp]i [i]s a
[m]i[s]gui[d]ed a[pp]roach, [th]at [th]is [b][e]i[n]g,
whether an angel or [d][e][m]o[n], in f[a]c[t] wouldn't
e[m]erge on [s]ome other [s]i[de] [p]re[c]i[s]e[l]y
be[c]ause there is n[o] a[c]tual o[th]er [s]ide, there's
[o]nly a [s]e[p]a[r]ate [r]e[l]ative [p]l[a]ce. And
[w]hen I [w]oke up, I [f]elt as th[ou]gh m[y] [i]l[l]f[e] had
always [f]o[l]lowed [th]e path of Ea[s]tern Or[tho]doxy,
but [i]n th[i]s [e]mbra[c]e I was a[cc]epting the
[n]on-[d]ual [n]ature of our [e]xi[s]ten[c]e inasmuch as I
was a[cc]e[pt]ing [a]nything [e]l[s]e. I [e]m[b]ra[c]ed
Ea[s]tern Orthodoxy a[f]ter [e]ng[a]ging i[n] a [s]exual
li[a]iso[n] with a [b][e]ing who [t]ook mul[t]iple r[a]cial
[f]orms, who l[e]f[t [m]e to [s]e[t]tle, not [s]outh of the
[M][i][ss][i][ss][i][pp]i, [b]ut [r]ather [s]outh of the
[M]issou[r]i—and o[pp]osite of the [b]oth of u[s] were two
[s]mall dar[k] [f]orms who [c]o[m]p[l]e[t]e[l]y [l]a[ck]ed
[B]eing, [s]igni[f]ying the im[p]o[s]s[i]b[i]l[i]t[y] of
[p]ure [e]vil. My [d][r]eam a[pp]r[o]p[r]iatel[y]
[r]e[p]r[es]ented thi[s] i[d]ea of t[r]ue [d]ualit[y], of [p]ure
good and [p]ure evil, [r]e[p]r[es]enting this ab[s]o[l]ute
[d]ualit[y] [w]ith a [r]e[l]ative [d]ualit[y] [w]i[t]h i[n] the
One, of [w]hich [a]ll Good and [a]ll [B]eing
o[r]i[g]i[n]ates, [b]oth [i]n t[r]an[s]cenden[c]e and

i[m]ma[n]en[c]e. I then [r]econ[c][i]led [m][y][s]elf w[i]th
 th[i][s] [b]eing that went [s]outh of the [M]issouri—and
 [p]erha[p]s this [b][e]in[g] wasn't l[e]a[vin]g [m]e as
 [m]uch as [g]uiding [m]e, [g]iving me hints [n]ot on where
 to g[o], [n][o], she wasn't [s][ay]ing where I should [g]o or
 [s][t][ay], she was in[s][t]ead [g]uiding [m][e] on how to
 r[e]ad a [m]ap.

Canto 18—415:582 .713

[E]ven Dion[y][s][i]us [s]t[a]ted outright, ‘One [s]ays of
 [G]od, the cause of all [g]ood, that h[e] [i]s
 “[i]n[e][b]r[i][a]ted”—[a]nd with th[at] in [m][i]nd, against
 [m][y] [b]etter judg[m]ent, I poured [m]y[s]el[f] a ni[c]e
 gla[ss] of vodka l[a]s[t S][a]tur[d]ay be[f]ore [m][y]
 girl[f]riend and [I] [d][i]ned out, knowing all [t]oo [w]ell that
 [w]e [p]lanned [t]o go [t]o the bar [p][r]ior [t]o our
 [r]eservation, for a [c]o[ck]tail. My [s][i]g[n]i[f]i[c]ant
 other ag[r]eed to [a][c]t [a]s our [d]esig[n]ated [d][r]iver
 for the [n]ight, and I’d [s]pent the [e]ntire wee[k]
 a[b]s[taining from [e]very [c]on[s]u[m]a[b]le item
 [e]x[c]ept water, [c]o[ff]ee, heart[y] grains, and [f]roz[e]n
 v[e]geta[b]les, and [I] [f]l[e]t as though [I] deserved a
 [n][i]ce, i[n]e[b]riated [n][i]ght. [I] [s]a[id to m[y][s]el[f]
 [Y]ou know what?—[y]ou’ve [r][i]go[r][ou][s][l]y
 [d]e[n]ied [y]our[s]elf p[l]easure thi[s] w[ee]k, and you
 [d]eserve a [n][i]ght [w]here you [g]o out and [g]et
 [w]h[i]t[e] girl [w]a[s]ted. [S]o [I] im[b]i]bed a [c]o[ck]tail
 [b]e[f]ore the [c]o[ck]tail, and [w]hen [w]e a[r]r[i]ved at the
 [b]ar, [w]aiting [f]or our [f]r[i]ends to m[e]et us, w[e] t[r]ied
 to [p]r[o]long the [c]o[ck]t[ai]l and m[a]k[e a [p]erf[e]c[t
 s[e]gw[ay] i[n]to the di[n]er—un[f]o[r]tunat[e]l[y], I’d
 [f]i[n]i]shed my [c]o[ck]tail [f]irst, and in[c]orre[c]tly
 a[ssu]m[ing] I had [a]nother ten to [f]i[f]teen [m]inutes
 be[f]o[r]e ou[r] [f]r[i]e[n]ds [a]r[r]ived, [s]o I ordered a
 [s]e[c]ond [c]o[ck]tail, y[e]t as [s]oon as the [s]e[c]ond

[c]o[c]k[tail [a][r]ived our f[r]iends [a][s]o [a][rr]ived, and
 then [w]e [w]ere [s][a]t [a]t the table [w]here,
 [n][ee]d[le][ss] to [s]ay, [w]e imm[e]d[iate[lly] o[r]d[er]ed
 a [n][ic]e bottle of [r]ed wine. [S]o [r]ather than
 [s]avo[r]ing my [s]e[c]ond [c]o[c]k[tail at the [b]ar a[n]d
 the[n] [b]eginning our [b][o]ttle o[f] [w]ine, I [w]as
 [c]on[c]urre[n]tly f[i]n[i]sh[i]ng my [s]e[c]o[n]d [c]o[c]k[tai[l]
 [w]h[i]le al[s]o [s]tarting our [b]ottle of [w][i]ne. [B]e[f]ore
 [I] knew it [I] was tho[r]oughly [d][r]un[k], I [b]e[c]ame
 e[n]thusia[s]ti[c]all[y] in[e]b[r]i[ate]d, [a]nd [I] [f]elt [a]s
 though [I] [d]eserved it—I [f]elt as though I [d]eserved to
 [b][e] in[e]b[r]i[ate]d, to [c]o[m]m[un]it[u]p on a [s][m]all
 [h]and[f]ul of to[p]i[c]s that I [p][ro]b[a]bly should [h]ave
 [r]e[m]ained [s]ilent a[b]out, to [b]a[bb]le [a]b[ou]t and
 [u]p[on] [a] [p]ot[p]ourri of issues th[at] [p]erh[a]p[s]
 would have [b]een [b][e]tter l[e]ft unaddr[es]sed. [B]ut
 [s]ometimes [i]t[s] [i]m[p]ortant to [d]o things [s]olely out
 of [a]b[un]d[an]c[e], to [b]e[c]o[m]e [c]omp[le]te[lly]
 in[e]b[r]i[ate]d, [t]o lose all [t]ouch with [c]ohe[r]en[c]y
 and [r]e[s]t[r]aint, and to e[n]g[a]ge i[n] a
 [c]om[p]l[e]te[lly] mi[s]gui[d]ed [c]onver[s]a[tion
 [p]ure[lly] out of [a]b[un]d[an]c[e]. The [F]irst [C]ause,
 [n]o [m]atter what [f]orm we g[i]ve [i]t, [n]o [m]atter how
 it[s] extensions [m]ay or [m]ay [n]ot [c]o[m]muni[c]ate
 with u[s]—[i]s [i]f [n]othing el[s]e [s]uper[a]b[un]dant.

LARRY ISOSCELES
Theories of the Western World
12,279:16,742 .733

Canto 01— 523:741 .706

[A]s a [m][a]tter of [f][a][c]t, I was just te[l]ling De[m]o as
[w]e [w]al[k]ed up to your [f][i][a]t, I've [b]een [j]u[s]t a
[t]ad [p][r]eo[cc]u[p]ied of [l]ate with a night I a[c]tua[l]ly
[j]u[s]t [r]e[m]em[b]ered [t]o[d]ay, [f][r]om years ago
a[c]tua[l]ly, [c]omp[l]e[t]e[l]y [n]on-de[s]c[r]ipt, entire[l]y
in[c]on[s]e[qu]ential at [f]a[c]e va[l]ue, yet it was a [n]ight
[th]at [n]one[th]e[ss], [n]ow [th]in[k]ing it [th][r]ough, is
e[ss]entially [i]nd[i]c[at]ive of my t[r]ue [c]ha[r]a[c]ter. It
was [a] n[i]ght, v[i]a pure instin[c]t, [I] [a]llow[ed] my true
[c]o[l]ors to [sh]ow, and of [c]ourse I was a[sh]amed at
[f]ir[s]t, who isn't di[s]gu[s]t[ed] at [f]ir[s]t [s]ight of their
[t]rue [c]olors, but as the years h[a]ve [p]a[s]sed I've
[c]ome to the [c]o[n]c[lu]sion [th]at [th]ere's a[c]tua[l]ly
no[th]ing a [p][r]io[r]i w[r]ong with my t[r]ue
[c]o[l]ors—a[c]tua[l]ly, if anything, it's [q]uite the
[c]o[n]t[r]a[r]y. My t[r]ue [c]o[l]ors, of [c]ourse I [c]an't
change them, but [e]ven [i]f [I] [c]o[u]ld [I] w[ou]ldn't.
Be[c]ause [e]ven though my t[r]ue [c]olors [r]e[qu]ire a
[p][r]e[r]e[qu]isite, a [p]erh[a]p[s] un[a]pp[et]izing
[p][r]e[r]e[qu]isite, a [p][r]e[r]e[qu]isite that, ye[s],
that I l[oa]the [c]ertain [p][e]o[p]le for n[o] r[ea]so[n]. [B]ut
[e]ve[n] [th]ough [th]at may in f[a]c[t] [b]e the [c]a[s]e, I
[b]e[l]ieve it's [a]c[tually] [p]ro[p]er to l[oa]the [c]ertain
[p]eo[p]le for a[b]so[l]ute[l]y [n]o r[ea]so[n], [w]ith
[n]o ju[s]tification [w]hat[s]oever, that h[a]ting
[p]eo[p]le [s]ans [p]r[e]text [i]s [i]n f[a]c[t] entire[l]y
ne[c]e[ss]ar[y], and I may [e]ven l[ea]p f[ur]ther and
[s]t[ate] outright [th]at [th]e[se] [c]ertain [p]eo[p]le,
whom w[e] l[oa]the [s]ans [p]retext, may a[c]tua[l]ly
deserve th[i]s [i]nten[s]e l[oa]thing and un[p]rov[o]k[ed]

hatred, [b]ut let me [b]egin, [p]lease. [B][e]cause to
 [b][e]g[i]n w[i]th, [i]t was an era where I [f]ound my[s]el[f]
 [s][p]en[d]ing a[n] i[n]or[d]inate amount of [t]ime at
 [s][o]cial events that I [l][o]athed—I [l][o]athed b[o]th
 [c]on[t]emplating my future a[t]tendan[c]e of these
 [e]ve[n]t[s] a[n]d the[n] my a[c]tual a[t]t[e]nda[n]c[e] of
 these [e]ve[n]t[s]. [P][eo][p]le, ul[t]imatel[y], have no
 [c]outh—to this day, [f]or exam[p]le, I o[f]ten [f][i]nd
 m[y][s]el[f] [p][r]esent at [s]ocial gathe[r]ings where a
 [q]u[ot]e-un[q]u[ot]e [v]egeta[b]le [p][l]ate, a[l]ong with a
 [v]egeta[b]le [d][i]p, [i]s [p]resen[t]ed as an hors
 [d]'oeuvre, and I'm a[l]most a[l]ways a [l]ittle [l]et
 [d]own by the qua[l]it[y] of the ce[l]ler[y]. [A]t th[a]t
 [p]arti[cu]lar [s]tage in m[y] [l][i]f[e], in [f]a[c]t, the e[r]a
 I'm [s][p]ea[k]ing of, [I]'d [r]e[c]on[c]i[le]d m[y][s]el[f] to
 the [f]a[c]t that [I] [h]ad [i]nt[r]i[n]s[i]cally [h]i[gher]
 [s]tandards than mo[s]t [w]hen it [c]ame to [c]e[l]ery,
 [c]u[c]umbers as [w]ell—I a[n]a[l]yzed [p][r]odu[c]e
 with a[n] [a][c]uit[y], f[r]an[k][l]y, [m]o[s]t of [m]y [p]eers
 would never [a]chieve. Having [s]aid [th]at, to [th]i[s] day
 the majo[r]it[y] of ho[s]ts in our [c]ount[r]y have [n]ext to
 [n]o [c]outh when it [c]omes to [s]erving [c]ele[r]y or
 [c]u[c]umbers. [F]or[c]ed to [a]ttend a [s][o]-[c]alled
 [p][o][s]t wedding [b]runch ju[s]t a [f]ew months [p]r[i]or to
 the events [I]'m [a][b]out to re[l]ay, I was [a][pp]alled at
 the [q]u[a]lity of [c]u[c]um[b]e[r]s [s]e[r]ved—a
 [c]u[c]um[b]er, [a][b]ove [a]ll else, [sh]ould be
 refe[sh]ing. A [p]ie[c]e of [c]e[l]ler[y], i[d]ea[l]l[y], [i]s
 [s][i]m[i]lar to [s][i]pp[i]ng a fresh g[l]a[s]s of i[c]e water
 on a ze[s]ty [s]ummer [d]ay. The [s]our[c]e of thi[s]
 [r]e[g]r[et]table [d]e[g]ra[d]ation in the [q]ua[l]it[y] of our
 [c]e[l]ler[y] and [c]u[c]umbers un[d]oubtedl[y] [s]tems
 f[r]om Ame[r]i[c]a's ove[r]re[l]ian[c]e on [d]ip.

Canto 02—570:752 .758

[D][i]p, [i]n ou[r] e[r]a, has [l]ite[r]a[l][y] and
 figu[r]ative[l][y] [b]e[c]ome the hors [d]’oeuvre, it’s
 [b]e[c]ome [c]ultu[r]a[l][y] a[cc]epta[b]le to utter[l][y]
 ig[n]ore the [q]ua[l]it[y] of the [c]e[l]e[r][y] and
 [c]u[c]um[b]ers, [t]wo of the m[o]st [r]ef[r]eshing yet
 deli[c]ate vegeta[b]les k[n][o]wn [t]o our [s]pe[c]ies, at
 [s]ocial gatherings [b]e[c]ause it’s [a][ss][u]med
 [c]on[s][u][m]ers’ [a]ttention will [b]e fo[c]u[s]ed
 [a][m][o]st [s][o]le[l][y] on the [d]i[p]. Yet it’s
 [p]re[c]i[s]e[l][y] the [d]i[p] that [n]egates the
 [n]ut[r]it[i]o[n]al [b]enefi[t]s of the [c]e[l]e[r][y], as well as
 the [c]u[c]um[b]ers. Ameri[c]ans [n]o [l]onger [c]on[s]ume
 [v]egeta[b]les—they [c]on[s]ume [v]egeta[b]les with
 d[i]p[s] and [s]au[c]es that o[b]l[i]terate all [p]o[ss]i[b]le
 [n]ut[r]it[i]o[n]al [b]enefi[t]s of a ve[g]eta[b]le. These dip[s]
 and [s]au[c]es [a][n]nihi[l]ate the [i]nt[r]i[n]s[i]ca[l]ly
 [r]ef[r]e[sh]ing [e][ss]e[n]c[e]s of our v[e]getables.
 Gu[e]sts att[e]nding th[e]se [p]arti[e]s could rel[ie]ve
 themselves all over th[e]se [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote]
 vegeta[b]le [p]l[ates] and [n]ot miss a [b]ea[t]
 [n]ut[r]it[i]o[n]a[l][y]—they’d pro[b]a[b]l[y] [e]ven [f]ail to
 [n]ot[i]c[e] a d[i]ffere[n]c[e] in ta[s]te, with the a[m]ou[n]t
 of sour [c]r[eam] [c]u[r]rentl[y] [f]ou[n]d in the
 [m]e[d]ian A[m]e[r]i[c]an [d]ip. [D]u[r]ing this e[r]a of
 [m]y l[i]fe, al[m]o[s]t eve[r]y [w]eek I [w]ould [s]p[en]d
 [t]w[o] [t]o [f]ive m[i]n[u]tes [i]n the [p]rodu[c]e
 [s]e[c]tion arduou[s][y] [s]e[l]e[c]ti[n]g on[l]y the
 [f]ine[s]t [c]e[l]lery [s]tal[k]s and mo[s]t [c]on[c]rete
 [c]u[c]umbers, touching all the [c]u[c]um[b]ers
 [i]nd[i]s[c]r[i]m[i]nate[l][y], with no [r]egard for the
 [c]u[s]tomers who [i]nev[i]ta[b]l[y] would touch these
 [s]ame [c]u[c]um[b]ers a[f]ter [l]’d [f]i[n]a[l]l[y] [m]ade [m]y
 [s]e[l]e[c]tion—[b]e[c]ause, to [t]his [d]a[y], [t]here’s
 nothing more [d]efi[n]i[t]a[n]t than a [s]tal[k] of [c]e[l]ery

gone [f][l]at by mid-wee[k], yet there's nothing more u[p][l]i[f]tin[g] than a [f]resh[l]y cho[pp]ed [s]tal[k] of [c]e[l]er[y], and the [s]ame [c]an [b]e [s]aid [f]or [c]u[c]um[b]ers. Yet, as [s]o-[c]alled G[r][ee][k]-[A]me[r]i[c]ans, none of u[s] should b[e] [s]ur[p][r]ised at thi[s] [s]tate of [a][f]fairs, with a vegetable di[p] ma[s][k]ing the [r][e][f]r[e]shin[g] [e][ss][e]n[c]e of the g[e]nuine arti[c]le, [s]o to [s]p[ea]k—and th[i]s br[i]ngs [m]e to a [m]uch [l]arger point, a [m]ore [g]r[an]d[i]ose [i]ssue, [i]f you'[[l] a[l]low me to [d]i[g]r[e]ss just [s][l]i[gh]t[l]y [b][e]f[ore] [l] [b][e]gin my [a]nec[d]ote, the [a]nec[d]o[te] I've [a]dmitt[ed] [y] [b]een o[b]s[e]ssing [o]ver for [w]ee[k]s now, [w]hich [w]i[[l] [i]nevita[b]l[y], I [b]e[[l]ie]ve, [b]e[c]ome the [c]rux of [m]y argu[m]ent here. [B]e[c]ause there's [e]nd[l]e[ss] [d]i[s]cussion to[d]ay with regard to our [s]o-[c]alled world, our a[l]l[e]g[e]d [W]e[s]te[r]n [w]o[r]ld, but [i]t's [i]m[p]e[r]ative we define our terms w[i]th [r]i[g]or as o[pp]osed to [c]arele[ss]ne[ss]—be[c]ause it's [t]oo often [th]at we [th]row [t]erms in[t]o [th]e e[th]er w[i]l[l]y-n[i]l[l]y. In short, it's [e]n[t]ire[l]y [p]ossible we're confusing [e]x[t]en[s]i[o]n with i[n]te[r]p[r]e[t]a[t]i[o]n as it [r]e[l]ates to our [W]e[s]te[r]n [w]o[r]ld. There's [e]nd[l]e[ss] tal[k] of this [W]e[s]te[r]n [w]o[r]ld, [b]ut let's [b]e [s]pe[c]i[f]i[c], thi[s] [W]e[s]te[r]n [w]o[r]ld [i]s, [i]n [f]a[c]t, [l]i[t]tle more tha[n] a[n] Ang[l]o [w]o[r]ld, it's [n]ot [s]im[p]l[y] a [n]on[d]e[s]c[r]i[p]t [W]e[s]te[r]n [w]o[r]ld, it's al[s]o an [a]c[tual [A]ng[l]o world—our [c]ivi[l]ization, [s]o to [s]pea[k], is [n]omi[n]a[l]l[y] [c]on[s]i[d]ered We[s]te[r]n, [n]omi[n]a[l]l[y] [c]on[s]idered G[r]ae[c]-[R]o[man], y[e]t th[e]re's a [b]ar[b]a[r]ism at [p]lay here, the[r]e's a n[e]fa[r]ious v[e]geta[b]le di[p] [b]u[r]ying the [g]e[n]uine article here.

In [a]ctu[a][l]ity, the [W]este[r]n [w]o[r]ld [i]s l[i]ttle [m]ore than a [m]isn[o]mer for the Ang[l]o [w]orld, [w]h[i]ch [i]s [e]sse[n]tia[l]ly the Am[e]rica[n] [w]orld, [a]nd the [A]ng[l]o [w]orld, in [a][c]tu[a][l]ity, is [n]ot [a]n ex[t]ension of G[r]ae[c]o-[R]o[m]an [A]n[t]i[q]uit[y], [n][o], [i]t's s[i]m[p]l[y] a[n] [i]n[t]er[p]r[e]tation of that world—and even [th]en [th]at in[t]er[p]r[e]tation was a [p]urely [s]ub[s]equent in[t]er[p]r[e]tatio[n], a[n] i[n]t[er]p[re]tatio[n] i[n] [r]e[s]p[on]se to a[n] i[n]t[er]p[re]tation. [B]e[c]ause the [p]rimary in[t]er[p]r[e]tation of [A]n[t]i[q]uity [c]ame from [C]onst[a]n[tin]o[p]le [a]nd [A]n[t]ioch [a]nd [A]lexan[d]ria, in the s[o]-[c]alled [B]yzantine world, and only then [d]id this [A]nglo world i[n]d[u]lge i[n] a [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent in[t]er[p]r[e]tation of the G[r]ae[c]o-[R]o[m]an [A]n[t]i[q]u[i]t[y], [b]ased on the [B]yzan[t]ine era's in[t]er[p]r[e]tation [b]ut al[s]o of [c]our[s]e [b]a[s]ed on their in[t]er[p]r[e]tation of the [s]o-[c]alled [B]yzan[t]ine world. This sh[ou]ld be under[s]tood, [th]at [th]e [A]ng[l]o world, in a very t[a]n[g]ible [s]en[s]e, [i]s l[i]ttle more tha[n] a[n] e[l]a[b]orate ve[g]eta[b]le [d]i[p] i[t]self, a [s]ub[s]equent i[n]t[er]p[re]tation, and [i]t's [p]erha[p]s the m[o]st [p]erv[as]ive i[nt]er[a]t[i]on of [s]o-called v[e]getable [d]i[p] our [p]lanet has y[e]t to [s]ee—be[n]eath it w[e] [d]is[c]over the genuine arti[c]le, the [p]rimary in[t]er[p]r[e]tation, [s]o to [s]p[ea]k. [A]s for us, w[i]th[i]n [th]i[s] [A]nglo [w]orld [w]e re[m]ain [m]ore o[r] l[e]ss g[l]o[s]sed o[ve]r, a [s]ub-o[p]ti[m]al [f]it o[ve]r here and [s]u[b]-o[p]ti[m]al [f]it o[ve]r there, as [D]i[a]m[an]d[a] [G]a[a]s a[p]tly [p]ut it: A[m]e[r]ica [i]s fi[x]ated on [m]ulti[c]ultu[r]alism yet [r]e[m]ains [r]e[m]iss with [r]e[g]ard to [M]i[dd]le [Ea]stern [c]ultures, wh[i]ch i[n]c[lude] [G]r[ee]k

[c]ultures—[b]ut how [i]s th[i][s] po[s]s[i][b]le? Yet [w]e
 [sh]ould note, [w]e [sh]ould final[l]y [a]d[m]it to
 our[s]elves [th]at [th]e [m]odern [c]enter of the Ang[l]o
 world, [A][m]eri[c]a, for [a]ll of its [m]elting p[o]t
 [m]yth[o]logy, has [n]ever [a]ssi[m]ilated, [n]ot [q]uite,
 be[c]ause [i]n[s]tead [i]t'[s] [s][i]mp[l]y [a]nnihi[l]ated—in
 Ameri[c]a we [l]o[ve] d[i][s]c[u]ssing ethn[i][c]i[ties],
 [p]eo[p]le wear h[y]phens l[i][k]e [n]ame-tags, [b]ut all of
 th[e]se ethn[i][c]i[ties] are at [b]ottom fal[s]e
 ethn[i][c]i[ties], ju[s]t as the [s]o-[c]alled modern
 Gree[k], the Helle[ni]c [b]a[b]oon, [i]s a fi[c]t[i]onal
 ethn[i][c]i[t]y, all [o]f [o]ur [o]ther ethn[i][c]i[ties] are
 e[ss]ential[l]y fi[c]t[i]onal ethn[i][c]i[ties], they're
 ethn[i][c]i[ties] at [b]e[s]t as [s]i[m]u[l]a[c]ra, and,
 [s]u[b]s[e]q[ue]nt[l]y, what's in[e]vita[b]l[y] [t]rue [b]ut
 will [r]e[m]ain [p]er[p]etual[l]y [u]n[t]ouched [u]p[on] is
 [th]at [th]ere is no [r]eal [r]a[c]e or [e]thn[i][c]i[t]y w[i]th[i]n
 [A]me[r]ic[a] with the [e]x[c]e[p]tion of the [A]ng[l]o.
 Eve[r]yone is [A]ng[l]o in [A]me[r]ic[a], th[i][s] [i]s
 obviou[s]. Eve[r]y [p]er[s]o[n] i[n] [A]me[r]ic[a], i[n]s[o]f[ar]
 as they've [a]do[p]ted [A]meri[c]an hy[ph]ena[tions], is
 e[ss]en[tial]l[y] Ang[l]o—as [C]athol[i][c]i[s]m [w]ashed
 [o]ver [th]e [th]i[r]d [w]o[r]ld, [th]e [th]i[r]d wo[r]ld
 be[c]a[m]e e[ss]ential[l]y [A]ng[l]o, the Puritanism of
 North [A][m]eri[c]a [m]i[x]ed w[i]th [th]e
 [C]athol[i][c]i[s]m of [S]outh [A][m]eri[c]a and [r]esulted
 in a [m]i[l]ieu where [e]ve[r]yone is [e]ss[e]ntially Ang[l]o.
 M[a]gic [J]o[h]n[s]on, [a]t [b]o[t]tom, is e[ss]ential[l]y
 Ang[l]o. [E]nd[l]e[ss] [e]thn[i][c]i[ties] have [b]een
 [p]ro[p]er[l]y i[denti]f[i]ed, [s]y[s]te[m]ati[c]al[l]y
 [a]ss[i]m[i]l[a]ted i[n]to th[i][s] [A]ng[l]o-A[m]eri[c]an
 [f]ramewor[k], and [s]ub[s]e[que]nt[l]y [a]nnihi[l]ated, and
 we [p]e[r]use their [c]oming-of-age [n]a[r]ratives,
 [p]enned in the [c]la[ss]i[c] [N]ew Yor[k]er [s]tyle, and we
 thin[k] to our[s]elves, “[W]ow, that's [n]i[c]e, [w]hat a

[n]i[c]e little [c]oming-of-age [s]tory, I [n]ever k[n]ew Viet[n]am was [s]o [n]i[c]e in Autumn—” when the rea[l]it[y] is th[e]se [p][e]o[p]le have b[ee]n ess[e]ntia[l][y] annihi[l]ated.

Canto 04—618:845 .731

The [c]o[m]ing-of-age [n]a[r]rative of the Viet[n]a[m]e[s]e [i][mm][i]g[r]ant t[i][ck]les the [r][e][c]e[ss]es of our [s]oul, yet it ne[v]e[r] occu[r]s to u[s] [th]at [th]i[s] [V]iet[n]amese per[s]on, writing in the [c]la[ss]i[c] [N]ew Yor[k]er [s]tyle, [h]as bee[n] e[ss]enti[a][l][y] a[n]nihi[l]ated. We [m]arvel at the eth[n]i[c] tr[ai]ts of [c]o[m]ing-of-age [n]arratives penned in the [c]la[ss]i[c] [N]ew Yor[k]er [s]tyle, yet th[e]se [e]th[n]i[c]i[t]i[e]s are [e]ntire[l]y fi[c]ti[ti]onal, they’ve b[ee]n [e][ss]e[n]ti[a][l][y] a[n]nihi[l]ated, just as we, the H[e]l[e]n[i]c [b]a[b]oons, have a[l]s[o] b[ee]n e[s]se[n]ti[a][l][y] a[n]nihi[l]ated. The Viet[n]a[m]ese-A[m]eri[c]an who penned your [f]avorite [c]o[m]ing-of-age story [i]s, [i]n [f]a[c]t, e[n]tire[l]y Ang[l]o. The [s]o-[c]alled Or[th]odox, [th]e [l]a[s]t of [th]e [s]o-[c]alled [B]yzantines, re[m]ain [u]n[a]ss[i]m[i]l[a]ted and there[f]ore [u]n[a]nnihi[l]ated, [p]erha[p]s only [b]e[c]ause they’ve [c]l[un]g to their meta[ph]y[s]i[c]al d[i]stin[c]tions—through [v]a[r]ying [c]r[u]s[ad]es and o[ccu]p[a]tions, [v]a[r]iou[s] [c]a[p]italis[m]s and [c]o[m]munis[m]s they’ve [c]l[un]g to their [m]eta[ph]y[s]i[c]al d[i]stin[c]tions, to the [m]eta[ph]ysi[c]al [f]r[amewor]k of the [P]a[t]r[iar]ch of [C]on[s]tan[t]i[n]o[p]le. In a[n]y [c]a[s]e, this Anglo world is [n]o extens[i]on of Ant[i]q[u]i[t]y, it’s [n]o [N]ew [R]o[m]e, [b]e[c]ause [i]ts [i]n[t]erp[r]e[t]ations have [i]n[e]vita[b]ly [b]een filtered through the [s]o-[c]alled [B]yzan[t]i[n]e, th[r]ough the [S]e[c]ond [R]o[m]e of [C]on[s]tan[t]i[n]e, [B]ut for the Ortho[d]ox, [C]h[r]i[s]t [s]ym[b]ol[i]zed the [t]rue, ve[r]i[f]ied immanen[c]e of

[G]od, to [c]o[rr]e[s]pond with the t[r]an[s]cen[d]en[c]e of [G]od—ju[s]t as the [s][o]-[c]alled [S][o][c]rati[c] I[d]ea was at on[c]e tr[a]n[s]cen[d]e[n]t a[n]d immane[n]t, just [a]s Love [a]s [a]n I[d]ea was out of [r]each [i]n-[i]t[s]elf ([i]n [i]t[s] [t]r[a]n[s]cen[d]en[c]e), yet [i]n[t]e[r]ac[t]ive [i]n a [r]ela[t]ive [s]e[n]s[e] ([i]n [i]t[s] [i]mma[n]e[n]c[e]), God was [n]ow the [s]ame, [n]ot [t]ran[s]cen[d]e[n]t or i[m]mane[n]t, but i[n]s[te]ad [t]ran[s]cen[d]e[n]t and i[m]mane[n]t. God as a[n] E[ss]en[c]e was [u]nkn[o]w[a]b[le], [u]n[a]pp[r]oach[a]b[le], and wh[o]lly t[r]an[s]cende[n]t, yet, th[r]ough Ch[r]i[s]t, God was [p]roven to [b]e wholl[y] i[m]manent, [i]n a[ddi]ti[on] to [b]eing en[t]irely [t]ranscen[d]ent, [G]od's [E]nergi[es] were [E]nergi[es] w[e] [c]ould a[pp]r[oa]ch and [i]nte[r]a[c]t w[i]th, to [b]e[c]o[m]e o[n]e with [G]od, [e]ven [m]o[m]entari[l]y, was d[e]em[ed] a [p]ossi[b]i[li]t[y]. Ch[r]i[s]t was b[r]illiantly [g]l[ori]f[i]ed onto [c]entu[r]i[es] of [G]l[ori]e thought in a [s]ys[te]m that [f]ound it[s] e[x]p[r]ession [f]r[om] [A]le[x]and[ria] to [A]n[t]i[o]c[h] [t]o [C]on[s]tan[tin]o[p]le, yet the [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent Angl[o] in[t]e[r]p[r]e[t]ation, by [r]e[s]t[r]i[c]ting God and [P]erson [t]o the in[t]elle[c]t, the [c]on[c]e[p]tual [t]o the [t]ran[s]cend[e]nt, [e]s[s]entia[l]ly ushered in the [s]e[c]u[l]ar a[th]eism [th]at's [b]e[c]ome our [m]ono[c]ulture [p]ar ex[c]e[l]len[c]e. This [s]u[b]s[e]q[ue]nt Angl[o] in[t]e[r]p[r]e[t]ation was [m]ar[k]ed[l]y [d]iffe[r]ent—[b]e[c]ause now to [b]e [t]r[an]scen[d]e[n]t and i[m]mane[n]t was now [d]eem[ed] [d]e[c]a[d]ent and o[r]ie[n]tal. The [s]o-called [B]yzan[tine] i[n]t[er]p[r]e[t]ation e[n]vi[s]i[on]ed a God wh[o], thr[ough] His [s]u[p]e[r]a[b]u[n]d[an]c[e], was [b]o[th] wh[o][l]l[y] immane[n]t a[n]d en[t]ire[l]y [t]r[an]scen[d]e[n]t, whereas the Angl[o] in[t]e[r]p[r]e[t]ation viewed that in[t]e[r]p[r]e[t]ation as b[oth] wh[o][l]l[y] [d]e[c]a[d]e[n]t a[n]d e[n]t[ire]l[y]

o[r]iental, the Ang[l]o in[t]erp[r]e[t]ation, just as the He[b][r]ew [G]od [b][a]nished [A][d]am [a]nd Eve from the [K]ing[d]om of [G]od, [s]u[b][s]e[qu]ently [b]anished [G]od from the [K]ing[d]om of M[a]n, to His e[t]ernal [t][r]an[s]cen[d]en[c]e. [N][o], the [s][o]-[c]alled [G][r]ee[k]s [n]ever [k]illed their [G]od be[c]ause they [n]ever [s]topped [m]e[r]ging with their [G]od. The [G]ree[k] world [n]ever chose to [k]ill their [G]od, they [n]ever [m]u[r]dered their [G]od in [c]old [b]lood [b]e[c]ause, in this [G]ree[k] [w]orld, [w][i]th[i]n th[i][s] [s][i][l]l[y] [B][y]zan[t]ine [m][i]l[li]eu, to [k][i]ll their [G]od would [b]e a[k]in to [c]o[m]mitting [s]ui[c]ide.

Canto 05—522:715 .730

[W]hereas the Anglo [w]orld [d][i]vor[c]ed [i]t[s]elf [f]rom the Energies, became the tran[s]cen[d]ent world [p]ar ex[c]el[l]en[c]e, and [l][e]ft it[s]elf no choi[c]e but to k[i]ll [i]t[s] God [r]uth[l]e[s]s[l]y and ex[p]ed[i]t[i]ous[l]y. The t[r]an[s]c[e]nd[e]nt world [p]ar ex[c]el[l]en[c]e alm[o][s]t i[p]s[o] fa[c]t[o] be[c]omes the [s]e[c]u[l]ar athei[s]t world [p]ar ex[c]el[l]en[c]e. T[r]an[s]c[e]n[d]en[c]e [d]ivor[c]ed [f]ro[m] i[m]manen[c]e is the p[r]i[m]a[r]y [f]or[m]u[l]a of the [s]ecu[l]ar. The [W]e[s]te[r]n [w]o[r]ld is the Ang[l]o [w]orld [w]h[i]ch [i]s nothing more than a [s]ub[s]equent in[t]erp[r]e[t]ation [r]ather th[a]n a [p]r[i]m[a]r]y in[t]erp[r]e[t]ation. In A[m]e[r]i[c]a, [e]ve[r]yone is Anglo, Viet[n]a[m]ese i[m]mig[r]ants w[r]ite [c]o[m]ing of age [s]to[r]ies that are [n]othing if [n]ot h[o]l[i]s[t]icall[y] [A]ng[l]o, tran[s]ce[n]de[n]t[l]y [A]ng[l]o. [A]nd we [s]it, [p]ortrayed [a]s [a]b[s]urd[l]y He[l]le[n]i[c], [a]s Athenian [b]a[b]oons, yet of [c]our[s]e we have [p]erha[p]s that “[B]yzantine loo[k],” our mu[s]k is [p]erha[p]s [B]yzan[t]ine, yet the [B]yzan[t]ine, we’re [t]o[d], was wh[o]lly [d]e[c]a[d]e[n]t a[n]d e[n]tire[l]y o[r]ie[n]tal a[n]d

n[o] [l]onger exists. The [A]f[r][o]-A[m]eri[c]an [M]an is the [A]ngl[o] [M]an, La[r]ry [B]ird [i]n add[i]t[i]on to [M]a[g]i[c] [J]ohn[s]on are [b]oth e[ss]entia[l]y Ang[l]o, the Ita[l]ian-A[m]eri[c]an [M]an is the [A]ngl[o] [M]an, the G[r]ee[k]-A[m]e[r]i[c]an [M]an, des[p]ite [p]laying the [r]ole of [A]thenian [B]a[b]oon, is [a]l[s]o e[ss]entia[l]y Ang[l]o. The [G]ree[k]s, u[l]timate[l]y, have [s]un[k] them[s]e[l]ves, [w]h[i]ch [i]s [w]hy they're no [l]onger [e]ven [G]r[ee][k], w[e] [c]an't [b]lame anyone more than our[s]elves, [w]e [w]ere [p]l[a]ced [i]n an [i]m[p]o[ss]i[b]le [p]osition [b]et[w]ee[n] [Ea][s]t and [W]e[s]t, [a]nd [w]e [a]cted [i]n [a]n [i]m[p]o[ss]i[b]le f[a]sh[i]on, [a]nd [n]ow we're [n]o longer even our[s]elves. [B]ut how did [w]e get onto u[s] any[w]ay, the [G]reeks—[h]ave I [g]one over[b]oard [h]ere at all? [A]m I ex[a]ggerating [a]t all? [i]t's de[f]i[n]ite[l]y [p]o[s]sible, yet I [f]eel com[p]l[e]te[l]y a[pp]r[o]p[ri]ate, I a[c]tua[l]y [f]eel [i]k[e], i[f] an[y]thing, I'm [b]e[ing] too reserved, th[at] i[f] anything I'm a[c]tua[l]y [i]a[ck]ing in h[y]per[b]o[l]e at the [m]o[m]ent. I feel [i]k[e], [r]i[gh]t now, [i]m a[c]tua[l]y b[e]ing too [k]ind, [th]at if any[th]ing I'm being a [t]ad [t]oo [r]eserved. I feel as [th]o[ugh] [th]ere's vi[t]ri[o]l that I [s]till [o]we, that I [o]wn [c]on[s]i[d]era[b]le [d]ebt, and it's all vit[r]i[o]l, [th]at [th]ere's n[o] choi[c]e [b]ut to [p]lay it [b]a[ck] to the gene[r]al [p]o[p]ula[c]e of thi[s] [c]ountry. It's [p]o[ss]i[b]le that I'm f[i]lled to the [b]r[i]m w[i]th [v]i[t]riol, it's [p]o[ss]i[b]le that I [o]we all this [v]i[t]ri[o]l to the gene[r]al [p]o[p]u[l]a[c]e. [i]t's alm[o]st as [i]f I'm [i]ea[ving] [i]oa[ds] of vitr[i]o[ol] on the table. The Ang[l]o world [i]e[c]tured us [th]at [th]e au[th]enti[c] Gree[k]s m[a]de [a]n[al] love [t]o [t]ee[n]a[ge] boys, and the[n] whe[n] G[r]ee[k]s [m]oved [p]a[s]t [p]e[n]et[r]a[ti]ng high [s]c[h]ool [a]ged [m]e[n] i[n] the [r]ear-e[n]d, when they i[n]s[tead] [s]u[b]s[c]r[i]b[ed] to the metaphys[i]cs of the

[P]at[r]iar[c]h of [C]on[s]tantino[p]le, it was only [a]t th[a]t
 [p]oint that G[r]reek [c]ulture be[c][a]me [d]e[p][r][a]ved
 and [d]e[c]a[d]ent. Wholl[y] o[r][i]ental. Th[i]s [i]s what
 I've [b]een per[s]onal[l]y taught [b]y the Ang[l]o
 [s][o]-[c]alled [s][c]ho[l]l[a]s[t]ic[s]—[a]nd th[at] I [c]an tell
 you is [a]b[s][o]lute[l]y no exaggeration.

Canto 06—528:719 .734

Only the Gree[k][s] would a[cc][e]pt two [s][e]ts of
 an[c][e]s[tors of [th]i[s] [s]ort [th]en [sh][r][u]g their
 [sh]oulders and [g]o [g]et d[r][u]nk at a [s]aloon. That's
 what I [d][i]d. [I]t's ju[s]t au[d]aciou[s], that's what [i]t [i]s.
 [I]f no[th]ing el[s]e I re[s]pe[c]t [th]e au[d][a]c[it]y,
 be[c]ause I [a]c[tual[l]y [h]ave the [h]ighe[s]t re[s]pe[c]t
 for the au[d]a[c]it[y] of the Ang[l]o world. Our
 an[c]e[s]tors have [s]pent hun[d]re[d]s of years in
 o[b]s[cure mountains, for[b]i[dd]en to [r]ead or w[ri]te,
 [w]h[i]le the ent[i]re Ang[l]o [w]orld has [s]pread th[i]s
 [m]i[s]sin[f]or[m]a[tio]n about u[s], this [s]l[an]der, this
 [c]hara[c]ter [a][ss][a]ssin[a]tio[n], [s][o] it's n[o] won[d]er
 [p]e[d]o[ph]iles [r]un [r]am[p]ant in [e]ve[r]y [W][e]s[te]rn
 [p]olity—look who [c]om[p][r]i[s]e the [i]dols of the
 [W]e[s]t! [Th]e A[th]enian with [th]e [b]eauti[ful]
 [b]oy[f]r[i]ends t[r]aversing pu[b]erty, as i[f] th[e]se were
 the onl[y] [G][r]ee[k]s, as if [th]ere were no o[th]er
 [G][r]ee[k] e[r]as, as i[f] the [a]l[ph]a[b]et [b]e[c]ame
 o[b]sol[e]te [a]fter [A]nti[q]uit[y]! [B]ut [I] d[i]g[r]es[s].
 [I]n a[n]y [c]a[s]e, [b]efore I e[n]t[er] i[n]t[o] thi[s] whole
 a[n]e[c]dote I should [s]ay thi[s]—n[a]mely, th[at] I was
 [a]t [a] [r]e[s]taur[an]t [a]c[r]o[s]s the [s]treet [f]rom
 [m]y [a]part[m]ent [f]or a [s]mall [g]athe[r]ing ju[s]t the
 other night, my [g]ood [f]r[i]end's [c]ousi[n] was i[n] town,
 [a]nd she [a]nd her [f]ather [i]nvited me to a[n]
 [i]nf[ormal] dinner [a]c[r]oss the [r]oad [f]rom [m]y
 [a]part[m]ent, [s]o [I] [d]e[c]i[d]ed it would be a [l]ittle

rude [f]or me not to go, con[s]i[d]ering I [l][i]ved w[i]th[i]n
 [s]p[i]tt[i]ng [d][i][s]tan[c]e of th[i][s] [r]e[s]tau[r]ant,
 [w][i]th[i]n [m][i]n[i]m[al] [w]alking [d][i][s]tan[c]e, and had
 [n]othing el[s]e to [d]o. I e[ss]enti[a]lly [h]ad to g[o] but
 [a][s][o] [h]ad [n][o] issue with [a]tten[d]ing. [I]n
 [a][d]d[i]t[i]on, I [w]as [a][w]are the meal [w]ould in all
 [l]ike[l]hood be [p]aid for, and [a]lthough I [d][i]d[n't]
 [p]arti[cu]lar[l]y thin[k] high[l]y of the [r]e[s]tau[r]a[n]t
 [a][c]ro[ss] the [s]t[r]eet, I knew there was at [l]ea[s]t
 one [d][e]c[en]t [m]eal, or [m]ayb[e] e[ve]n two
 [d][e]ce[n]t [m]eals, that I could or[d]er and [f]ee[l]
 re[l]ative[l]y [s]at[i]ated. [P]er[s]o[n]al[l]y, I was a big
 [f]an of the [S][p]i[c]y Mak[i] [P]latter, where you
 re[c]ei[ve]d eigh[t][ee]n [p]ie[c]e[s] of [t]u[n]a, [s]almon,
 and yel[l]ow[t]ail [s]ushi for ju[s]t [s]ix[t]ee[n] dol[l]ars. It's
 a great [m]eal, and be[c]ause of the e[c]o[n]o[m]i[c]al
 [p]ri[c]e-[p]oint you [d]on't feel [l]ike a [c]om[p]l[ete]
 a[ss]hole or[d]er[i]ng it on [s]omeone el[s]e's tab. [I]n
 a[n]y [c]ase, we a[r]r[i]ve, m[y] f[r]iend and [I],
 [p]erh[a]p[s] we're a[c]tua[l]l[y] [l]overs, but I [d]on't want
 to [g]o in[t]o a [g]r[ea]t [d]ea[l] of [d][e]t[ail] about m[y]
 [p]r[i]vate [l]ife here, we [m]ight e[ve]n [l]i[ve] w[i]th
 ea[ch] other in [m]y a[p]art[m]ent, but I'[m] [n]ot going
 into that [n]ow, [w]e're in [l]ove [w]ith ea[ch] o[th]er in a
 [w]ay [th]at ju[s]t [f]ee[ls] [p]ro[f]ound, that's [p]o[ss]ib[le],
 [b]ut i[n] a[n]y [c]ase we're [th]ere, at [th]e
 [r]e[s]tau[r]ant, whe[n] my [f]r[ie[n]d's [c]ousins [f]rom
 out of town a[rr]ive, and [a][m]ost i[m]m[e]d[i]atel[y]
 the [c]on[v]er[s]ation [t]urns [t]o the m[u]ch
 [d]i[s]c[u]ssed [C]O[V]ID-Ninet[ee]n va[cc][i]n[e], and
 [b]ei[ng] wh[o][l]l[y] [s]o[b]ber as well as extr[e]me[l]y
 hung[r]y [I] de[c]i[de] to have [n][o] part of it, I [d]on't
 me[n]tion a[n]ything a[b]out [n]onli[n]ear
 [d]i[s]t[r]i[b]utions, the i[n]he[r]e[n]t [d]i[s]hone[s]t[y] of

[a]ll l[a]rge govern[m]ents over the cour[s]e of [h]u[m]an
[h]i[s]tor[y].

Canto 07—546:721 .757

I ch[oo]se t[o] [r]e[f]r[ai]n [f]r[om] m[e]ntioning E[l]i[ot]
[A][b][r]ams [r]ec[ei]ving a [f]i[f]t[y] dol[l]ar [f]ine [f]or
t[r][a][ff]i[ck]ing [c]r[a][ck] [c]o[c]ai[n]e into eve[r]y
[b]l[a][ck] [c]o[mm]u[n]i[ty] i[n] A[m]er[i]c[a] i[n] the
[N]ineteen-[Ei]ghties, I ch[oo]se t[o] [r]e[f]r[ain] [f]r[om]
[m]entio[n]ing a[n]y of this, as it wasn't the [r]i[gh]t [t]i[m]e
[t]o di[s]c[u]ss [n]on[i]i[n]ear[i]t[ie]s a[n]d E[l]i[ot]
Ab[r]ams, thi[s] was my [c]o[n]c[l]usion at the time. I
wasn't [g]oing to [g]et [c]aught u[p] in the [n]a[t]ure of
[p]r[o]b[a]b[i]l[i]ty [d]i[st]r[i]b[ut]i[ons] and E[l]i[ot]
[A][b][r]ams' [f]i[f]ty [d]o[l]l[ar] [f]ine [f]or [s]e[ll]ing [l]arge
[s]wathes of [c]r[ack] [c]o[c]aine at the [b]e[he]s[t] of the
[f]i[r]st [B]ush [a]dmini[s]tration [a]t th[at] time. It would
have [b]een un[c]outh, ill-[a]dvised, [a]s well [a]s
[c]o[m]p[l]e[t]e[ly] i[n]a[p]p[r]o[p]r[i]ate. But in
[k]ee[p]ing [m]y [m]outh shut I felt just a [m]o[m]en[t]ary
[t]i[n]ge of ag[i]t[ation], in h[ea]ring th[e]se o[p]i[n]ions I
inve[t]e[r]at[ely] [d]i[s]ag[r]ee[d] with, in [r]e[f]r[ain]ing
[f]r[om] [u]tte[r]ing the [ph]r[ase] [n]on[i]i[n]ear[i]ty
[d]i[s]t[r]i[b]ut[i]ons and E[l]i[ot] [A][b][r]ams I [b]ec[a]me
s[i]gh[t]l[y] [a]git[at]ed, the [o]n[l]y [a]n[t]i[d]o[t]e [t]o my
[a]gi[t]a[tion] would [b]e to s[a]y the [w]ord
[n]on[i]i[n]eari[ty] a[l]oud, [w]hich I had [n]o in[t]ention of
doing. I couldn't [b]ring my[s]elf to [s]ay the word
[n]on[i]i[n]eari[ty], [a]nd I h[a]d [a]b[s]o[l]ute[ly] no
intention of utte[r]ing the ph[r]ase E[l]i[ot] [A][b][r]ams
at thi[s] [r]e[s]taur[ant], [I] coul[d]n't [d]o either without
embar[r]a[ss]ing [m]y[s]elf, and [I] kn[ew] it. The f[a]ct of
the [m]a[tter] is whe[n] a[n] o[p]i[n]i[on] I d[i]sag[r]ee
w[i]th [i]s ex[p]r[ess]ed w[i]th[i]n [m]y gene[r]al
[p]r[o]x[i]m[i]ty, [a]nd I [a]ct s[o]ciall[y]

a[pp][r][o][p][r]iate[l][y] and [r]e[f][r]ain [f][r]om sha[r]in[g] my t[r]ue [f]ee[l]in[g]s on the [m]atter, then I o[f]ten [f]eel th[i]s [t]i[n]ge of [a]gi[t]ation, [a]s i[f] I was [p]ut on thi[s] Ea[r]th for the [s]ole [p]u[r][p]o[s]e of behaving ina[pp][r][o][p][r]iate[l][y] and ex[p]r[e]ss[ing] my hone[s]t o[p]inions, n[o] matter the co[s]t [s][o]ciall[y]. In[s]tead I [f]ound my[s]el[f] g[l]an[c]ing [i]nter[m]ittent[l][y] at [m]y [f]riend's older [c]ousin, ju[s]t shame[l]e[ss][l][y] [s][p]e[c]u[l]at[ing] on his [r]a[c]ial m[a][k]eu[p]—which I h[a]te. I've [b]ee[n] on the [r]e[c]eiv[ing] e[n]d of thi[s] de[s]p[ic]a[b]le [b]ehavior, and I'm sure you've ex[p]e[r]i[e]n[c]ed [s]i[m]il[ar], and [l] [d]e[s]p[is]e [p]eo[p]le who ju[s]t shame[l]e[ss][l][y] [s][p]e[c]u[l]ate as to [m]y r[a]cial m[a][k]eu[p], I'm sure you [d]e[s]pise them j[u]st as m[u]ch, yet [s]itt[ing] a[c]ro[ss] [f]r[om] thi[s] [d]i[s]tant [c]ousin of [m]y [f]r[i]end, [m]y [l]over [p]erh[a]p[s], I [s]a[t] in this [s]i[l]ent hy[p]oc[ri]s[y], I [s]at there and shame[l]e[ss][l][y], [c]ontinuou[s][l][y] [s][p]e[c]u[l]ated on his r[a]cial m[a][k]eu[p] to [m]y[s]elf, going [s]o [f]ar as [t]o [t]a[k]e [s][p]e[c]i[f]ic [f]acial [f]eatures into a[cc]ount and [s][p]e[c]ulate on a [g]eo[g]r[a]phic a[r]ea of o[r]i[g]in. It was [g]r[ote]s[que]. But that's un[f]ortunately what I [f]ound my[s]el[f] doing in [p]lac[e] of sharing my [s]in[c]ere o[p]inions on [n]onli[n]ear [p]ro[b]a[b]i[l]i[t]y [d]i[s]t[ri]butions and E[l]liot A[b]rams [d]i[s]t[ri]b[ut]ing [c]r[ack] c[oc]aine to the [b]l[a]ck [c]o[m]mu[n]iti[es] of the U[n]ited [S]t[ates] in the [N]et[work] [E]i[gh]ts—but of [c]ourse [n]o one [c]an [m]ention [n]onli[n]ear di[s]t[ri]butions or E[l]liot A[b]rams [s]ell[ing] [c]r[ack] anymore.

Canto 08—501:685 .731

Govern[m]ents have lied to u[s] al[m]o[s]t without pause [s]i[n]c[e] the i[n]ventio[n] of the nation-[s]tate, in just

[A][m]eri[c]a [a][l]one w[e]’ve [s][ee]n the [l]arge-[s][c]ale
 o[pp][r]ession of A[f][r]i[c]an-A[m]e[r]i[c]ans over the
 [c]our[s]e of [c]enturies, the [s]tate-[s]an[c]tioned
 poiso[n]i[n]gs of A[f][r]i[c]an-A[m]eri[c]an [c]o[m]munities
 with [c][r]a[ck] [c]o[c]aine, of [l]ower [c][l]ass
 [C]au[c]asian [c]o[m]munities w[i]th [p][r]es[c][r]i[p]tion
 [p]ills, we have [p]o[p] [s]tars named [L]ittle Xanax,
 m[i][l]ions of ch[i][l]dr[e]n [i]n thi[s] [c]ountry [f]anta[s]ize
 [a][b]out [a][b]using [p][r]e[s][c]r[i]p]tion nar[c]oti[c]s
 bef[or]e they go to [s][l]ee[p] at night and the [F][D][A], a
 [r]e[gul]ator[y] [b]o[d]y with [a]m[p]le [f]un[d]ing [f]or
 [r]e[gul]a[ti]ng ju[s]t this [s]ort of [b]ehavior,
 [a][pp]arent[ly] thinks [n]othing of it. We have one [p]o[p]
 [s]tar [n]amed [L]ittle [X]anax and [z]ero
 [ph]arma[c]eu[tic]al e[x]e[c]utives wh[o]’ve been
 [p]ro[s]e[c]u[t]ed [f]or [p][r]oduc[ing] this lu[r]id [s]tate of
 aff[ai]rs, and th[at]’s just [s][c]ra[atching] the [s]urf[a]ce in
 Ame[r]i[c]a, [c]onf[ining] our in[q]ui[r]y to a [s]ingle [s]ide
 of the Atlanti[c] we ha[v]en’t e[v]en ment[i]oned the
 Tur[k]i[sh] o[ccu]p[a]ti[on], the geno[c]ides of [P]ol [P]ot,
 Hitl[er] and the Na[t]ional [S]o[ci]a[l[i]s]ts, the Gu[l]ag, the
 [f]a[m]ine of [M]ao, or the [p]re[p]on[d]e[r]an[c]e of [o]ther
 [o]ccu[p]ations, [g]e[n]o[c]ides, [f]amines, and
 [g]e[n]e[r]al [d]ebau[c]he[r]y which have o[ccu]rred [a]ll
 [a]cro[ss] the g[l]obe mo[r]e o[r] [l]e[ss]
 in[c]e[ss]ant[ly]—yet [n]ow the U[n]ited [S]t[ate]s
 govern[m]ent [i]nfor[m]s [i]t[s] [c]i[tiz]ens without a
 t[r]a[c]e of i[r]ony that a [f]a[st-t[r]a]cked v[a]ccine is
 beyond [r]e[p]r[oa]ch [f]or a[n]y a[n]d eve[r]yone, with
 no [l]ong-term [e]m[p]i[r]i[c]al [e]vi[d]en[c]e [a]vail[ab]le,
 and i[f] we [q]u[e]stion [th]at [th]en we’re [e]ssentia[ll]y
 [e]xco[m]muni[c]ated [f]rom [d]e[c]ent [s]o[c]iety. We’ve
 [b]ecome [ch]a[r]l[at]ans [p]a[r] ex[c]el[le]n[c]e if we
 [d]are men[t]ion the [n]ature of [n]on[l]i[n]ear
 [p]ro[b]a[b]i[li]ty [d]i[s]tri[bu]ti[ons], if we m[e]nti[on] the

[f][a][c]t th[at] E[l]liot A[b]rams was [f]ined [f]i[f]ty do[l]lars
 [f]or se[l]ling [c][r]a[ck], if we utter the [ph][r][a]ses
 [n]on[l]i[n]ear [p]ro[b]a[b]l[i]i[ti]ty [d][i]st[r]i[b]ution or
 E[l]liot A[b]r[am]s was a [c][r]a[ck] [c]o[c]ai[n]e [d]ea[l]er
 we've a[pp]a[r]ent[l]y [b]e[c]ome [f]asci[s]ts in thi[s]
 [c]ount[r]y. [S][o] I had [n][o] in[k]l[i]ng of the r[a]cial
 [m][a][k]eup of thi[s] [m]an [s]itting [s]o i[n]no[c]ent[l]y
 a[c]ro[ss] from m[e], and eventual[l]y [l] just [s]aid to
 m[y]self—you're [d]i[s]g[u]s[ti]ng, th[i]s [i]s
 [g]ro[t]e[s]q[ue], [t]a[k]e out your [s][m]art[ph]one and
 [d]i[ck] a[r]o[und] [o]n that, [f]or the [s]a[k]e of [C]h[r]i[s]t
 Him[s]el[f], ju[s]t [p]lease re[m]ove your [s][m]art[ph]one
 [f]rom your [p]o[ck]et thi[s] [s]e[c]ond. [S]o we order our
 [m]eals. [M]y [f]r[i]end, who I [m]ay or [m]ay not [b]e in
 love with, who o[r]d[er]s [r]ight [b]e[f]o[r]e [m][e], or[d]ers
 the [S][p]i[c]y [M]a[k]i [P]latter, [s]o we both [e]nd u[p]
 ordering the exa[c]t [s]ame [m]eal, the [S][p]i[c]y
 [M]a[k]i [P]latter, and I ju[s]t shot her a [l]oo[k], I
 [l]oo[k]ed at her [l]i[k]e Are you [k]idding me? [W]e
 [c]ould h[a]ve [a]t [l]ea[s]t [d]i[s]c[u]ssed thi[s]
 [b]e[f]o[r]e the [w]aitre[ss] a[s]ked [f]o[r] the or[d]ers, now
 we're or[d]ering the [s]ame ex[a]c[t meal [b][a][ck] to
 [b][a][ck].

Canto 09—483:668 .723

But [th]en I [th]ink to my[s][e]l[f] W[e]ll, i[f] sh[e] doesn't
 [ea]t all eight[ee]n [p][ie][c]es, [w]hich sh[e] [w]on't, then
 I'll at [l]ea[s]t have the o[p]tion to [s]nag a [s]ush[i]
 [p][ie][c]e or two if I'm not com[p]l[i]te[l]y [f]ull a[f]ter my
 eighteen. I [g]uess I [c]an [b]e a [b]it [g][l]u[t]tonou[s]
 when it [c][o]mes to [s]ushi, [b]ut I al[s]o—in t[r]ue
 [G][r]eek Ortho[d]ox [f]a[sh]ion—[t]end [t]o [f]a[s]t [f]or
 [s]i[n]g[n]i[f]i[c]ant portions of the [d]ay, [s]o b[y] the
 t[i]me [d]inner a[r]r[iv]es [l]i'm [a]lways [p]r[e]p[ar]ed to
 [s]tu[ff] my [f]a[c]e. I've [r]ea[d [m]o[d]ern

[m]e[d][i][c][i]ne [i]s [b]egi[n]ning to [r][e]cog[n]ize value in
 thi[s] [f]a[s]t and [f][ea][s]t [r][e]gi[m]en of [ea]ting, [th]at
 [th]e [b]o[d][y] [p]erha[p]s [f]unc[t]ions more e[ff]i[c]ientl[y]
 when it'[s] [d]e[p][r]ived [f]or a [p]e[r]iod of time. [B]ut i[n]
 a[n]y [c]a[s]e we [b]oth or[d]er the [S][p]i[c][y] Ma[k][i]
 [P]latter, and her [d][a]d, who's [s][a]t [n]ext to [m]e,
 orders a shrimp [n]oo[d]le [d]ish th[at] h[a]s [n]o a[pp]eal
 to [m]e, [n]ot that I [c]are, be[c]ause I h[a]d [n]o [p]l[a]ns
 on [sh]aring the meal with him, and when th[i][s]
 [sh][r]i[m]p [n]oo[d]le [d][i]sh [i]s [s]erved h[i]s [i]n[i]tial
 [r]eac[t]ion is Wow, th[i][s] [i]s b[i]g—and [i]t [i]s, [i]t's
 huge. The port[i]on [i]s [i]mmense. And the [n]oo[d]les, it
 shoul[d] [b]e [n]oted, are th[i]ck—[i]t would [b][e]
 n[ea]rl[y] im[p]o[ss]i[b]le for one [p]er[s]on to finish a
 [p]late of th[at] [m]a[gnitu[d]e, [s]ave for the
 [m]or[b]i[d][i]t[y] o[b]e[s]e, in ju[s]t one [s]itting. S[o]
 i[m]m[e]d[i]ate[l]y, and [o]n[l]y with the [b][e]st of
 int[e]ntions, [b]e[c]ause her [d]ad is one of the [m]o[s]t
 w[e]ll-i[n]t[e]ntioned i[n]d[i]viduals you'll ever [c]ome
 a[c]ros[s], her [d]ad [s]tarts to o[ff]er me [s]ome of h[i]s
 [d][i]sh, and [i]n[i]tial[l]y I re[f]use not on[l]y [b]e[c]ause
 I [f]ind the [d]ish una[pp]ea[l]ing but [p][r]ima[r]i[l]y
 [b]e[c]ause I'm [ea]ting [m]y own [m]ea[l]. But this
 [ch]anges even[tu]a[l]l[y]. [F]a[m]ished [a]s I [f]ound
 my[s]elf, I obviou[s]l[y] [f]inished [m]y [m]eal not
 on[l]y [b]e[f]ore [a]nyone [e]lse at the ta[b]le [b]ut
 [c]on[s]ide[r]a[b]l[l]y [p]r[i]or to [a]nyone [e]l[s]e at the
 ta[b]le [c]l[e]aning their [p]l[ate]—I'm [s]itting there with a
 [c]om[p]l[e]te[l]y [c]l[e]an [p]l[ate] while [e]veryone
 [e]lse is [a]t [m]ost h[a]l[f]way [th][r]ough [th]eir [m]eal.
 And my [f]r[i]end is [h]ardl[y] [ea]ting [h]er [M]a[k][i]
 Pl[at]ter [a]t all, instead she's busy [m]u[n]ch[ing] her
 [c]ou[s]in's General [T]so Shrim[p], yet her dad, of
 [c]ourse [m]eaning well and [n]oti[c]ing [m]y em[p]ty
 d[i]sh, for the [s]e[c]ond time a[s]ks i[f] I want [s]ome?

[N][o], [n][o] [th]an[k] you, [I]'m [f]ull, [I] say, [n]ot
 [th]in[k]ing at all. Wi[th]out a [s]ingle [th]ought in my
 [s][k]u[ll] [I] [r]epl[y] that I'm full—y[e]t in
 [r][e]t[r]o[s]p[e][c]t what [e]l[s]e [c]ould I [s]ay? How [c]an
 y[ou] [r]e[f]u[s]e a bite of [s]omeone's meal,
 e[s]pecial[ly] on a [s]e[c]ond o[ff]er, without [s]aying
 you're [f]ull? It's [p]ro[b]a[b]l[y] the on[ly]
 a[cc]e[p]ta[b]le excu[s]e, [f]eigning [f]ull[n]ess, [b]ut [n]ow
 I've [p]l[ac]ed mysel[f] [i]n a [b]i[t] of an [i]m[b]ro[g]l[i]o,
 [b]e[c]ause her dad thin[k]s I'm [f]ull, [b]ut I'm a[c]tually
 the [f]ur[th]e[s]t [p]o[ss]i[b]le [th]ing [f]rom
 [f]ull—[b]e[c]ause [s]ush[i] never [f]i[ll]s [y]ou. [Y]ou
 [f]i[n]ish a [p]l[ate] of [s]ush[i] and the [f]i[r]s[t] [th]i[n]g you
 [th]i[n]k [i]s I [c]ould go [f]or a [l]ittle more [s]ush[i].

Canto 10—441:639 .690

"Eight[ee]n p[ie][c]es of [f]i[sh]-[f]i[ll]ed [s]ushi and I'm not
 [e]ven rem[o]t[e][ly] [c]l[ose] to [f]ull. All my th[ou]ghts
 [r]ev[o]lve a[r]ound [c]on[s]u[m]ing [m]ore [s]ush[i], of
 which I [s][ee] [p]l[ent]y, [b]e[c]ause [m]y [c]om[p]anion,
 [m]y [l]over, is [b]are[ly] even touching her [S][p]i[c]y
 [M]a[k]i [P]latter. [S]o now [I]'m [t]r[y]ing [t]o [d]ev[i]se
 a [m]etho[d] of [c]l[an]d[e]s[tine][ly] [s]n[e]aking a few
 [p]i[e]c[es] of [s]aid [s]ush[i] into [m]y [m]ou[th] with[ou]t
 [m]y [c]om[p]a[n]ion's d[a]d [n]oticing, [n]ot that he would
 [c]are, but ju[s]t on [p]rin[c]i[p]le. I already inh[a]led [m]y
 [m]eal, [ei]ght[ee]n p[ie][c]es of [f]i[sh]-[f]i[ll]ed [s]ushi,
 and now I'm [c]l[ai]ming, to my [f]r[i]end's [f]ather, that
 I'm [f]ull, but then [r]e[m]or[s]e[le]ss[ly] [c]on[s]u[m]ing
 the [s]u[sh]i [s]itting next to my [p]l[ate]? That just
 wasn't [a] p[a]l[ata]b[le] o[p]tion in [m]y [m]i[n]d at the
 t[i]me. I wanted to [a]void that [s]cenario if [p]o[ss]i[b]le.
 Yet as I'm [c]on[c]o[c]ting a [p]l[an] to
 [s]urre[p]titiou[s][ly] extra[c]t this foreign [s]ush[i] into
 [m]y [m]outh [m]y [f]riend's [c]ousin [t]a[k]es her [f]or[k]

and [s][t]arts eating her [s]ush[i]—po[t]entiall[y] my [s]ush[i]. I'm watching my [f]riend's [f]ather struggle to [f][i]n[i]sh h[i]s [g]ar[g]antuan shrimp [l]o [m]ein on [m]y [l]e[f]t, then watching [m]y [f]riend's [c]ousin [m]ethodi[c]a[l]l[y] [ea]t [ea]ch [l]e[f]t[over] [p][ie][c]e of this [S][p]i[c][y] [M]a[k][i] [P][l]atter on [m]y r[i]ght. Then I [l]oo[k] [a][c][r]oss the t[a]b[le] and [b]egin [sh][a]mele[ss][l]l[y] [r][a][c]i[a]l[l]l[y] [s]pe[c]u[l]a[t]ing [a]gain, just [t]o [m]o[m]en[t]ari[l]l[y] get [m]y [m]i[n]d off this wh[o]le [S]pi[c][y] [M]a[k][i]-[l]l[o] [m]ein imb[r]o[g]l[i]o. As the [m]eal [c]on[c]l[u]ded there were tw[o] or th[r]ee [s]ush[i] [p][ie][c]es [l]eft, my [c]om[p]anion says [H]ave one, and I shake my [h]ead, realizing the e[n]tire e[n]d[eavor, th[i]s m[i]ssion to obt[ai]n [m]ore [S][p]i[c][y] [M]a[k][i], was [d]oomed to f[ai]lure. I con[s]idered a[s]k[ing] her [t]o [t]a[k]e the [p]ie[c]es h[o]me, but n[o]—thi[s] urge for [m]ore [M]a[k]i [i]s [m]i[s]gu[i]d[ed], [l] thought, it's already [d]oo[m]ed t[o] f[ai]lure, it's t[oo] [l]a[te] for that. The [S][p]i[c][y] Ma[k][i] [P][l]atter was de[l]icious, but [t]o [t]a[k]e h[o]me the [l]e[f]t[over] sushi wasn't a [p]a[l]atable o[p]tion [t]o me at the [t]ime. And a [f]unny thing o[cc]urred, I a[c]tua[l]l[y] [b]egan to [f]eel [f]ull as [e]veryone [e]lse [b]egan t[o] [c]on[c]l[u]de their [m]eals—[d]e[s]p[ite] [r]e[m]aining hung[r]y i[m]m[e]d[i]ate[l]l[y] a[f]ter [f]inishing [m]y eight[ee]n [p][ie][c]es of [s]ush[i], b[y] the t[i]me [e]veryone [e]lse [c]on[c]l[u]d[e]d their [d]inner I, somehow, no [l]onger felt hung[r]y, [d]e[s]p[ite] eat[i]ng noth[i]ng [i]n the [i]n[ter]im, for the above [s]aid [r]easons. But, i[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, onto thi[s] a[n]e[c]d[o]te—[s]o it was a few years ag[o] at this [p]oint, Ho[r]atio was [p]ro[b]a[b]l[y] there, it was a mo[r]e o[r] [l]es[s] [n]onde[s]c[r]i[p]t [n]ight, abso[l]ute[l]l[y] [n]othing of [n]ote was o[c]curring, and I thin[k] all of us were [a]t th[at] [p]oint [q]uestioning [w]hy

[w]e [w]ere [e]ven out, [w]hy [w]e [w]eren't at home
s[l][e]e[p]ing [l][i][k]e young children.

Canto 11—469:700 .670

[W]e [w]ere at the [D][ea]n Hotel on [W]ashington
St[r][ee]t in a [d]ar[k] [b]a[ck] [b]ar [c]alled the
[M]ag[d]a[l][e]n[a] [R]oom where [n]othing [m]uch of
[n]ote was going on, [n]ear[l]y [n]othing of [n][o]te was
ever g[o]ing on [w][i]th[i]n the [w]alls of this h[o]tel [b]ar,
[n]ever [m]ind in the [b]a[c]k room, [w]hich [w]as
d[i]m[l]y [l]i[t] i[n] a[n] a[l]l[m]ost a[b]r[a]sive w[a]y and
usual[l]y [a]t h[a]lf [c]ap[a][c]it[y] at [b]e[s]t. [B]ut
[m]ay[b]e that's what the [v]enue i[n]te[n]d[ed],
[m]ay[b]e the [m]ai[n] goal of the [v]enue was
a[b]r[a]s[i]v[e] i]te[r]a[tions of [d]im lighting [a]nd h[a]lf
[c]ap[a][c]ities. I[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, I'm with a [f]ew
[f]r[i]ends, Ho[r]a[tio m]ay have been there, and [t]w[o]
well-[t]o-d[o] An[g]lo [g]irls are there, [a]nd one of
us—not [m]e—a[t]t[em]pts to [c]o-[m]i[n]g[le] with the [t]wo
[A]n[g]lo [g]irls, [a]nd a [c]onver[s]ation en[s]ues. One of
our [f]r[i]ends is with[ou]t a d[ou]bt ai[m]ing to [e]n[g]a[ge]
i[n] [c]on[s]e[n]sual [s]e[x]ual [e]n[c]ounters with
these girls in the near [f]uture, at [l]east if the
[e]n[c]ounter goes a[cc]o[r]d[ing] to his [p]l[an],
[h]owever, [h]is [p]l[an] is a[b]out to go
un[e]x[p]e[c]te[d][l]y [a]wry, things are in n[o] way
a[b]out to g[o] a[cc]o[r]d[ing] to his [p]l[an], [a]nd,
i[n]a[d]ve[r]te[n]t[l]y, I'm a[b]out to ensu[r]e his [p]l[an] is
foiled [i]n a[n] i[r]reve[r]si[b]le man[n]er. [N]ot in the
[s]u[r]e are things goin[g] a[cc]o[r]din[g] to his
p[lan], a[n]d I'm inadvertent[l]y a[b]out to [b]e the
[c]ause of the fo[i]l[i]n[g]. I]nev[i]ta[b]l[y] [b]oth girls [i]n
the [p]u[sh] [p]art of the [c]ity, they don't [h]ave
[j]obs, or they [h]ave [j]obs they c[l]ea[r[l]y re[c]eiv[ed]
due to [s]tat[us]es of [b]e[ing] young and opu[l]ent, they

[i]nev[i]ta[b][i]y [b]eg[i]n to d[i][s]cu[ss] the variou[s]
 [p]ro[p]erti[e]s their fami[l]i[e]s' own, in [S]a[n]
 F[r]a[n][c]i[s]co I [b]e[l]ieve, [p]erha[p]s s[o]me [o]ther
 out[r]ageous[l]y [o][p]u[l]ent are[a]s of the U[S],
 may[b][e] [e]ven over[s][ea]s. I [f]orget the [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c]
 [l]o[c]ales, I a[c]tual[l]y [p]aid [l]ittle to no atte[n]tio[n] to
 a[n]ything [ei]ther of th[e]se An[g][l]o [g]irls said, there
 were a [f]ew [l]ocales whe[r]e thei[r] [f]athers' owned
 [th]is [p][r]o[p]erty or [th]at [p][r]o[p]erty, [th]ey'd
 [s]u[mm]er here or [th]ey'd [s]u[mm]er [th]ere, but it was
 [a]ll [o]p[u]l[e]nt i[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, [s]ome a[r]ea where
 [o]n[l]y the m[o]st eg[r]eg[i]ous d[i][ck]heads [l]i[ve]. [I]t
 [d][i][d]n't par[t]i[c]u[l]ar[l]y offend me, yet their [t]one was
 [c]on[d]e[s]cend[i]ng i[n] a way that al[m]o[s]t [m]ade
 you be[l]i[e]ve they v[ie]wed y[ou] as an [e]qual, [w]hich
 [i]n[n]uriated m[e]. [W]hen [p]eo[p]le [i]n[n]vete[r]ate[l]y
 [b]e[l]i[e]ve them[s]elves to [b][e] [s]u[p]e[r]ior, yet [s]till
 h[a]ve the au[d]a[c]ity to [c]on[d]e[s]cend as i[f] you're
 almo[s]t e[qu]als, [i]t'[s] [i]n[n]uriating. [A]s it [s]o
 h[a]ppened, I'[d] been [s]tu[d]ying a[n] exte[n]d[ed]
 [d]o[c]ume[n]tary on the inter[n]et at wor[k] th[at]
 [a]fter[n]oon, it was a slow [a]fter[n]oon th[at]
 [a]fter[n]oon, [r]egar[d]ing the m[a]tting habits of
 [d]ol[ph]ins, in [f]act this vi[d]eo went into g[r]ea[t [d]etail
 [r]egar[d]ing the [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c] [m]e[c]hani[c]s of how
 [d]ol[ph]ins [p]er[f]orm [s]ex, and I [p][r]o[c]e[d]e[d] to
 share thi[s] i[n]f[or]mation [r]egar[d]ing the [s][p]e[c]i[f]i[c]
 [m]e[c]hani[c]s of [d]ol[ph]in [s]exual inter[c]our[s]e with
 the g[r]oup.

Canto 12—520:719 .723

[A][pp]arently this was [a] bit of [a] faux [p]aus on my
 [p]art, D[e][m]o—it was [c][l]ear these young [f]i[e][m]ales,
 although i[n]no[c]ent e[n]ou[gh], were ju[s]t of a
 [s]e[p]a[r]ate [c][l]a[ss], [a]nd [th]ey be[l]ieved [i]t, [a]nd

[th]ey knew [i]t, [a]nd [th]ey had no [r]e[s][p]ect [f]or the
 w[e]ll v[e][r][i]f[i]ed int[e]ll[i]gence of dol[ph]ins and their
 [s]exual [m]ating [m]echanic[s]. It was [t][r][u]e [t][o] them
 [th]at [th]ey were [s]u[p]e[r]ior—their an[c]e[s]tors were
 having [p]ebble wars and [ea]t[i]ng m[e]d[i]um-[r]are
 [s]qui[r]rel, [w]hile our an[c]e[s]tors [w]ere w[r]iting
 ex[t]en[s]ive [c]o[m]m[en]t[ar]ies on [m]eta[ph][y]s[i]c[s]
 and en[f]or[c]ing [c]o[m]p[l]e[x] [s]y[s]tems of [t]axation,
 [b]ut in our [c]u[r]rent mi[l]ieu they were [b]oth
 un[d]oubte[d][l]y of [s]u[p]e[r]ior [s]to[ck] to [a]nyone
 [e]l[s]e in the [r]oom, e[s][p]e[c]ial[l]y [m]y[s]elf. That
 [m]uch [c]ould not be [d]i[s][p]uted, and I [d]on't
 [d]i[s][p]ute it t[o] thi[s] [d]ay. Yet to [d]i[s]c[u]ss the
 i[n]t[er]i[c]a[c]ies of [d]ol[ph]i[n] i[n]ter[c]o[u]rs[e] was, in
 their eyes, [s]omething [r]evoltin[g], [s]omething [f]or
 [l]a[ck] of a better word [c]l[a]ss[i]e[s]. It was
 e[s]s[e]ntial[l]y a [M]arxi[s]t ane[c]d[o]te, [n]o[t]ing
 [s]p[e]c[i]f[i]cally how [d]ol[ph]in [p]e[n]i[s]
 [p]e[n]etrates [d]ol[ph]in vag[i]na in the [M]ag[d]a[l]l[e]n[a]
 [R]oom that [n]ight. I g[r]ew up i[n]un[d]ated with
 Ang[l]o-Saxons, [D]e[m]o, and [l] k[n]ow when [l]’m
 b[e]ing viewed [a]s [a]n Other, in fa[ct] I k[n]ow [i]t
 [i]n[s]t[i]n[c]t[i]vely[l], it’s [s]omething that e[s]s[e]ntial[l]y
 [r]u[n]s in my [b]l[oo]d, and this was a [p]arti[c]u[l]ar[l]y
 eg[r]e[g]iou[s] [c]a[s]e. And it [b]e[c]ame
 [p]arti[c]u[l]ar[l]y eg[r]e[g]ious [f]o[l]lowing [m]y
 [m]o[n]o[l]ogue i[l]l[u]m[i]nating the [m]e[c]ha[n]i[c]s of
 dol[ph]i[n] i[n]ter[c]o[u]rs[e]. I [m]a[y] have [m]a[d]e a [f]ew
 [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent off-[c]olor [c]o[m]m[en]ts on[c]e the
 [c]onver[s]ation was [c]l[e]ar[l]y going
 [c]o[m]p[l]e[tel]y [d]ownhill, on[c]e thi[s] [d]i[s]c[u]ssion
 was [c]l[e]ar[l]y i[r]re[p]a[r]a[b]le. I [p]ro[b]a[b]l[y]
 [r]aised my [v]oic[e] to an ina[d]v[is]a[b]le [d]e[c]ib[el]
 le[v]el. [B]ut i[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e I [c]a[m]e to [d]e[s]pise
 these two i[n]n[o]c[e]nt young fe[m]ales. And in

[r]et[r][o][s][p]ect, if I'm [h][o]lding [m]y[s]el[f] to the [h]ighe[s]t [s]tandard of hone[s]ty, I de[s]pised them at [f]ir[s]t [s]ight. The [s]e[c]ond our [f]r[ie]n[d]—Ho[r][a]tio [m][a]y have bee[n] there—[m][a]de the a[cq]u[ai]ntan[c]e of these two [f]e[m]ales I i[m]m[e]d[i]ate[l]y [d]e[s]pised them. In[s]tinctive[l]y I k[n]ew [th]e [th]r[ee] of us [c]ould [n]ever b[e] [c]ordial, th[at] [p]erh[a]p[s] the [s][a]c[k]ing of [C]on[s]tan[t]i[n]o[p]le in [T]welve [O]h Four [s]till [d]ivi[d]e[d] us i[n] a[n] i[m]m[utable] [m]a[n]ner. I [b]e[l]ieve in the [p]er[p]etuating [c]ha[r]a[c]te[r]i[s]ti[c]s of [b]l[ood], [D]e[m]o, I [d]on't [c]a[r]e what the [s]cieti[s]ts [s]ay. [S]pi[r]its are a[l]w[ays] a[m]ong us and [w]here [b]etter to [b]ury [th]em[s]elves [th]an [w]ithin our [b]lood[s]t[r]eams? If the [s]pi[r]its of an[c]e[s]tors are [b]u[r]ied any[w]here [i]t's [w]i[thou]t a d[ou]bt in our [b]lood[s]t[r]eams. If the tortured [s]ouls of our muti[l]ated an[c]e[s]tors are [b]u[r]ied any[w]here in the [w]orld [i]t's [w]i[th]in our [b]l[ood]s[t]r[ea]ms, D[e]mo. F[r]om the [s]eco[n]d I [s]aw these two in[n]o[c]ent, [d]e[c]ent-looking girls I [d]e[s]pised them, and I [n]e[ver] qu[est]i[one]d [i]t. [I]n[s]tin[c]tively I k[n]ew [d]i[s]c[u]ssing [d]ol[ph]in [b]o[n]ers would [b]e a[b]ho[r]rent t[o] these in[n]o[c]ent young [f]emales, and I [r]elayed the a[n]e[c]d[o]te without hesitation.

Canto 13—448:606 .739

The [s]e[c]ond their [f]a[c]es [f]l[i]lled w[i]th [d]i[s]gust [a]t my [a]n[n]e[c]d[o]te I was [s]a[t]i[s]fied. If they wal[k]ed [i]nto th[i]s [r]oom [r]ight [n]ow I'[d] imm[e]d[i]atel[y] start to, yet again, [d]i[s]c[u]ss the me[c]hani[c]s of [d]ol[ph]i[n] [i]n[t]er[c]o[u]rs[e]. [D]ol[ph]ins are high[l]y i[n]te[l]lige[n]t [m]a[m]mals—[w]hy shouldn't [w]e [l]earn, in-[d]e[pth], a[b]out their [m]ating ha[b]its? It s[ee]ms entire[l]y [l]ogical to me, [e]ven now. Yet [w]e should be

hone[s]t [w]ith our[s]elves, [w]e shouldn't min[c]e
 [w]ords, [w]e shouldn't [c]o[w]er to euphe[m]ism,
 be[c]ause every[o]ne is Ang[l]o. [M][ay][b]e I haven't
 [m][a]de that [a][b]undant[l][y] c[l]ear yet, [b]ut we're [a]ll
 essentia[l][y] Ang[l]o, we [c]ontain resi[d]ual amounts of
 the H[e][l][l][e]ni[c], we're [d]i[r]e[c]t [d]e[s]ce[n]d[an]ts of
 the [s]o-[c]alled Byzantine, the [p]ωμιο[σ]ύv[n], but
 [e][ss]ential[l][y] [e]ve[r]yone is Ang[l]o, u[s] in[c]l[uded].
 You may [s]it here and [p][r][o][p]o[se] that, [s]ay,
 [P]uert[o] [R]i[c]ans are [s]omehow [d]i[s]tin[c]t from the
 m[e][d]i[an] [w]hite, [w]hen in a[c]tua[l]ity [P]uerto
 [R]i[c]ans are Ang[l]o. But [D]o[m]i[ni[c]ans are
 [d]i[f]fe[r]ent, [r]ight?—[n]o, [D]o[m]i[ni[c]ans are
 [a]c[tua[l]ly [A]ng[l]o [a]s well.
 [A][f]r[o]-[A][m]e[r]i[c]ans are in[c]re[d]ib[l][y] [A]ng[l]o,
 in [f]a[c]t. The [P]ortuguese are [d]e[f]inite[l][y] Ang[l]o,
 [t]hey're [t]he a[p]ex of Ang[l]o, the [S][p]anish [a]re
 [a][s]o [t]o[tal]ly Ang[l]o, and the [I]talians are [a]s
 [A]ng[l]o [a]s anyone, Fi[l]i[p]i[n]o[s]—we [c]an't de[n]y
 their e[ss]ential [A]ng[l]i[c]ism, be[c]ause we're all
 e[ss]ential[l][y] [e][q]ua[l][y] Ang[l]o, wherever
 [C]athol[i]cism and [i]t[s] meta[ph]y[s]i[c]s has
 [s]p[r]ead, the Ang[l]o [w]orld [w]ith[ou]t a d[ou]bt has
 [f]lo[wd], whe[r]ever the [s]ordid meta[ph]y[s]i[c]s of
 the [C]athol[i]c church h[a]s [p]l[anted] its [r]oots,
 [A]ng[l]i[c]ism has [p]ro[l]i[f]e[r]ated unab[r]idged.
 [A]ng[l]os, [F]ra[n]ks, Ve[n]etia[n]s, Italians, the
 Ger[m]a[ni[c] [t]r[i]bes, we [sh]oul[d]n't [l]ose [m]uch
 [s]l[ee]p in [d]i[s]tingu[i]sh[i]ng these [t]erms, [b]e[c]ause
 they're all [s]u[b]s[e]c[t]s of each other [e][ss]en[tia]lly,
 we [sh]ouldn't [l]ie to our[s]elves about [t]hat. [T]hese
 [t]erms [e][n]c[omp]a[ss] the [e][n]t[i]re world and for that
 r[ea]son [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent[l][y] m[e]an e[ss]ential[l][y]
 nothing. We [a]ll [a]t[t]empt [t]o quar[r]y g[r]ou[p]s of
 [p]eo[p]le off by the [t]i[n]t of their s[k]i[n], the sha[p]les of

their eyes, the [c]on[t]ours of their [n]oses, [th]e [th][i][ck][n]e[ss] of their [l][i]p[s], when the [r]ea[l]it[y] is [e]ve[r]yone is [e]ssential[l][y] [A]ng[l][o]. Mi[c]hael [J]or[d]an [i]s [i]n[c]re[d]i[b]l[y] [A]ng[l][o]. As are [L]arry [B]ird and Sha[q][ui][l]e O'N[ea][l]. [C]ait[l]yn [J]e[n]ner is [n]oth[i]ng [i]f [n]ot [A]ng[l]o, [a]nd the [K]ard[a]shians are the [s]p[i]tt[i]ng [i]m[a]ge of [A]ng[l][i][c]l[i]sm. The world [i]s [i]n[c]re[d]i[b]l[y] [c]omp[l]ex, [b]ut at times it [c]an [b]e [d]ivi[d]ed [e]ven[l][y] in[t]o [t]w[o]—the Ang[l][o] world and the [s]o-[c]alled Gree[k] [w]orld, [w]hich n[o] [l]onger exi[s]ts.

Canto 14—448:651 .688

The world [i]s [i]n[c]redi[b]l[y] [c]omp[l]ex, [b]ut at [c]ertain times it [c]an [b]e easi[l][y] [s]p[l]it [d]own the m[i]ddle, at [t]imes the world re[d]u[c]es [t]o e[ss]ential[l][y] [t]w[o] [d]i[m]ensions, in [s]ome [w]ays the [w]orld on[l][y] exi[s]ts [t]wo [d]i[m]ensional[l][y], the [s]c[h]i[sm] be[t]w[ee]n the [C]atho[l]i[c]i[sm] that over[t]oo[k] the [w]orld and the Orthodox[y] that [e]ventual[l][y] [b]e[c]ame [m]o[r]e o[r] [l]e[ss] [e]xtinguished, [m]ay[b]e that's one in[s]tan[c]e of [b]i[n]ar[y] [s]i[m]p[l]i[c]i[t]y, the [i]de[a] of [a] God who w[an]ts to hear your [p]ett[y] [s]ins, who [w]ants to [s]p[eak] [w]ith you and have [s]ome ty[p]e of [r]e[l]a[t]i[on]sh[i]p. A [p]er[s]onal [r]e[l]a[t]i[on]sh[i]p w[i]th God—it's the mo[s]t ab[s]urd thing. It's e[ss]ential[l][y] [a]thei[s]m. There's on[l][y] one end-g[a]me to be[l]ieving the [a]ll[eg]ed [C]re[ator] of the Univer[s]e wants to [h]ear [a]b[ou]t [h]ow you [s]to[l]e a [b]ag of [L]ays chip[s] from your [U]ni[v]er[s]ity [c]on[v]enien[c]e [s]tore as an [ei]ghteen year old—the on[l][y] end-g[a]me to that [s]ort of meta[ph]y[s]i[cs] [i]s [a]theism. It's r[u]th[l]e[ss][l][y] [d]ua[l]i[s]t [b]ut al[s]o [d]e[l]ightful[l][y] athei[s]t. [i]f y[ou] tr[u]l[y] [b]e[l]ieve

God [w][i]shes to [s]peak [w][i]th [y]ou about the [y]oung
 man [y]ou [v][i]c[i]ous[l]y threatened with [v]io[l]en[c]e
 [w]hen [y]ou [w]ere on[l]y ninet[ee]n [y]ears old th[e]n
 [y]ou're [e][ss]ential[l]y an ath[ei]st. That's how we
 [c]ould be[s]t de[s][c]r[i]be it. An idea [th]at [th]e
 ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e of God is [s]umma[r]ized verbal[l]y,
 [a]nd th[at] all [s][p]i[r]itual ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e mu[s]t [d]efer
 to a[n] i[n]tel[l]ectual un[d]e[r[s]tan[d]ing of it—we're all
 Ang[l]o now. Of [c]our[s]e I [d]e[s]pised th[o]se two
 i[n]no[c]e[n]t Ang[l]o [g]irls, be[c]ause I [s]aw
 [m][y]s[el]f in them—in [s]o [m]any ways I've [b]e[c]ome
 a[n] i[n]no[c]e[n]t Ang[l]o [g]irl ju[s]t [b]y d[e]f[i]n[e] of [i]n[v]i[s]ing
 i[n] the world i[n] a [c]on[t]i[n]uous fashion. Wh[y] haven't
 I re[t]ired [t]o an o[b]s[c]ure mountain [s]omewhere, to
 [b]e[c]o[m]e $\rho\omega\mu\iota\sigma\upsilon\nu\eta$ again? [B]ut that's wh[y] I
 have no [q]ualms a[b]out de[s]pising [c]ertain
 [p]eo[p]le for no [p]arti[c]u[l]ar r[e]ason—[b]e[c]ause, at
 [b]ottom, we're all essentia[l]y Ang[l]o. Yet, if we're
 [b]eing hone[s]t with our[s]elves, it's [o]n[l]y the
 h[o]meless who t[r]u[l]y [r]ecognize the absur[d]ity of
 our a[l]lege[d] i[n]d[i]v[i]dua[l]ism—a [p]oor guy
 [s][i]n[ee]p[s] in the [s]treet, [a]nd we [a]ct [a]s if he
 [m]u[r]de[r]ed a [m]an. [S]ome[o]ne falls on hard times,
 [b]eg[i]ns [d]r[i]nk[i]ng heavi[l]y, p[r]o[b]a[b]l[y] [d]oes
 a [d]ecent amount of [d]rugs, [h]e [l]oses [h]is job, [h]is
 [h]ome, [h]is wife [l]eaves [h]im, [h]e's [r]e[d]u[c]ed to
 [b]egging [p]eo[p]le on [s]treet [c]orners for [d]ollar
 [b]ills and [s]leeping in a[l]leyways, and [w]e [a]ct [a]s
 if [h]is [h]ardshi[p] is a[n] i[n]convenien[c]e [f]or
 u[s]—we're off[en]ded at his [p]overty. I've
 ex[p]erien[c]ed [m]ore [m]alici[e] [d]i[r]e[c]ted at bums in
 the [p]a[s]t [d]e[c]ade tha[n] a[n]y [p]r[e]v[i]ous
 [d]e[c]ade I [c]an [r]e[c]all, the malici[e] toward bums
 [s]eems to b[e] i[n]c[r]ea[s]ing in this [c]ountry [a]t [a]n
 alm[o]st exp[o]nential [r]ate.

Canto 15—553:720 .768

They [v]iew it as a [s]e[v]ere aff[r]ont to [th]eir [l][i][b]erty
 [th]at a [b]um—who [s][l][ee][p]s in a[l][ey]s and
 [r]emains [p]ar[k]ed e[ss]ential[l][y] at [d]eath's [d]oor
 [d]ay and night—should a[s][k] them for [s][p]are change.
 Our [s]o[c]iet[y] ab[j]ect[l][y] fails [p]eo[p]le, and [p]eo[p]le
 [w]ith a[l]leged moral [s]tanding [w]ithin our [s]o[c]iet[y]
 can hard[l][y] [b][e] [b]othered to [e]ven [w]itne[ss] a
 [b]um, to gaze at a [b]um [f]or a [b][r]ie[f] pe[r]iod of time,
 i[f] they're [f]or[c]ed to [e]ven [m]i[n]i[m]al[l][y]
 i[n]te[r][a]c[t with a [b]um they [v]iew it [a]s a [s]ort of
 [s][a]c[r]i[l]ege. [V]iewing a [p]er[s]on [s]ans a
 [d]omi[c]ile is [c]on[s]i[d]ered an aff[r]ont to good [t]a[s]te.
 [B]ut who wouldn't [t]os[s] a [c]ou[p]le ex[t]ra [b]a[ck] if
 they [n][o] longer [h]ad a [h][o]me? There's [n][o] doubt
 that [t]o [s]ome ex[t]ent we—all of u[s]—have failed
 th[e]se [p]eo[p]le in [s]ome way that's [p]ro[b]a[b]l[y]
 mate[r]i[al]. It's one thing to [b]e [d][ow]n and
 [ou]t—[b]ut to [b]e on the [s]t[r]eet [d]r[i]n[k]ing a
 hal[f]-[f]illed [C][o][c]a-[C][o][l]a [b]ottle [f]i[l]led w[i]th
 [i][l]l[i]c[i]t s[u]b[s]tan[c]es, a[s]king [s]t[r]angers for
 mon[ey], [c]l[earl][y] on[l][y] partia[l][y] a[w]a[r]e of
 [w]he[r]e you are, that [sh]ould, [f]r[an]k[l][y], be
 [sh]amef[ul] [f]or all of us. Any[o]ne [c]an be[c]o[m]e a
 [c]r[a]c[k] a[ddi]c[t. [I]f the h[i]s[t]o[r]y of [c]r[a]c[k] in
 this [c]ount[r]y has taught u[s] [a]nything it's that
 [a]ny[o]ne [c]an be[c]o[m]e a [c]r[a]c[k]head. We're all
 [c]a[p]a[b]le of [b]e[c]o[m]ing [c]r[a]c[k]heads, given the
 a[p]p[r]o[p]r[i]ate [c]ir[c]um[s]tan[c]es. The whites of
 [A]m[e]r[i]c[a] [l]aughed [a]t the b[l]a[ck]s of
 [A]m[e]r[i]c[a] du[r]ing the [c]r[a]c[k] e[r]a, as the
 U[n]ited States govern[m]ent [p]um[p]ed [c]r[a]c[k] into
 [b]l[a]c[k] n[eigh]b[or]hoods, on[l]y to, [d]e[c]a[d]es
 l[ate]r, f[i]nd ent[i]re [l]ower-[c]l[a]s[s] white

[c]o[m]mu[n]it[ie]s [t]urned in[t]o jun[k]ie[s], [b]a[ck]ed
[b]y the U[n]ited [S]tates govern[m]ent, [b]a[ck]ed [b]y
the phar[m]a[c]euti[c]al [c]ompanies, who
[i]nd[i][s][c][r][i][m][i]nate[l]y to[ss]ed he[r]oin
e[q]uiva[l]ents at any [l]ower-[c][l]a[ss] [w]hite [w]ith a
[s]p[r]ained an[k]le that [w]ent [t]o their ph[y]s[i]c[i]an.
A[n] e[n][t]ire ge[n]e[r]ation of white junkies e[m]erged
s[ee][m]ing[l]y overn[i]gh[t], the [l]aughter of wh[i]t[ie]s
[c][a][ck][l]ing at [c][r][a][ck] [c]o[c]aine un[d]oubted[l]y
[r]esoun[d]i[n]g i[n] the [b]a[ck]g[r]ound. Yet just as the
[b]l[a]ck [p]o[p]u[l]ation of Ame[r]i[c]a e[ss]ential[l]y had
no choi[c]e [b]ut to [b]e[c]ome [b]l[a]ck
[c][r][a][ck]heads, the white [p]o[p]u[l]ation of A[m]eri[c]a
has si[m]il[ar][l]y invo[l]un[t]ari[l]y [t]ran[s]f[or]med
in[t]o white jun[k]ies. [Ph]arma[c]euti[c]al [c]om[p]an[ie]s
have a[t]tained [m]ul[t]i-billion dol[lar] [m]ar[k]et [c]a[p]s
al[m]o[s]t ex[c]lusive[l]y by [t]urning [p]oor [w]h[ite]s
in[t]o [w]h[ite] jun[k]ies. Yet no [o]ne [w]ants to [d]eal
[w]ith [w]h[ite] jun[k]ies [w]h[i]le they're [d]rin[k]ing
[w]i[n]e [a]nd h[a]ving [a]p[p]e[t]izers. The [s]e[r]ve[r]s
and the [c]u[s]t[ome]r[s] [c]onve[r]s[e] about what
[s]te[p]s the [c]ity should [t]a[k]e [t]o [c]oun[t]e[r]a[c]t the
white jun[k]ies and the b[l]a[ck] [c][r][a][ck]heads who
invade the [l]i[n]es of s[i]ght of [p]eo[p]le who've [d]r[iv]en
tens of miles to [s]t[u]ff their [f]a[c]es with [c]a[l]a[m]a[r]i
and [m]ozza[r]e[l]la [s]t[i]ck[s] and ja[l]a[p]eno
[p]o[p]pers, to [d]r[ink] [c]r[af]t beers and [s]u[ck] [d]own
wine [s]p[r]itzers. Th[e]se [p]eo[p]le just [c]an't get
enou[gh] t[r]a[n]s [f]a[t], and they hate [b]ums. Th[e]se
[p]eo[p]le [s]p[en]d hours a day exam[i]n[i]ng the
[i]nt[r]i[c]a[c]ies of [c]r[af]t [b]eer [b]ut [c]om[p]l[e]te[l]y
[l]a[ck] the teme[r]it[y] to [e]ven [s]p[ea]k with a [b]um.

Canto 16—516:676 .763

It never occurs to any of th[e]se [p][eo][p]le [th]at [th]eir own [l]atent ma[l]l[i]c[e] [i]s [d]i[r]ect[l]y [r]e[s]pon[s]ible [f]or the [d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[t]ed [s]t[a]te of their [f]el[l]ow [c][i]t[i]zens, [th]at [th]eir [c]om[p][l]i[c]i[t]y, their myo[p]i[c] and en[d]u[r]ing i[d]io[c]y has [d]ire[c]t[l]y [r]esulted in a [s]tate that's shame[l]e[ss][l]y [p][r]o[d]u[c]ed white jun[k]ies [a]nd b[l]a[ck] [c][r]a[ck]heads at a[l]larming [r]ates. It's a shame [th]at [th]e c[i]ty [i]s[n't] [d]oing more, th[e]se [p][eo][p]le [s]ay without a [t]r[a]c[e] of i[r]ony, and [th]en [th]ey [d]i[s]c[u]ss the [t]ange[r]ine a[f]ter[t]a[s]te in an over[p]r[i]c[ed] [c]r[a]ft [b]eer. Do you [t]aste [t]ange[r]ine at all?—No, I was getting [a] [b]it of [a] [B]artlett [p]ear a[f]ter[t]a[s]te! The [p]eo[p]le who [d]i[r]ink c[r]a[ft] [b]eer, it [s]eem[s] to [m]e, [d]e[s]p[ite] their a[d]van[t]ageou[s] and [c]al[cu]lated [p]oses of [l]ibe[r]a[l]ism, are the [m]o[s]t una[p]o[l]ogeti[c]a[l]y [c]a[p]ita[l]i[s]t [c][r]i[m]i[n]als we have [i]n th[i]s [c]ount[r]y. I've never heard a [c]r[a]ft [b]eer enthusia[s]t a[p]o[l]ogize [f]or the idio[c]y of his [c]al[cu]lated [l]i[b]eral [p]oses. The [c]r[a]ft [b]eer d[r]i[n]k[er]s instead m[ai]ntai[n] a t[r]a[n]s[p]a[r]ent [p]ose of [b]enign [l]i[b]e[r]a[l]ism, y[e]t [s]till e[nd] all of their [t]i[m]e [t]r[y]ing [t]o de[t]e[c]t the [s]i[gh]te[s]t [t]r[a]c[e] of Bart[l]ett [p]ear [i]n [a] [C]o[n]o[ut] [i]ndi[a] [P]a[le] [A]le—as o[pp]o[s]ed [t]o [e]ve[n] a[t]t[em]p[ti]ng to [h]el[p] any of their fellow [h]uman b[e]i[n]gs. Th[e]se [p][eo][p]le who su[p]p[ort] [c]r[a]ft [b]eer ch[oo]se [t]o [b]uy [b]rands that a[l]l[e]g[e]d[l]y [d]o[n]ate to Good [C]auses, they [p]o[s]t to [s]o[c]ial [p]l[at]forms to make [p]eo[p]le they d[o]n't k[n]ow aware [th]at [th]ey [b]uy The [S]o[c]ially Re[s]p[on]si[b]le [B]eers, k[n]o[w]ing [e]ntire[l]y well that all of these d[o]n[ati]ons are [e]ssentia[l]y cri[m]i[n]al, that [n]o[n]e of thi[s] [m]o[n]ey ever

[r][ea]ches the [p][eo][p]le it [n][ee]ds to [r][ea]ch, wh[i]ch
[i]s [r]ea[d]ily a[p]pa[r]ent, [b]e[c]ause when they [s]it
[d]own to or[d]er [s]aid [c][r]aft [b]eer all they [s]ee are
[b]ums. [O]nly a [c][r]a[ft] beer d[r]in[k]er would
[c]on[c]lude the [m][o]st e[ff]icient way of [h][e]lping [h]is
[f][e][l]low [h]u[m]an [b][e]ing is [b]uying [m]ore [c][r]a[ft]
[b][ee]r. The [r]ea[l]ity is [n]one of us k[n]ow [w]hat t[o]
d[o] [w]ith [b]ums, [w]e're [p][r]ivy to [n][o] [b]um
[s]o[l]utions, [n][o] [s]o[l]ution to our [b]um [p][r]o[b]l[em]s,
yet we k[n]ow all of these [b]ums are e[ss]entiall[y]
Ang[l]o. The white jun[k]ie and [b][l][a][ck] [c]r[a][ck]head
are [b]o[th] at [b]ottom entirel[y] Ang[l]o. We k[n]ow
how to [p][r]o[d]uce [b]u[ms], [b][u]t we have [n][o] i[d]ea
[w]hat t[o] d[o] [w]ith these [b]u[ms] o[nce] [w]e've
[p]ro[d]uced them. We [p]ro[d]uce [b]ums
shame[l]e[ss]l[y], and then even more
[sh]ame[l]e[ss]l[y] w[e] [sh]u[n] th[e]se [b]u[ms] from
a[cc]epta[b]le [s]o[c]iety. Yo[u]'ll never meet [a] p[er]son
at [a] r[estau]rant d[ow]ntow[n] who [u]sed to [b]e a
[b]um. It's im[p]o[ss]i[b]le for [b]ums to [r]e-en[t]er in[t]o
[s]o[c]iety, there's a [w]all, an in[s]urmounta[b]le [w]all
that's [c]on[s]t[r]ucted a[r]ound eve[r]y [b]u[m] i[n] th[i]s
[c]ou[n]t[r]y, betw[ee]n the st[r]eets of a [d]ow[n]tow[n]
and the r[estau]rants of a [d]ow[n]tow[n]. A
[r]estau[r]ant-g[oe]r [c]an [b]e[c]o[m]e a [b]u[m], [b][u]t a
[b]u[m] will never a[g]ain [b]e[c]ome a
[r]estau[r]ant-g[oe]r.

Canto 17—500:689 .726

The harsh rea[l]ity is [th]at [th]ere's [l]ittle we can [d]o
[f]or our [f]e[l]low [c][i]t[i]zens who've reached [s]uch
[d]i[st]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [s]t[ate]s more [th]an [s]im[p]l[y] talking
to [th]em, and th[i]s [i]s [s]omething anyone who's [b]een
in a [d]i[st]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [s]t[ate] knows to [b]e
[p]ro[f]oundl[y] t[r]ue. The e[n]t[ire] i[n]du[s]t[r]y of

[s]t[r]i[pp]ers and w[h]ores, in [f]act, should [b]e
[r]e[h]a[b]i[l]it[a]ted [b]a[s]ed on this [p]oint a[l]l[o]ne,
because n[o] one in our [s]o[c]iety gives the
[d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [p]er[s]on more [t]ime of [d]ay [th]an
[th]e exo[t]ic [d]an[c]er. It's un[d]oubte[d]l[y] true [th]at,
[th]i[s] [c]e[n]tur[y], the exoti[c] [d]an[c]ing
[c]om[m]u[n]it[y] has [d]one [m]ore for the
[d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [p]er[s]on [c]o[m]mu[n]it[y] than the
[C]atho[l]i[c] [ch]ur[ch] [c]o[m]mu[n]it[y]. Be[c]ause
[s]tri[pp]ers and whores [i]nnate[l]y g[i]ve the
[d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [p]er[s]on the time of [d]ay, any
[s]tri[pp]er worth her [s]alt [i]n[s]t[i]n[c]t[i]ve[l]y kn[ow]s
how to [s]p[ea]k to the [d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [s]ou[l], the
[d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [p]er[s]on ju[s]t needs [s]omeone to
[l]i[s]ten to a [s]ob [s]tory for a [s]e[c]ond of time, [f]or
[s]omeone to [c]are [f]or a [f]r[a]c[tio[n] of a[n] iot[a] of
their day, to p[r]e[t]end [t]o [c]are in a way that's not
g[r]oss[l]y [c]on[d]e[s]cen[d]ing in the [c]o[m]m[un]it[y]
bu[r]eau[c]r[ati]c [m]a[n]ner. Yet [th]ere's [th]i[s]
[m]i[s]guided n[ot]ion [th]at [th]e [s]t[r]ipper [o]n[l]y
[t]alks [t]o [c]u[s]tomers, whe[n] i[n] [f]a[c]t the
[s]tri[pp]er [s]p[ea]ks to [i]n[f]i[n]ite[l]y [m]ore [p]otential
[c]u[s]tomers th[a]n a[c]tual [c]u[s]tomers—the
[s]u[cc]e[s]s[f]ul [s]tri[pp]er, in [f]a[c]t, has no [m]ore than
a [s]mall hand[f]ul of [c]u[s]tomers that [p]ay her
[b]ills—and, [b]y [c]ontra[s]t, it's [th]e [p]otential
[c]u[s]tomers who are [i]n[f]i[n]ite[l]y [m]ore [l]i[k]e[l]y
to be [d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d. The a[c]tual [c]u[s]tom[er] is
[m]ore [l]i[k]e[l]y to be o[p]u[l]ent and jovial,
un[r]e[s]t[r]ained and [d]e[c]a[d]ent, while the [p]otential
[c]u[s]tom[er] is a[l]l [m]ost a[l]lways entire[l]y
[d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d. G[i]v[i]ng th[i]s [p]o[t]ential cu[s]tom[er]
the [t]ime of day is a[l]mo[s]t a [r]e[l]i[g[i]ous act on
[th]e [p]arts of [th]e [s]t[r]i[pp]ers and whores. And it's for
[p]r[e]c[i]sely thi[s] [r]ea[s]on I have [s]o [m]uch [m]ore

[r]e[s][p]ect for [s]t[r]i[pp]ers and whores than I [d]o [f]or
the [m][e][d][i]an [c][r]a[ft] [b]eer [d][r]i[n][k]er. W[e]
[b]e[l][i]e[ve] [c][r]a[ft] [b]eer [d][r]i[n][k]ers are [l]a[u]d[a]b[le]
mem[b]ers of our [s]o[c]iety, [w]hile [w]e [d]e[n]ig[r]ate
[s]t[r]i[pp]ers and whores, [b]ut I a[c]t[ua]l[l]y find
[s]t[r]i[pp]ers and whores to [b]e [l]a[u]d[a]b[le] mem[b]ers
of our [s]o[c]iety, wh[i]le [l] [d]e[n]ig[r]ate [c][r]a[ft] beer
[d][r]i[n][k]ers. There's [o]n[l]y [s][o] much you [c]an do for
a guy who's [b]e[c]o[m]e a [b]u[m] on the [s]t[r]ee[t], one
[p]a[rti]c[u]l[ar] [b]u[m] a[pp]r[o]ach[ed] me on a [s]e[c]o[n]d
[d]a[te] i[n] a[n] a[l]l[e]yway a[n]d [r]e[f]er[re]d to the [g]i[r]l I
[w]as [w]ith as my [w]i[f]e, and I [g]ave him ten [d]o[l]lars,
but even that [t]en [d]o[l]lars wasn't [s]i[n]c[er]e, that [t]en
[d]o[l]lars was a [d]i[s]i[n]genuou[s] [t]en [d]o[l]lars, it was
obviou[s][l]y [f]or the be[n]e[f]it of the girl I [w]as [w]ith.
You [n][ee]d to [s]p[ea]k to [p]eo[p]le in
[d]i[l]a[p]i[d]a[te]d [s]t[ate]s, [l]arge[l]y [b]e[c]a[us]e it's the
o[n]l[y] thing you [c]an [d]o that will, [a]t [b]ottom, h[a]ve a
[p]a[l]p[a]b[le] effe[c]t.

Canto 18—506:657 .770

What hap[p]ens to them will [l]arge[l]y [b]e [f]ata[l]i[s]ti[c],
it will [b]e a matter of [f]ate [s]tat[i]s[tic]ally
[s]p[ea]k[ing], [b]ut it's j[u]st [u]tter [c][r]uel[t]y [t]o
ignore them, [t]o [t]r[ea]t them as [p]eo[p]le who [d]on't
[d]eserve the [t]ime of [d]ay, [n]ot eve[n] a[n] iota of
your a[ft]e[r]n[oon], to [c]o[m]p[l]ai[n] to your [w]a[ite]r
[b]e[c]a[us]e a [w]hite ju[n]k[ie] in your [l]i[n]e of s[i]ght is
ruining the [B]a[r]l[e]tt [p]ear a[ft]e[r]t[he] a[st]e of your [t]en
do[l]lars I[P][A]. [B]ut th[i]s [i]s what's happened to [s][o]
many [d]o[wn]t[ow]ns, these [s]ame [d]o[wn]t[ow]ns I
[s]till g[o] to, these [d]o[wn]t[ow]ns th[at] h[a]ve [m]y
[m]e[m]ories [f]o[l]d[ed] into them, [m]aybe a [d]e[c]a[d]e
or [m]ore [f]o[l]d[ed] into [th]em—[th]ey've [b]e[c]ome
i[n]j[u]d[ate]d with [c][r]a[ft] [b]eer [d][r]i[n][k]ers. It's [n]ot

[th]e [b]ums who o[ff]end me, [n]o, it's the [c][r]a[ff]t [b]eer
 [d][r]in[k]ers who o[ff]end me. It's the [p]eo[p]le who
 [b]e[l][ie]ve twelve [d]o[l]lars for a [b]eer is an
 a[p]p[r]o[p]r[i]ate [p]r[i]ce to [p]ay for a [b]eve[r]age. It's
 the [p]eo[p]le who thin[k] [d]i[s][c]u[s]sing the afterta[s]te
 of ho[p]s is an a[p]p[r]o[p]r[i]ate [c]onver[s]ation to have
 in [p]ub[l]i[c]. It's the [p]eo[p]le who be[l][ie]ve
 [s]t[r]i[p]pers and whores are [p]eo[p]le we should [l]ook
 down u[p]on a [p]r[i]o[r][i]—it's the [p]eo[p]le who
 [m]ai[n[t]ai[n all the [s]o[cia[l]i[y] a[p]p[r]o[p]r[i]ate
 o[p]inions but [d]i[s][p]l[y] all of the [m]o[s]t
 [c]oward[l]y [t]e[n]d[e]n[c]ies. Our [d]ow[n]t[ow]ns are
 [b]eing [r]uined [b]y th[e]se [p]eo[p]le, w[h]o [h]ave the
 [c]o[r]re[c]t o[p]i[n]i[on]s on eve[r]y issue—at [b]ottom all
 th[e]se [p]eo[p]le [c]are a[b]out is m[ai]n[t]ai[ning the
 [c]o[r]re[c]t o[p]i[n]i[on] on any issue [a]t h[a]nd. Our
 d[ow]n[tow]ns [w]ere [o]n[c]e [g][r]ea[t] [p]l[a]c[es] to
 [g]r[ab] a [s]l[i]c[e] of [p]izza—f[l]l[ed] w[i]th bums and
 [s]t[r]i[p]pers and whores—[b]ut [n]ow our
 [d]ow[n]t[ow]ns are i[n]un[d]ated with [c][r]a[ff]t [b]eer
 [d][r]in[k]ers and [f]r[i]ed [c][a][l]l[a]m[a]r[i] and
 [m]ozza[r]e[l]l[a] [s]ti[ck]s and j[a]l[a]p[eno] [p]o[p]pers
 and [p]eo[p]le who have [s]o[cia[l]i[y] a[cc]e[p]table
 o[p]i[n]i[on]s on [e]ve[r]ything. [I]t's d[i]s[gu]s[t]ing
 [r]ea[l]i[y]. [B]u[t o[f] course a[l]l [r]a[t]iona[l]i[s]m [i]s [l]ittle
 more than a[b]surd[i]t[y]. [p]ro[p]a[ga]n[d]a. It's on[l]y
 via [r]a[t]iona[l]i[s]m, [a]n [e]ss[e]ntia[l] Angl[o] con[c]e[pt],
 that we find our[s]elves [w]i[th]i[n] a [p]r[i]sm [w]here
 eve[r]y[th]i[n]g [i]s Angl[o], [w]h[er]e [e]ve[r]y [w]hite
 ju[n]kie and b[l]a[ck] [c][r]a[ck]head are [e]q[ua]l[i]y
 Angl[o]. It's [o]n[l]y [w]he[n] [w]e atte[n]d the
 [f]une[r]als of c[l]o[s]e [f]r[i]e[n]ds who die ab[s]urd[l]y
 young that w[e] [r]ea[l]ize [th]i[s], [th]a[t] all
 [r]a[t]iona[l]i[s]m [i]s [l]ittle more than [l]u[r]id
 ab[su[r]d[i]st [p]ro[p]a[ga]n[d]a. On[l]y [p]eo[p]le who

attend these [f]une[r]als under[s]tand thi[s] [f][r]om
 ex[p]e[r]ien[c]e. We [r]ealize not ju[s]t the a[b][s]urdit[y]
 of th[e]se [c]onver[s]ations [b]ut the a[b][s]urdit[y] of
 our[s]elves—A[n]d eve[n] i[n] my [c]ase, it was on[l][y] a
 [f]ew years [a][g]o when [a] [g]ood [f]riend of m[i]ne
 [f][i]nal[l][y], a[f]ter years of [s][ee]ming[l][y]
 [c][ea][s]e[l]e[ss] [s]u[f]fe[r]ing, g[a]ve in to [l][a]te
 [s]t[a]ge b[r][ai]n [c]an[c]er. The entire ord[ea]l was
 [c][r]i[m]i[n]al, and to [b]e [c][l][ea]r I was p[r]o[b]a[b]l[ly]
 one of the [m]ost [c][r]i[m]i[n]al.

Canto 19—434:601 .722

[M]y social [c][r][i]m[i]nality h[a]s [p]erh[a][p]s
 [n]ever been [m]ore a[c]ute than [d]u[r]ing this [p]e[r]iod
 of [m][y] [l][i]fe. [M][y] [f]riend was [d]iag[n]o[s]ed with
 [l][a]te [s]t[a]ge b[r][ai]n [c]an[c]er and moved [b]a[ck]
 in [w][i]th h[i]s pa[r]ents [w]here, [n]ot [l]ong a[f]ter, h[e]
 [s]u[f]fered a [s]eizure wh[i]le [d][r]i[ving], [t]otaled his car,
 and was [f]rom then on [f]orbi[dd]en [t]o [d][r]ive. [S]o
 n[a]tu[r]al[l][y], [b]eing a good [f]riend, [b]eing
 [a]ctua[l][y] a [b]etter [f]riend to him than even a [f]ew of
 the [f]riends [h]e'd [h]ad [f]or [d]e[c]a[d]es, a [b]etter
 [f]riend at lea[s]t in [t]erms of [t]ime [s][p]ent, I [t]ook it
 u[p]on [m]y[s]el[f] to [d][r]i[ve] [t]o his [p]a[r]ents' house
 [m]ul[t]i[p]le [t]i[m]es [p]er [w]ee[k], after [w]or[k], [w]here
 I alrea[d]y had a [d]ecent [c]om[m]ute, [w]hich [w]asn't
 a[n] i[n]s[i]gn[i]f[i]c[an]t [d][r]ive, to his [p]a[r]ents'
 [h]ouse, to [h]ang out w[i]th h[i]m, to [p]i[c]k h[i]m u[p]
 and then d[r]ive him to other [p]laces [w]here [w]e'd
 hang [ou]t [f]or a [r]ea[sonable] am[ou]nt of time, [w]here
 a[f]ter[w]ard I'd [d][r]i[ve] h[i]m back to [h]is pa[r]ents'
 [h]ou[s]e. Th[i]s was a [d][i]ff[i]c[ult] or[d]eal [f]or my
 [f]riend [a]s you [c]an im[a]gine, and there were
 va[r]ious [s]e[r]ies [o]f [u]p[s] and [d]owns—had I [b]een
 [b]orn into [w]ealth I'd have [d]one [w]hatever he a[s]ked,

[b]ut [b]ein[g] a wor[k]in[g] [s]tiff there was [o]nly [s][o] much that I [c]ould do, there [w]ere [t]imes he [w]an[t]ed [t]o get an ice [c][r]eam [c]one and I, unfortunate[l]y, had to [d]o [l]aun[d]r[y]. A young man with [l]a[te] [s]t[age] [b][r][ai]n [c]an[c]er, e[ss]ential[l]y a [d]eath [s]enten[c]e, [w]anted to [b]uy [m]e a [m]int [ch]o[c]o[l]ate [ch]i[p] [w]affle [c]one, [b]ut I had to [p]ol[i]te[l]y [d]e[c][l]i[n]e [b]e[c]ause [l] nee[d]ed to wash my [b]oxer [b]r[ie]f[s]. I[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e his girl[f]r[i]end, who was [y]ounger [th]an [th]e two of u[s] [y]et [s]till [y]oung, [d]u[m]ped him not long a[f]ter, and [f]rom this we [c]on[c]l[u]ded that ap[p]a[r]ent[l]y [w]aiting [f]or him [t]o [d]ie [w]as [t]oo much of a bu[r]den [f]or her, wh[i]ch [i]n [r]et[r]o[s]p[ect] I [s]u[pp]ose is [f]air [e]n[ou]gh, [n]ot [e]ve[r]y[o]ne has the [p]a[t]ien[c]e to [w]ait [f]or [s]o[m]e[o]ne to die, a [t]erm[i]n[al] [i]ll[n]e[ss], for [s]ome [p]eo[p]le, [c]an just [b]e a [b]it [t]oo in[c]onvenient, a [t]ad [t]oo [c]um[b]er[s]ome. At the [t]ime, I d[i]dn't th[i]nk [m]uch of it, [m]y [f]riend was [f]air[l]y [t]orn [u]p a[b]out it, and who could [b]lame him?—[b]ut, again, with the ex[c]e[p]tion of [c]on[s]o[l]ing a [p]er[s]on in a mo[r]e o[r] [l]e[ss] gene[r]i[c] [w]ay there's not much [w]e [c]an [r]ea[l]i[s]ti[c]a[l]l[y] do. We [c]an [t]ell our [d]ying [f]r[i]end that his ex-girl[f]r[i]end is a [t]e[r]ri[b]le person, a [t]aw[d]r[y] whore, that he [d]eserves [b]etter, [b]ut the [r]ea[l]i[t]y [i]s there's [n]ear[l]y [n]othing [y]ou [c]an tell a [y]oung per[s]on who, in all [l]i[k]e[l]ihood, will [d]ie a [s]low [d]eath, there's [n]ext to [n]othing you [c]an tell [h]im that will [c]om[f]ort [h]im when [h]is att[r]a[c]tive girl[f]r[i]end [r]uthl[e]ss[l]y [l]eaves him.

Canto 20—483:709 .681

It's g[r]eat to [s]ay, it's an [a]ppealing i[d]ea to [th]in[k] [th]at we [c]an [a]rr[i]ve at the [d]oor of a

[d][y]ing young man and [a]lter his li[f]e [f]or the [b]etter,
 [b]ut [i]t's [s][i]gn[i]f[i]cantly [m]ore d[i]ff[i]cult [t]han
 you [m]ight [t]hink, in [p]rac[tic]e it's [m]ore o[r]
 [l]e[ss] an [i][m]p[ro]s[s]ib[i]l[i]t[y]. You [i][m]a[gine] a[t]
 [t]he time [t]hat you're [s]aying [s]omething un[i]que[i]y
 en[i]ghte[ni]ng whe[n] i[n] rea[l]it[y] you're ju[s]t
 mind[le]ss[ly] [s]pewing ge[n]e[r]i[c]
 [c]on[d]o[le]n[c]e[s]—ge[n]e[r]i[c] [c]on[d]o[le]n[c]e[s] that
 a[r]e [h]a[r]d[ly] of any [h]e[l]p at a[l]l. [H]aving [s]aid that,
 [d]u[r]ing my [d]ay-to-[d]ay [r]outi[n]e I [t]hought almo[s]t
 no[t]h[i]n[g] of his ex-girl[f]r[i]end, I le[f]t it a[t] [t]h[a]t, I
 [t]hought she was t[a]king the easy w[ay] out, there's [n]o
 [d]o[ub]t a[b]o[ut] that, [b]ut I [d]i[d]n't [n]e[c]e[s]sari[l]y
 cu[r]s[e] her [n]ame in m[y] pe[r]s[on]al t[i]me, I [f]elt [l]ike
 it was her decision, and ulti[m]ate[l]y i[f] she [f]elt as
 though my [f]riend wasn't the pe[r]s[on] she [w]anted to
 [w]ait [f]or, in a te[r]minal s[e]n[s]e, then I
 re[s]p[e]c[t[ed] th[at] a[s] her [d]e[c]ision, [t]hat [t]here was
 little any of u[s] [c]ould [d]o [b]es[i]d[es] re[s]p[e]c[t her
 [d]e[c]ision and [s]p[ea]k [p]oorly of her [b]eh[i]nd her
 [b]a[ck]. I d[i]dn't th[i]nk m[u]ch o[f] it at all a[c]tua[l]l[y]
 un[t]il the [f]o[l]lo[w]ing [w]eek[en]d [w]hen I [w]as at a
 bar [a]r[ound] [c]lo[s]ing [t]ime with a [c]lo[s]e [f]r[i]end,
 and I [f]elt a tap on my sh[oul]d[er], [o]n[ly] to [f]i[n]d this
 ex-girl[f]r[i]end of my [d]y[i]n[g] [f]r[i]end. [Sh]e said [sh]e
 ju[s]t wanted to [s]ay hi, and [s]ub[s]e[qu]ent[l]y I [s]aid
 h[e]ll[o], y[e]t [o]n[ly] a few [m]om[en]ts l[ate]r I
 [r]e[c]eiv[ed] yet a [s]e[c]ond tap on the shoulder. Now this
 ex-girl[f]r[i]end's [f]r[i]end, who a[cc]om[p]anied her to the
 l[o]c[al]e, was [s]tanding in [f]r[ont] of my [p]er[s]on, and
 she [p]r[o]c[eed]ed to in[f]orm me that I was
 [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote] “[k]ind of [r]ude” to m[y] [d]y[i]ng
 [f]r[i]end's ex-girl[f]r[i]end, that I [c]ould [h]ave said
 [h]e[l]lo just a [l]ittle more [c]ordia[l]l[y], this [f]r[i]end of
 m[y] [d]y[i]ng [f]r[i]end's ex-girl[f]r[i]end a[c]tua[l]l[y] h[a]d

the au[d][a][c]it[y] to [s]t[a]nd there and with in a [s]tate of [s]in[c]erity [s][p]ea[k] th[e]se exa[c]t words to m[e], to [p]ro[c]laim that it was a[c]tual[l]y m[e], [th]at I [w]as [th]e [p]erson w[h]o [w]as [c]ommitting the faux [p]as [h]ere, that I [w]as the [o]ne just a [l]ittle out of [l]i[n]e, that my [l]e[ss] than enthusia[s]tic [h]e[l]lo was the [t]rue a[f]f[r]ont to good [t]aste [h]ere. Given the [c]ir[c]um[s][t]an[c]es, [m]y [t]e[n]de[n][c]y [t]oward the i[n]t[em]pe[r]ate [t]oo[k] hold of me, and I in[f]ormed them [b]oth of [m]y [f]ee[l]ings on the [m][a]tte[r], that I [p]erha[p]s in[f]ormed them of [m]y [f]ee[l]ings i[n] a[n] acer[b]ic [m][a]nne[r], in [p]erha[p]s the [m]o[s]t a[c]erbi[c] [m][a]nner I [c]ould i[m]a[gine [a]t the time. I let them k[n]ow in [n][o] unce[r]tain [t]e[r]ms who I [b]e[l]ieved was [c]o[m]mitting the [t]rue faux p[as] at this [b][a]r, [l]ate [i]n the [e]vening, [w]here [w]e [w]ere all [i]n[e]b[r]i[ate]d. [l]i[n] a[n]y [c]a[s]e, ju[s]t [m]o[m]ents later I [r]e[c]eived an a[dd]i[t]io[n]al ta[p] on my sh[ou]l[d]er. The [b]oun[c]er of the [b]ar [s]tood in [f]r[ont] of me, [r]a[th]er a[p]athetic, and in[f]ormed [m]e th[at] I n[ee]ded to l[e]ave the [p]re[m]ises be[c]ause “the girl [o]ver there,” [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote], was [c]laiming I ph[y]s[i]cally [h]it [h]er.

Canto 21—596:752 .793

A girl who j[u]st [d]u[m]ped m[y] [d]y[ing] [f]riend [s]aid [h]e[l]lo to me then [h]ad [h]er [f]riend ver[b]a[l]l[y] [a]s[s]ault m[e] for [a]lleged[l]y not [b]eing [e]nthusias[t]ic [e]nou[gh] when I [r]eturned [h]er [r]ep[r]ehen[s]i[b]le [h]e[l]lo, then I [s]u[b]se[que]nt[l]y ver[b]a[l]l[y] a[s]saulted [b]oth [h]er and [h]er [f]r[iend] [f]or [c]on[c]erning [th]em[s]elves with en[th]usia[s]ti[c] g[r]eet[i]ngs as o[pp]osed to [p]eo[p]le [d]y[i]ng arduou[s] [d]eaths, then sh[e] [f]a[s]e[l]l[y] a[cc]used m[e] of [ph]y[s]i[c]ally [h]itting [h]er in a [p]ubli[c] [p]a[c]e.

[L][u][c]ki[l][y] en[ou][gh] [f]or m[e], [th]i[s] notion [th]at a
 [p]er[s]on [p]unched a [f]emale in a venue [d]en[s]e[l][y]
 [p][a][c]ked [a]t th[a]t [c]a[p][a][c]ity, yet m[a]naged to
 [l][a]nd a [p]unch [s]o [c][l]an[d]e[s]tine[l][y] [n][o] one in
 the venue [n][o]ti[c]ed, that [n][o] eye [w][i]t[n][e][ss]es
 [e]me[r]ged [w]as ab[s]u[r]d to all [p]arties in[v]olved, yet
 I [s]till [v]igorou[s][l][y] [p][l]eas[e]d my [c]a[s]e, be[c]ause
 I'd ne[v]er [p][l]ead guilty whe[n] i[n]no[c]ent, [s]o I
 vigo[r]ou[s][l][y] [d]e[f]en[d]ed my [n]ame against what I
 [c]o[r]re[c]t[l][y] in[t]er[p]r[et]ed [t]o be a [t]otal
 [d]e[f]a[m]ation of [m]y [c]hara[c]ter, [a]gainst thi[s]
 t[a]ste[l]e[s]s [c]hara[c]ter a[ss]a[ss]in[a]tion, a
 [l]eg[i]t[i]mate a[ss]a[ss]in[a]tion [a]tt[em]pt,
 all—un[b]e[l]ieva[b]le as it may [s]ee[m]—as a
 [s]ub[s]e[que]nt [r]e[s]ult of me [r]e[fu]sing to [r]eturn
 a[n] e[n]thu[s]ia[s]ti[c] he[l]lo. A[n] une[n]thusiastic he[l]lo
 near[l][y] [t]urned m[e] in[t]o an [s]eriou[s][l][y] a[l]l[e]g[e]d
 [f]e[l]l[ow], and as I'm de[f]ending my[s]elf
 [v]igo[r]ou[s][l][y], [p]erha[p]s [e]ven [e]x[c]e[ss]ive[l][y]
 [v]igo[r]ou[s][l][y], the [e]x-girl[f]rie[n]d [a]m[b]les over
 with her [d]e[n]e[r]ate [f]rie[n]d [a]nd [a]dmits that her
 [c][l]ai[m] was entire[l][y] [f]a[b]r[i]c[a]ted, th[at] it h[a]d
 [a]b[s]o[l]ute[l][y] no [b]a[s]is in [r]ea[l]it[y]—a[n]d the[n]
 the [e]x-g[i]rl[f]rie[n]d a[n]d her [d]e[n]e[r]ate [f]rie[n]d,
 the t[r]ue [N]azi of [e]nthusiastic [g]r[ee]tings, [d]i[r]i[ve]
 [r]i[gh]t off, ad[m]itting in [s]o [m]any [w]ords [th]at [th]ey
 [w]ere in the busine[ss] of a[ss]a[ss]inating the
 [c]ha[r]a[c]ter of anyone who [f]a[i]led to [s]ay he[l]lo to
 [th]em en[th]usia[s]ti[c]a[l]l[y], [th]at [th]ey e[q]ua[te]d a
 [l]e[ss] [th]an en[th]usia[s]ti[c] g[r]e[et]ing w[i]th
 [ph]y[s]i[c]al vio[l]en[c]e. The next morning I
 [r]e[c]eived a [c]all [f]rom my [s]i[ck] [f]rie[n]d, [a]nd
 [a]s he add[re]ssed the [s]ituation [f]rom the
 p[r]e[v]iou[s] night, it [b]e[c]ame [r]e[l]ative[l][y] [c]l[ear]
 to m[e] that h[e] was, [f]or [l]a[ck] of a [b]etter [ph]r[ase],

t[a][k]ing her [s]ide. In [m][y] [m][i]nd at the t[i]me thi[s] de[f]en[s]e of thi[s] per[s]on was [s][y][n][o][n][y][m]ou[s] w[i]th ta[k]ing her [s]ide, which, [a]s you [c][a]n i[m][a]gine, l[ie]d to a [b]it of a [f]a[l]ling out [b]etween u[s], as [h]e [f]ound [h]im[s][e]l[f] a[t][t][e]m[p]t[ing] [t]o [w]or[k] [t]hings out [w]i[th] a girl w[h]o now [h]at[e]d [e]ve[r]y a[s]pe[c]t of my [b]eing and [v]i[c]e [v]er[s]a. It was [a] [b]it [o]f an im[b][r][o]gli[o], [b]e[c]ause n[ow] I [f]ou[nd] my[s]el[f] e[ss]entially a[b]an[d]onin[g] m[y] [d][y]in[g] [f]r[i]end as well. I [g]ave his [e][x]-[g]irl[f]r[i]e[n]d [a]n [e][x]ten[d]ed ha[r]angue [r]e[g]ar[d]ing her [r]uthl[ess] aban[d]on[m]ent of [m][y] [d][y]ing [f]r[i]end, then just [d][ay]s l[ate]r I [f]ound my[s]el[f] [a]l[s]o [r]uthl[ess]l[y] a[b]an[d]on[i]ng h[i]m. Eventual[l]y w[e]’d [s][ee] [ea]ch other again, [m][y] d[y]ing frie[n]d a[n]d [l], we’d [s][p]end l[ate]r [i]n [t]ime [t]ogether here and there, of [c]our[s]e, our [f]riendshi[p] [d][id]n’t [c]ea[s]e [c]om[p]l[et]e[l]y, and it was [f]ine, there was no [b]itter[n]e[ss] [p]er [s]e, [b]ut our [f]r[i]endshi[p], [f]r[ank]l[y], was obviou[s]l[y] [n]ever the [s]ame.

Canto 22—522:679 .769

His ex-[g]irl[f]r[i]e[n]d [a]b[andoned] him, then she [f]elt as th[ough] I [g]ave her an [i]n[s]i[n]c[er]e hel[l]o at [a] [b]ar, then I [d]i[s]c[re]d my t[r]ue thoughts on her [c]ha[r]a[c]ter, her [d]e[s]pi[c]a[b]le [c]hara[c]ter, her [r]uthl[ess] a[b]an[d]on[m]ent of [m][y] [d][y]ing f[r]iend, then ju[s]t [d][ay]s l[ate]r I [a]l[s]o [r]uthl[ess]l[y] a[b]an[d]oned m[y] [d][y]ing f[r]iend. It [t]oo[k] [q]u[i]te a l[ong] [t]i[m]e for him to [d]i[e]—he l[ate]r [h]is [s]ight, and [h]e was almo[s]t ent[i]rely b[l]i[n]d, [h]e was admi[t]ted to [h]o[s]pitals i[n] a t[er]m[in]a[l]l[y] i[n]t[er]m[in]t[er]n[ati]onal fashion, v[i]s[i]t[i]ng w[i]th h[igh]-[p]r[i]c[e]d [s]p[ecia]l[i]s[t]s that brought [n]o[t]h[ing]

[o][th]e[r] [th]an [u]tte[r] [f]i[n][a]ncial [r]uin to his
 [f][a]mi[l]y, and [e]ventual[l]y h[e] was [e][n][c]losed i[n]
 his bed[r]oom f[r]o[m] [s][u]n[s]et [t]o [d]awn [t]o [d]inner,
 in [h]is pa[r]ents' [h]ouse, an only child, a[b]an[d]oned
 [b]y [b]oth his [g]irl[f]r[i]end and his [g]ood [f]r[i]end.
 [F]our years [l]a[te]r I [h]eard that [h]e'd entered
 [h]o[s]pi[c]e, that [h]e [l]i[ai]d on [h]is [d]eathbed, and I
 arr[a]nged to p[ay] h[i]m a v[i]s[i]t the [s]u[b]se[que]nt
 [m]orning with [m]y c[ou]sin, [b]ut he [d]ied over[n]ight.
 [D]ay[s] l[a]ter, his [m]other [n]oted t[o] a [m]u[t]ual
 [f]r[i]end that she'd p[r]efer h[i]s [i]m[p]en[d]ing
 [f]une[r]al to be a [s][m]all c[er]e[m]ony, that she
 [d]i[d]n't want it to [b]e a [b]ig c[er]owd, a[n]d I
 c[on]sidered not atten[d]ing [b]e[fore] [b]eing
 ulti[m]ately c[on]vin[c]ed [b]y a [m]utual [f]rie[n]d [t]o
 [a]tt[e]nd. A[gai]n st [m]y better judg[m]ent I
 a[tte]n[d]ed the [f]uneral, y[e]t the [s]e[c]ond I [s]aw my
 [d]ea[d] f[r]ie[n]d's made-up [c]or[p]se in the [c]offin,
 the [s]e[c]ond [l]i[s]t[e]p[er]ed in [s]igh[t] of the [c]offi[n],
 a bout of i[n]te[n]se r[eg[r]e[t] c[ame] over me, and [l]
 r[eal]i[z]ed [l] had no [b]usine[ss] a[tte]n[d]ing thi[s]
 [f]une[r]al, that I [a]b[an]d[on]ed m[y] [d]y[ing] f[r]iend,
 a[n]d the[n] I h[a]d the au[d]a[c]it[y] to a[tte]nd his
 [f]une[r]al, [e]sse[n]tia[l]y agai[n]st his own [m]other's
 [w]i[sh]e[s]—not ex[p]l[i]c[i]t[l]y agai[n]st his [m]other's
 [w]i[sh]e[s] but [i]m[p]l[i]c[i]t[l]y agai[n]st his [m]other's
 [w]i[sh]e[s]. There was [n]o [d]oubt his [m]other
 [m]o[s]t l[i]ke[l]y would have p[r]eferred I [n]ot attend.
 There was [n]o [d]oubt, if p[r]e[ss]ed, she would have
 a[t] [l]ea[s]t bee[n] a[gn]o[s]ti[c] [v]i[s]-[a]-[v]i[s] my
 a[tte]n[d]an[c]e, wh[i]ch, c[on]s[i]dering her
 p[re]fere[n]ce was a [s][m]all c[er]e[m]ony, is
 t[an]ta[m]ount to p[r]efer[ring] my ab[s]en[c]e. V[i]a
 the p[r]o[c]ession [l]i[n]e, it was c[l]ear his p[ar]ents
 c[l]ear[l]y [e]i[ther] d[i]d[n't] re[m]e[m]ber m[e] or

[d]e[l]i[b]erate[l][y] forgot m[e]. In my [s][ea]t I [c][ea][s]e[l]e[ss][l][y] [s]pe[c]u[l]ated whether they [d][i]d[n't] re[m]e[m][b]er me or [d]e[l]i[b]erate[l][y] for[g]ot m[e]. Me—the [g]uy who used to always [g]o [p]i[c]k u[p] their son, what a [g]reat [g]uy, I u[s]ed to go [p]i[c]k their [s]on u[p] more [f][r]e[q]uentl[y] than [e]ven his childhood [f][r]iends, [l] was such a n[i]ce g[uy], yet eventually of [c]our[s]e I [s]to[p]ped [c]o[m]ing a[round], I [a][b]an[d]oned their [d]ying son [l]i[k]e we [a]ll eventua[l][y] [a][b]an[d]on the ter[m]ina[l][y] ill, and [s]u[b][s]e[q]uentl[y] his pa[r]ents [f]orgot a[b]out m[e], and [r]ight[f]u[l][y] [s]o. It would h[a]ve [a][c]tua[l][y] [b]een di[s]ta[s]te[f]ul [f]or the[m] to [r]e[m]e[m][b]er m[e].

Canto 23—549:733 .749

The [m]o[m]ent I w[i]tn[e]ssed, [i]n [m][y] [d]ead [f]riend's [f]ather's e[y]es, that h[e] [ei]ther [i][n]t[ie]n[t]i[ona]l[l][y] or un[i][n]t[ie]n[t]i[ona]l[l][y] [f]or[g]ot m[y] [i]d[e]n[t]it[y] I k[n]ew a[t]t[e]n[d]ing thi[s] [f]u[n]e[r]al was a [g][r]a[ve] mi[s]t[a]ke. I s[a]t [b][a]ck down in my [b][i]l[a]ck [f]old out chair and [s]aid to my[s]elf Th[i]s [i]s the [l]i[a]st [f]u[n]eral I'll attend, because [a]ttending a [f]u[n]eral is [a]lw[ay]s [a] [m]i[s]t[a]ke, it's the [m]o[s]t [i]n[s]i[p]id [m]i[s]t[a]k[e] we [c]an [m]a[k]e. [A]t[t]en[d]ing a we[dd]ing [m]ay [b]e [a] [f]aux paus [b]ut [a]t[t]en[d]ing a [f]uneral is [a]lw[ay]s a[n] i[n]a[n]e [m]ist[a]ke. We [a]ll [g]ather [a]r[ound], [a]ll [f]r[i]ends and [f]ami[l][y], to [g]aze [i]d[i]o[t]ic[al][l][y] at a [s]tiff [c]orp[s]e, then we [g][o] eat at a [l]o[c]al [r]e[s]taur[ant]—we all [m]ind[l]e[ss][l][y] [s]tare at a [d]ea[d] bo[d]y, then we have a [n]i[c]e [m]eal. There's [n]othing [m]ore [d]i[s]ingenuou[s] than a [f]u[n]eral, and the [m]o[s]t [d]i[s]ingenuou[s] [f]u[n]erals are th[o]se held [f]or the young. An esse[n]tially i[n]ter[m]i[n]a[b]le [d]isease, [b]ut the [m]e[d]i[c]al [p]ro[f]essional [m]ade a

[s][i]g[n][i][f][i][c]ant [f]ortune in the [p][r]o[c]e[s]s. A
[c]a[r]eer's [w]o[r]th for the [w]o[r][k]ing [c]lass, no
[d]oubt. They exten[d]ed his [s]uffe[r]ing, the
[s]uffe[r]ing of his [f]ami[l]y, the [s]uffe[r]ing of
eve[r]yone [a]round [h]im, then [a][l]lowed [h]im to [d]ie.
[H]ow [m]a[n]y [h]un[d]re[d]s of thousands of [d]o[l]lars,
[i]f [n]ot [m][i]ll[i]ons of [d]o[l]lars, were [s][p]e[n]t, only to
exte[n]d a [m]an's [s]uffe[r]ing and [s]till a[l]low him to
[p]e[r]ish [p][r]e[m]ature[l]y? [B]ut of [c]our[s]e they [s]till
a[cc]e[p]ted [p]lay[m]ent, [b]e[c]ause you never get [a]n A
[f]or [e][ff]ort in this [c]ount[r]y, un[l]e[ss] you're a
m[e]di[c]al [p][r]o[f]e[ss]ional. It's on[l]y [d]o[c]tors who
h[a]ve the au[d]a[c]ity to extend a [s]o[n]'s
[s]uffe[r]ing, watch him [d]ie, and [s]till [r]uin the
[f]a[m]i[l]y [f]in[a]ncia[l]l[y]. We think [s]o high[l]y of
[d]o[c]tors in this [c]ount[r]y, yet it [s]eem[s] to [m]e
that [d]o[c]tors are g[r]eater charlatans now [th]an
[th]ey've ever [b]een. [B]ut of [c]our[s]e I atten[d]ed the
[r]e[c]eption as [w]ell, [w]h[e]re the [d][i][s]i[n]genuous
nature of the [e]ntire [e]ve[n]t [r]eal[l]y [c]ame into
fo[c]u[s]. The [d][i][s]i[n]genuous [n]a[t]ure of the [e]ntire
or[d]eal [n]at[ur]al[l]y [r]eac[h]ed its [a]pex at the
[r]e[c]eption, as it [b]ecame ju[s]t a[n]other [s]ocial
[e]vent. I[t]'s [i]m[p]o[ss]i[b]le to have an iot[a] of
[r]e[s]p[ect] f[or] your[s]el[f] or the [s]ociety you
[p]arti[c]i[p]ate in a[ft]er a[tt]ending a[n] eve[n]t of th[at]
m[a]gni[t]ude. [S]till [i]n th[at] b[l]a[ck] [f]old-out
chair, [s]ta[r]ing at my d[e]ad [f]rie[n]d's heavil[y]
[m]ade u[p] [c]or[p]s[e], it [f]ai[le]d [t]o o[cc]ur [t]o [m]e
then—I was t[oo] [c]on[s]u[m]ed with di[s]gu[s]t f[or]
my[s]el[f]—but in [r]et[r]o[s]p[ec]t my on[l]y
[c]on[c]l[u]sion f[rom] that [d]ay is ju[s]t th[at], th[at]
[r]a[tiona[l]i[s]m [i]s no[th]ing [m]o[r]e [th]an [th]e [m]o[s]t
[l]u[r]id [f]o[r]m of ab[s]ur[d]i[s]t [p][r]o[p]agand[a]. We've
[c]o[n]s[t]ituted a [r]a[tiona[l]i[s]t [A]ngl[o] world that

h[a]sn't [c]o[n][s]umed everything—not [q]uite yet—[b]ut that [s]till [r]e[m]ains e[ss][e]ntial[l]y o[b]j[e]c[tiona]b]le, ju[s]t as the [m][y][s]t[i][c] [B][y]z[a]ntine world, it's natural oppos[i]te, was, [i]n [i]t[s] e[ss]en[c]e, al[s]o e[n]tire[l]y o[b]j[e]c[tiona]b]le. And the [d]o[c]tors who t[r]eat our [d][ea]d [f][r][i]e[n]ds, [p][r]o[l]onging their [s]u[ff]e[r]ing and buying [h]omes in the [H]am[p]tons w[i]th the [c][r][i]m[i]nal [p][r]o[c]ceeds, they're o[b]j[e]c[tiona]b]le in [e]ve[r]y way.

Canto 24—368:499 .737

And the [p]eo[p]le who [a][ss][a][ss]i[n]ate our [c]ha[r]a[c]ters [b]e[c]ause [th]ey [f]eel as [th]ough we're [n]ot [e][n][th]usia[s]ti[c] [e][n]ou[gh] [w]hen [w]e [s]ay hello to them at [b]ars, they're [c][r][i]m[i]nals of the highest [m]agnitude. [B]ut we our[s]elves are ju[s]t as o[b]j[e]c[tio[n]a]b]le [a]s any of these [a][c]tors, we're al[s]o [c][r][i]m[i]nals of the highe[s]t [m]ag[n]itude, we're [p]erha[p]s the [m]o[s]t o[b]j[e]c[tio[n]a]b]le. We a[s]tutely [r]e[c]og[n]ize [o]ur [o][pp]os[i]tes as [c][r][i]m[i]nals be[c]ause we exi[s]t as [p]arts of the [s]ame [c][r][i]m[i]nals wh[o]le. We [d][o][n]'t k[n]o[w how to [d]eal with [d]eath any[m]ore. We thin[k] our [s]cienti[s]ts and our do[c]tors are p[r]og[r]e[ss]ing, [th]at [th]ey'll eventually p[r]og[r]e[ss] [t]o a [s]tate [w]here they'll [o]n[c]e and [f]or all un[d]er[s]tand [d]eath, on[c]e and [f]or all when the [s]ad [r][e][a]l[i]ty is we [r][e][m]ai[n at the [a][p]ex of the [p][r]i[m]i[t]ive with [r]egards to [q]u[ote]-un[q]u[ote] [d]ea[l]ing with [d]eath. We're e[ss]e[n]tia[l]ly a[n] i[n]dige[n]ou[s] [p]o[p]u[l]ation when it [c]omes to in[t]e[r]a[c]t[i]ng with [d]eath. We're z[eal]ot[s] of [p][r]og[r]e[ss], and as [s]uch we're i]ll-e[q]u[i]pp]ed to [i]nte[r]a[c]t w[i]th any [s]ort of [p][r]ofun[d]ity, be[c]ause we're [s]u[s]p[e]nded in [p][r]og[r]e[ss], [w]e're [s]t[u]ck [w]aiting for our

[s]cien[t]i[s]ts and [d]o[c]tors to give u[s] the [w]ord, to
[g]ive u[s] the word [t]hat [t]hey've finally [g][o][t]ten to the
[s]o-called b[o][tt]om of [d]eath. [P][r][e]v[i]ou[s]
[g]ene[r]a[t]ions [s][p]o[k]e [p][r]o[f]ound[l]y in the [f]a[c]e
of [d]eath, while our [g]e[n]e[r]a[t]ion [s]erves [c]ole
[s][l]aw and chi[ck]en [p]armigi[a][n][a] at [f]u[n]e[r]al
[r]e[c]e[p]t[i]ons, the [i]m[a]g[es] of [c]or[p]s[es] [s]t[i]ll
[f]r[esh] in our mind. [P][r][e]v[i]ou[s] [g]e[n]e[r]ations
un[d]e[r]s[t]ood [d]eath in a [p][r]o[f]ound[l]y [g]e[n]e[r]al
[s]en[s]e i[f] hard[l]y at all in a [s][p]e[c]i[f]ic [s]en[s]e.
We [c]on[s]u[m]e [m]ozza[r]e[l]la [s]ti[ck]s in the [f]a[c]e
of [d]eath, we eat j[a][l]a[p]eno [p]o[p]pers in the [f]a[c]e
of [d]eath, we [d][r]in[k] [c]r[a]ft beer with i[d]ioti[c]
[t]ange[r]ine a[f]ter[t]a[s]tes in the [f]a[c]e of [d]eath.
It's, [f]r[an]k[l]y, [o]n[l]y the h[o]me[l]e[s]s of ou[r] e[r]a
wh[o] t[r]u[l]y [r]e[c]og[n]ize the ill[s] of the p[r]ivate
[s]phere—'[b]y exami[n]ing the [n]ature of [s]en[s]i[b]le
[t]hings, [t]hese [p]eo[p]le have arrived at a [c]ertain
[c]on[c]eption of God, but not at a [c]on[c]eption trul[y]
worth[y] of Him.'