

Canto 26

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Summary

- ◆ Dante is walking and he is in the flames of the ring of lust in this canto. A few people who are in this ring come up to Dante when they realize he has a body. As Dante moves forward he sees gestures and creatures. Dante tells the people in the ring that a “lady above has won {him} grace” (26.59) explaining why he has his body. Guinizelli tells Dante about the sin they have committed and why they are there. The Canto ends by Dante and Guinizelli seeing a shadow and turn to it and see a French poet.

Characters and Theme

- ◆ Dante is the main character in this canto although we meet some people along the way. We see the souls in the beginning who don't say their name. We meet Guinizelli who talks to Dante about their sin and tells him a story. At the end of the canto we meet the French poet Arnaut Daniel.
- ◆ We see the theme of lust in this canto. While Dante is walking he sees the souls "greet the others with a kiss" (26.32). It is the ring of lust therefore making it the top theme of this canto. We hear the souls call out "Sodom, Gomorrah" (26.40) and also we hear about "Pasiphaë" (26.41) and their lustful stories.

Stylistic Features

- ◆ Metaphor- We see Dante comparing the souls who greet each other with kisses as “ants” (26.34).
- ◆ Simile- Dante compares the soul leaving “like a fish” (26.134)

Study Questions

- ◆ 1. How is Guinizelli and Arnaut like Dante? Compare and contrast them.
- ◆ 2. What story does Gunizelli tell Dante. How is this important?
- ◆ 3. Who is Arnuat Daniel and what does he say to Dante? Why is he suffering?

Works Cited

Esolen, Anthony, translator and editor. *Purgatory*. By Dante Alighieri, New York, Modern Library, 2004.

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digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/purgatorio/purgatorio-26/.