

DANTESSERAE

a cross between Gaudi and
Piranesi,
the pieces
 hanging
between floor and ceiling.

Pendant tesserae
compose the theophany
in the apse of St Vitale
at Ravenna
influenced Dante's
Paradiso period
at least:
an unbearded Christ
sits on a blue globe
universe.
He wears the folds of
a purple imperial, gold-
bordered robe, holds
a scroll and a crown.

each letter is a compression,
each name an alphabet
of signs used and others excluded;
the Pantocrator's raiment bears
an emblem, fissile like lightning
made of mosaic, a put-up job,
impenetrable but able to be read;
we have no language nor concept
sufficient to the experience
of dense skies in tesserae
of stars and self-oblivion
of asterisks and darkness.

Dante Alighieri,
whispering flames: 'Ante alight':

'Alight': illuminating, climbing down.

'Ante': *before* the light.

illusion. Artifice
as world and vice-
versa. There are others
made up of thousands
of stone particles
of different shades
flung out from and bound back
to planetary core,
in more than
human scale:
spatial disruptions,
above our eye-lines
destined for the abyss.

Once said
there is nothing more difficult
than giving unconditional love,
a man who knows replied
'And easier'



The crypt of St George's
in Leeds for the homeless:
Steve Simpson's
paintings like
shards on the walls
broken from inside,
the faces rise
blue, yellow, clay-tones
archaic, new
yesterday's
stress-lines, passion
confused and knowing
previous verdicts, addict-
ions, scraped
and waking
to the unfamiliar
underground, brought
through to see
Pastor Roger Quick.



to imagine walking in
on my younger selves,

trespassing visitants
time-travellers
so near and so far
it seems like
lives lived
on other planets;

in Dante it's always the past,
to pass through the bowels of the earth
awarding remembered sins

the texture of wrongs to be righted
a colourful comic –
wonder where we go
as we rise to consciousness.

The daily News intro
shows you/me
as dinky manic Lilliputians
in fast-mo
zipping through broadcast HQ
simplified to streamlines:
minimal
streaks of data
to be
digitally
harmonised
as cyber symbol-cymbals
and drumheads
bashing out
the headlines

'We burned copies of Dante
and Swift and Marcus Aurelius'



Eating Florentines
Belgian dark chocolate,
almonds, plump sultanas
mixed peels in ginger-
spiced caramel.

Dante's Satan
eats Judas; on TV,
paranormal ghost shows
stack up nothings,
disappear. Other than that

are we all aliens on Terra?
Is there anything more
than the terza rima's
re-calibrations,

working themselves out like
a funicular gathering to the
crest; that, and the paintings
of Hilma af Klint, abstract schemas
of beatification, humanity

meeting the divine?

Coming back from Lizzie and Sue's:
friendship, laughter and a glass
of Chante-Alouette Hermitage,
(Dan-te Alouette)
the bottle label with its winged
cartouche vineyard lifting the terroir;

skirting city daylight, constellations
off the ring-road, playing Nicola Conte's
'Black is the graceful veil': Intelligences,
aliens buzzing round the transept of the text.
bass and harp ripple, bongos, women's
voices hemming borders:

when love instils the eyes: 'L' Amore
che move il solee l'altre stelle'
behind the veil

earthling
earthing
where have you been?

"Jazz possesses
 higher
vibrations
When I was thirteen
 family sent me to London;
 record shops on Oxford Street--
heaven."

Nicola Conte lives in Bari
"Things that belong to the time
of the Crusades are
happening,
 like waving the flag
of religion or colour of one's
 skin against the colour
of another,"

centuries from London
to Canterbury, pilgrims
and,
 further, on the
 Via Francigena:
through France to Aosta
to San Gimignano, Roma
to Apulia and,
 Bari,

embarking
for the Crusades.



Alessandro Michele
installed a burning passage along dirt path
at Alycamps for Gucci Cruise
on silver benches: VIPs, editors, Elton John, Valeria Golino, Salma Hayek, husband,
Gucci owner, Kering CEO François-Henri Pinault - tribute to the power
of fashion that Gucci installs
a huge fire inside a UNESCO world heritage site
where Dante placed his heretics.

Finally we entered the Sixth Circle

unopposed, fulfilling my desire

stepping into the Fortress of Dis

to see the lay-out of this place

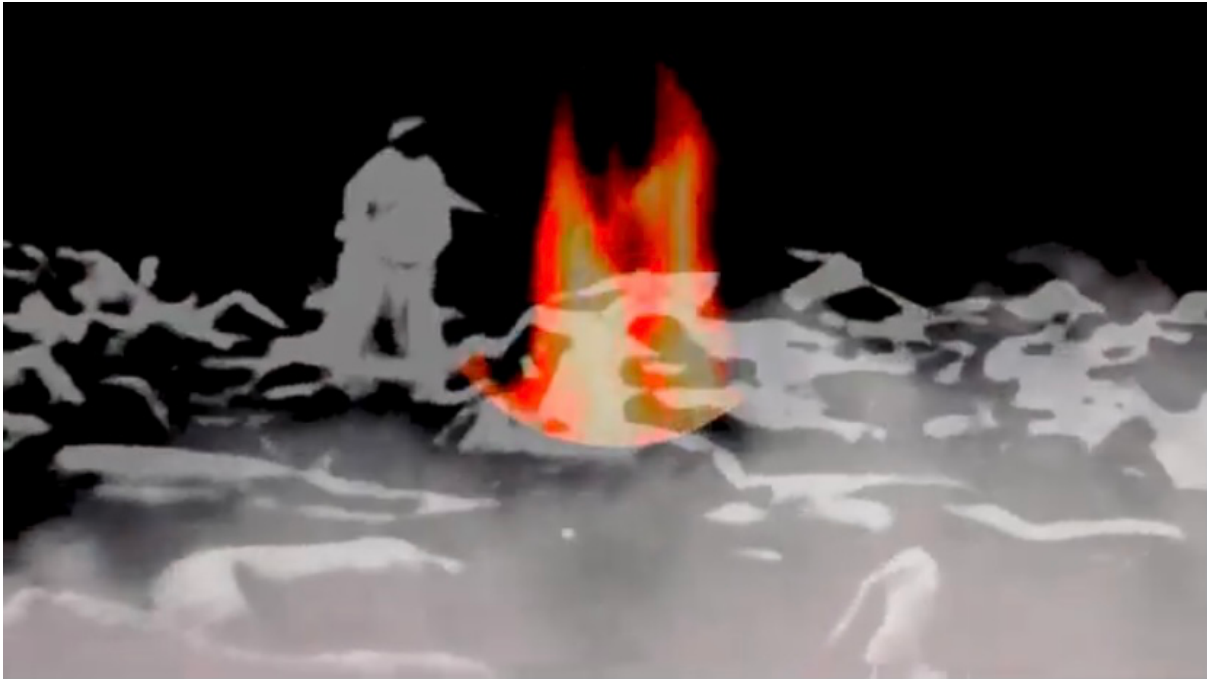
– duchesses in ruffled satin gowns

worn over turquoise stockings a

oh and topped with contrast sunglasses
my eyes running freely over the vast revealed
wasteland Kering Eyewear sold over four million
the dread and torment, studded silver warrior biker looks
looking everywhere over ground uneven This brand is on fire financially too
with tilted sepulchres a maximalist revolution
as in Arles where the Rhone river one lens black the other white. The collection was crammed
runs to stagnancy paired with pink bobby soxers;
at Alycamps hipsters in zebra print leggings
Among the tombs were scattered flames great shades: insect rocker style;
heating the masonry marvelous nd logo pumps
to glowing incandescence retro Futurist après ski.
British postbox-red cashmere coat

'Master, who are these people
Who so cry out?'

followers of every sect



Cardinal Alfredo Ildefonso Schuster
Indefensible 1935
(beatified '96)
'È la perpetua mission /
The perpetual mission of the Italians'
enrolling Dante
for their expedition,
backed all gassing in Ethiopia
for spreading the Cross.

Pound's broadcasts for Mussolini
Gianluca Iannone
and CasaPound
breaking into disused
offices, a nod
to the American
'fascist evangelist'
Radio Bandaniera Nera
since black was Benito's favourite.

Lockheed and Martin
grim for the charities
clearing the mess
equipping the Saudis
'the world's worst humanitarian
crisis': a family of six
including four children
killed in the northwest
by a bomb produced by
RWM Italia S.p.a.
consistently found as debris

CEO RWM
Fabio Scarzi
"Non esiste il problema."
'uno scrupolo di
conscienza?'"
"If you choose the Defence
industry:
from day one
you know what is produced--
what it will be used for."

the of and to a in for is on s
that by this with I you it not
then or there or be are
from at as if as your
is all of is

blood gems, missile money,
Hugo Boss'
brownshirt uniforms and Baliacarga sewing
Signora Franco's dresses

'La Mussolini' they call her in Napoli
attired in cashmere or softest suede
every day wear of crocodile pumps
of finest leather, high-heeled and giggling
swinging her Chanel purse

UK resumed arm sales. Gun chic.
the misery-go round

orbiting
lives lived
on other planets
Venus is the highest score
in the game of tesserae;
on Venus, the rough terrain
between lava plains
is 'tessera': in the Heaven
of Venus, Dante
meets Cunizza

In the Heaven of Mars
Dante encounters
his great-great grandfather
'of noble blood': Cacciaguida
the Crusader, from a time in Firenze
of 'no frippery and no
embroidered dresses'



where have you been?
I've been to London
to see the queen
and what did you there
among the
food kitchens?

Poverty, poverty, knock,
my loom is
a-saying all day.

a cross between Gaudi and
Piranesi,
pieces,

orbiting

with a gasp
I whistle 'We can
Work it out' – to
hearths vanished, rooms gone
I cannot save:
light falls through a door

Coming back from
Sue and Lizzie's
playing Nicola Conte's
'Black is the graceful veil':
skirting city daylight

For Lacan 'tessera' are
a thing of great worth
serving as prosopopeia:
for the lost fullness
of worn images
I cannot
speak for the dead,

let

ter

s

ha

ng

i

ng

d i s

ject

a

is all of is

leaf

a feather

M E Z Z O

S O P R A N O

v i t a

n--- o ---s--- t--- r--- a

Perotin's Marian

anatomy:

'Beata Viscera'

seizing time

for a note

here & there

Vivaldi: 'Nisi Dominus'

a n d a n t e

slowly, a walking pace

music and the lifted voice

put coils around my soul

when love instils the eyes

earthling

earthing

before
the light;

we wake *into* ourselves.

Images 1-3 & 6: Steve Simpson's paintings for the crypt of St George's
Crypt in Leeds.

Images 4 & 5: stills from Howard Munson's film collaboration with my version of
the 'Dis' section of *Inferno* Canto IX, which can be accessed at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6Q-jvlc_po

'We burned copies': Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*.