



ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Thirty-Four Illustrations for Dante's *Inferno*

Essay by Leah Dickerman

Poetry by Robin Coste Lewis Kevin Young

The museum of modern art New York

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Front cover: Robert Rauschenberg. Canto XIV: Circle Seven, Round 3, the Violent against God, Nature, and Art from the series Thirty-Four Illustrations for Dante's Inferno. See p. 53

Back cover: Robert Rauschenberg, 1958. Detail of a photograph by Jasper Johns. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives, New York

P. 2: Rauschenberg working on a solvent transfer drawing in his Front Street studio, New York, 1958. Work in background is Untitled (1955). Photograph: Jasper Johns. Photograph Collection. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives, New York.

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Foreword

Dante Alighieri was in his mid-thirties when he began writing the *Inferno*, as Robert Rauschenberg was when he began working on his series of drawings illustrating each canto of Dante's epic journey through the netherworld. Rauschenberg worked on it in strict chronological order, canto by canto as he read, and the project occupied him even when he paused his work on it—for over two and a half years. The result is Rauschenberg's most sustained exercise in the medium of drawing. It was surprising to observers when the series was first displayed in 1960, after avant-garde painters in New York had embraced abstraction for almost two decades, that Rauschenberg, a rising star, had chosen to journey into the symbolic universe of Dante's Hell. Acquired by The Museum of Modern Art soon after its making through an anonymous gift, Rauschenberg's Thirty-Four Illustrations for Dante's *Inferno* is now among the most celebrated works in our drawings collection. It is with pride that we publish this volume on the occasion of our retrospective of the artist's career, Robert Rauschenberg: Among Friends.

Rauschenberg was always a great experimenter. For the Dante series, rather than making conventional drawings, he used a novel technique that allowed him to capture images from the media-saturated reality of the contemporary world. He moistened clippings from photo-illustrated magazines with solvent and rubbed their backs with an implement to transfer them to drawing paper. He then added washes of watercolor and gouache, touches of crayon, chalk, and pencil, combining traditional fine art materials with these migrant glyphs from the media world. He described the results as "combine drawings." They can also be seen as an early salvo in a revolution: the use of readymade images would serve as the foundation for Pop art in the decade to come.

The ghostly images aptly evoke the shades of Dante's world. Yet they are also sharply contemporary, referencing current events, creating an allusive relay between the classical world and Rauschenberg's present. Like Dante's *Inferno* before them, they weave together meditations on both public and private spheres, politics and inner life. It is perhaps the searching of an artist who, approaching the end of youth, is pushing himself to greater wisdom and comprehension of the world around him. And it is a poignant and haunting vision of hell, of souls condemned to eternal suffering by sins both great and small, of human imperfection and vulnerability.

Above all, Rauschenberg's Dante drawings pay homage to creativity in dialogue. The ancient Roman poet Virgil's *Aeneid* was both source and model for Dante's tale. Virgil accompanies Dante, as mentor and guide, on his journey into hell. Rauschenberg chose Dante for his own odyssey; each drawing is a conversation with the poet across the centuries.

Now, we have asked two extraordinary poets of our own time—Kevin Young and Robin Coste Lewis—to offer their response, in conversation with each other, to Rauschenberg's Thirty-Four Illustrations for Dante's *Inferno*. We are delighted to be able to share their work: a poem for each drawing.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the writers, including Leah Dickerman, The Marlene Hess Curator of Painting and Sculpture, MoMA; to our Department of Drawings and Prints and our Department of Publications; and to the Sonnabend family. We are deeply grateful to the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation for making this project possible and to The Derald H. Ruttenberg Foundation for establishing the Riva Castleman Fund for Publications, which is supporting this publication.

GLENN D. LOWRY

Director, The Museum of Modern Art



Rauschenberg working on a solvent transfer drawing in his Front Street studio, New York, 1958. Photograph: Jasper Johns. Photograph Collection. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives, New York

Canto by Canto An Introduction

Leah Dickerman

It began when Robert Rauschenberg decided to "make a whole lot of drawings," he recounted, so he started "looking for a vehicle, something to keep them going." Propelled by his desire to focus on the medium in depth, Rauschenberg set to work in the middle of 1958 on a series of drawings inspired by Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*, the first of the poet's three-part epic *Divina Commedia (Divine Comedy,* c. 1307–21). He proceeded to make one drawing for each of the *Inferno*'s thirty-four cantos, culling images from popular illustrated magazines using a novel solvent transfer technique, then adding touches of pencil, crayon, watercolor wash, and gouache. He continued working on the project, with breaks and varying intensity, across two and a half years, through the end of 1960, when the series was presented at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York (fig. 1).

Working from a literary source was a first for the artist, one that he spoke of as a "test." ² "The problem when I started the Dante illustrations was to see if I was working abstractly because I couldn't work any other way or whether I was doing it by choice," the artist explained to Dorothy Gees Seckler. "So I insisted on the challenge of being restricted by a particular subject where it meant that I'd have to be involved in symbolism. . . . Well, I spent two-and-a-half years deciding that, yes, I could do that." It may seem surprising that for this test against narrative constraint the young artist chose a work written more than six centuries before, one telling of the poet-narrator's visionary journey through the spiritual realms of Hell and Purgatory, where he is accompanied by the ancient Roman poet Virgil, and Heaven, where he continues alone.

The sheer tenacity of Rauschenberg's pursuit over a long period of time stands out, as do the suggestions of emotional strain that appear in his descriptions of efforts to bring the series to completion, so



1.34 Illustrations for Dante's Inferno exhibition, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York,
December 6, 1960–January 7, 1961. Installation view showing Rauschenberg's drawings for Cantos XXIV–XXXIV,
with Michael Sonnabend's narrative summaries below. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

atypical for this artist who generally spoke lightly, even playfully, of the process of making art. Rauschenberg had consistently rejected the trope of psychic struggle in creation that was so pervasive among an older generation of Abstract Expressionist painters. "There was a whole language that I could never make function for myself in relationship to painting," he explained. "Attitudes like tortured, struggle, pain.... I never could see those qualities in paint." Nonetheless, after receiving a rejection from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for a fellowship to support work on the project, he seems to have encountered doubt. He had applied after completing the first six drawings, throwing himself into preparing the application during the fall of 1958, carefully crafting his statement and soliciting references from luminaries in his world like MoMA curator Dorothy Miller, publisher George Wittenborn, and Dante's new translator, the poet John Ciardi, while refraining from asking artists who might be too forward-thinking for the respectable Guggenheim committee. Rauschenberg would recount to the critic Calvin Tomkins that he had approached Ciardi with the first group of drawings in hand, and the poet agreed to recommend him, though seemingly reluctantly, saying that "he didn't know why, he'd always thought of the *Inferno* as all dark." When Rauschenberg got the disappointing news from the foundation, he put the project aside. He picked it up again some time later, forging ahead without grant support, simultaneously

working on several exhibitions, dance collaborations, and a contribution to Jean Tinguely's Homage to New York, a machine staged to self-destruct in the Sculpture Garden of The Museum of Modern Art in 1960. The impact of his immersion in Dante registered in the Combines made in this period, which are rife with references to the classical world: Gift for Apollo (1959) conjures the Sun God's daily chariot ride in the sky; Canyon (1959) recasts the myth of Zeus's descent to earth in the guise of an eagle in order to capture the beautiful Ganymede; and Winter Pool (1959) evokes Narcissus's tale of echoes and mirrored reflections (fig. 2). Amid all this activity, Rauschenberg concluded that in order to see the Inferno project through he needed to withdraw from his normal routine, isolate himself from human demands—the phone calls, the broken hearts needing consolation—and all the enmeshments of a social world that he usually embraced with open arms, and leave New York City. In mid-1960, he traveled to Treasure Island, off the coast of St. Petersburg, Florida, and there worked in near solitude: "It was exactly what I needed. I stayed there six months, and I never knew anyone. I did the last half of it there. The Inferno builds up in intensity, and I really needed the isolation." Returning to New York at the end of 1960, he showed the completed series at the Leo Castelli Gallery from December 6, 1960, to January 7, 1961. Critics seemed to struggle to make sense of the rising star's engagement with Dante's symbolic domain. Stuart Preston, for one, wrote in the New York Times, "They can be criticized for being too literary and for containing too many superficial and ephemeral conceits that do not pass successfully as images. But his attempt is a brave one, and, in its odd way, moving."8



Robert Rauschenberg exhibition, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, March 29

—April 16, 1960.
Installation view, left to right: Gift for Apollo, Canyon, and Winter Pool, all 1959.
Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

In making the Dante drawings, Rauschenberg soaked images taken from Sports Illustrated, Time, Life, and other photo-illustrated magazines with lighter fluid, which functioned as a solvent, then pressed the clippings facedown on a sheet of paper, rubbing their backs with the barrel of an empty ballpoint pen. The transferred images appeared in reverse, at the same scale as the mass-media originals, but with a fainter palette—for only some of the ink was dislodged in this second-generation printing—and in broken striations resulting from the rubbing. He then worked further on each drawing, adding strokes of pencil and crayon, washes of watercolor and gouache, and occasionally pasting on collage elements. The ghostly palette and the broken markings give the images a certain tenuous materiality, a sense of coming in and out of being, which has been described as "veiling." Their shadowy presence aptly evokes the shades who inhabit Dante's netherworld. Branden Joseph has also perceptively likened this aspect of the works to the flickering of the low-resolution screens of the era's television sets, one of which always seemed to keep Rauschenberg company. The visual consonance with the new medium of television offers a frame of reference for the flow of media images that appear in his drawings. 10 Such reproduction of the media image as trace, and something worked on, also has the effect of rendering it as touched. In this way, the Dante illustrations seem allied with work being done at this time by Jasper Johns, then Rauschenberg's partner, such as Painted Bronze (1960), a pair of ordinary ale cans meticulously remade in modeled bronze and painted by hand.

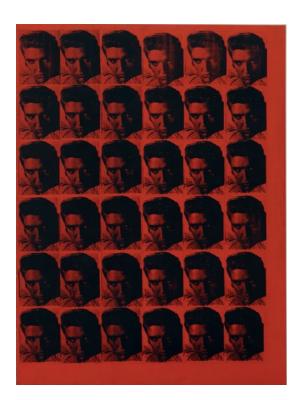
The technique he used in making the drawings, Rauschenberg later recalled to Tomkins, was obvious to him: "I got to that right away. I already had that." He had, he said, experimented with transferring printed images on a trip he made to Cuba with fellow artist Cy Twombly during a spring break from Black Mountain College in 1952. According to his description, however, in those early works the images were transferred dry, without any solvent, and culled from comic strips—clippings from the funnies like those that appeared in the proto-Combine Red Paintings he made soon afterward, including works such as Yoicks and Minutiae (both 1954)—and other graphic print sources, rather than photographic ones, as in the Dante series. This first Cuban trial with transferring images came out of his desire to find a mode of working in the medium of drawing analogous to the one he had defined for himself in painting, which brought the stuff of the world into his works. "I liked the intimacy of drawing against the object quality of my painting," he would explain. "I'd always liked to draw.... But I felt I had to find a way to use collage in drawing, to incorporate my own way of working on that intimate scale. I said I wouldn't come back from Cuba until I had found it, and luckily I did."12 After having discovered it, however, Rauschenberg set the technique aside for more than five years, only returning to it in early 1958, when, immediately before launching into the Dante series, he began making a suite of transfer drawings, now using a solvent, experimenting first with turpentine, then settling on lighter fluid, and choosing photo-based imagery for application. The process, through dissolution and friction, made images mobile, capable of flight from one support to another, one discursive sphere to another.



3. Robert Rauschenberg. *Monogram*. 1955–59. Oil, paper, fabric, printed reproductions, metal, wood, rubber shoe-heel, and tennis ball on two conjoined canvases with oil on taxidermied Angora goat with brass plaque and rubber tire on wood platform mounted on four casters, 42 x 53 ½ x 64½ in. (106.7 x 135.2 x 163.8 cm).

Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Purchase with contribution from Moderna Museets Vänner/The Friends of Moderna Museet

Photo-based media had already entered Rauschenberg's work in clippings glued to the surfaces of Combines such as Canyon (1959) and Monogram (1955-59) (fig. 3); with his transfer drawings, photomechanical images plucked from the flux of contemporary culture became central. The Dante project provided Rauschenberg with what the art historian Rosalind Krauss has described as "his apprenticeship to the media image,"13 training in the strategic premises of what would become known as Pop art.14 The Dante drawings led Rauschenberg almost immediately to efforts to scale up, to create a painting with readymade images: the artist first made Calendar, a solvent "transfer painting," in 1962, which he felt was not fully successful in the way that the magazine images were dwarfed by the large canvas; he then attempted and failed to find a way to produce photo-sensitive canvas that would allow images to be imprinted directly onto the support; ¹⁵ and finally—after consulting with Andy Warhol, who had just begun making silkscreen paintings—he adopted the silkscreen technique himself (figs. 4, 5). "Silkscreen was a way not to be victimized and limited in scale and color, but still have access to current worldwide information," he would explain in 1997 in comments he made on an essay about his work that Krauss was preparing for publication.¹⁶ Combining photography and painting, machine work and manual work, these early silkscreens registered images of culture at large but also reflected on the tradition of fine-art painting. In Rauschenberg's case, the move from collaged abstraction to media-based imagery came via Dante.



4. Andy Warhol. *Red Elvis*. 1962.
Silkscreen ink and acrylic on linen,
69 ³/₄ x 52 in. (177.2 x 132.1 cm).
The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut



Robert Rauschenberg. Crocus. 1962.
 Oil and silkscreen-ink print on canvas,
 x 36 in. (152.4 x 91.4 cm). Private collection

When Rauschenberg began work on the series, he had never read the *Inferno*.¹⁷ He later recalled that when Alfred H. Barr, Jr., chief curator at The Museum of Modern Art, and Dorothy Miller, the curator charged with contemporary art, arrived to visit his dealer Leo Castelli, they brought a copy of Dante's *Inferno*.¹⁸ The occasion may well have been a viewing of Rauschenberg's first exhibition at Castelli's gallery, in early 1958, where he debuted his Combines, paintings which incorporated all manner of materials—a taxidermied chicken, a pair of shoes, a baseball, a pillow, a door—sometimes things so large and unwieldy that the work became, as Rauschenberg put it, "awkward physically." Barr and Miller originally declined to buy any of the Combines, a decision that lingered as a slight in Rauschenberg's mind. Indeed, of the twenty works shown, only *Bed* (1955) was bought, and by Castelli himself. The remembrance says something about the cultured world in which Rauschenberg—who hailed from the gulf town of Port Arthur, Texas, and had little formal literary education—had found himself. Castelli was a Trieste-born refugee from Europe's recent convulsions. Ileana Sonnabend—his wife, a key figure

at the Castelli Gallery, and later, with the founding of her own gallery in Paris in 1962, Rauschenberg's European dealer—was the daughter of one of Romania's prewar textile magnates. Both were multilingual, witty, urbane, and wide-ranging in their cultural interests. By the time Rauschenberg began his Dante project in 1958, Leo and Ileana were moving toward separation, though their lives would remain closely entwined. Ileana had found a new companion in Michael Sonnabend, an "emigre from Buffalo," as he described himself, with an elfin mien, a bright laugh, and an unmistakable voice; they married in 1959. Sonnabend was a self-taught scholar of the Italian Renaissance: he had traveled to Venice as a young man to learn to read Dante in the original. Nina Sundell, Leo and Ileana's daughter, would remember how the relics of classic European culture pervaded the conversational rituals of this modern family: "Michael [Sonnabend] and Leo would recite Dante; Marianne [Nina's oldest daughter] knew La Fontaine and the letters of Madame de Sévigné." One senses the potency of Dante's immaterial presence for Rauschenberg in 1958, when he was tightly enmeshed with Castelli and the Sonnabends and harboring hopes of an acquisition by MoMA.

At the same time, Dante was receiving fresh attention from American audiences, sparked by the publication in 1954 of Ciardi's new translation, which offered English terza rima verses to those who did not have access to the Italian original. Published in both deluxe hardcover and paperback editions, it was enthusiastically embraced, selling nearly sixty thousand copies in its first six months.²³ The muscular contemporaneity of Ciardi's verse earned critics' acclaim. In the *New York Times*, underscoring what he perceived as the masculinity of both Ciardi's prose and the figure of the translator himself, Dudley Fitts proclaimed with considerable fanfare:

My few sessions with John Ciardi have been anything but those of sweet silent thought: I have quarreled with him about his rhyme, his meter and his diction, and my neighbors still meditate upon our discussion of the first line of the last Canto, which consumed the better part of an evening and involved considerable breakage of furniture.... Nevertheless, I feel now what I have felt from the beginning: that here is our Dante, Dante for the first time translated into virile, tense American verse.²⁴

A comparison with British author Dorothy Sayers's translation—a mass-market competitor to Ciardi's, first published in 1949—of Francesca's famous lines about Paolo in Canto V makes the frank, carnal urgency of Ciardi's rendering appreciable.

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Sayers:

Love, that to no loved heart remits love's score, Took me with such great joy of him, that see! It holds me yet and never shall leave me more.²⁵

Ciardi: Love, which permits no loved one not to love,
Took me so strongly with delight in him

That we are one in Hell, as we were above. 26

Although Rauschenberg bought several translations—everything he could find on the shelves of a secondhand bookstore on Fourth Avenue, he later reported in an interview with Barbara Rose²⁷—it was Ciardi's that resonated with him.

Ciardi's translation is accompanied by extensive footnote annotations, also appealingly lucid and down-to-earth, for example, identifying the historical figures on whom Dante based his characters Paolo and Francesca as an adulterous thirteenth-century couple from Ravenna, with the introduction "The facts are these." Ciardi's notes placed him (as Rauschenberg's drawings would later place him) in a nearly seven-hundred-year-long tradition of commentary on the *Inferno* that began almost as soon as Dante had finished writing it and which goes on to this day. Such commentary was necessary, poet Clive James explains in his introduction to a recent verse translation of the *Inferno*, because "Dante had composed every canto of his poem as if it were a weekend article based on news that only just happened, and whose details did not need to be outlined." Rauschenberg was also aware that many artists had illustrated Dante's narrative journey through hell in a form of visual commentary on the poet's work—that Michelangelo had made drawings, which were later lost at sea; that Gustave Doré had created an etching series, which was not to Rauschenberg's taste; and that Botticelli, too, had tackled the subject, producing drawings that Rauschenberg called "his favorite" for the way the artist had treated the material "like a combination road map and cartoon." It was a noble lineage, and the dialogue between artist and writer appealed to him: "An illustration has to be read: it has to relate to something already in existence."

In tackling the task he had set for himself, Rauschenberg put in place a number of rules for engagement with the poetic text. He would make one drawing for each of the thirty-four cantos, illustrating all rather than selecting scenes the way previous illustrators of the series had done, which he thought put too much emphasis on the artist's discernment.³² He would make each drawing immediately after reading the relevant canto, and without reading ahead. This one-at-a-time rule seemed aimed at ensuring that Rauschenberg encountered the changing story line afresh, responding in the present, despite the span of hundreds of years. He structured time as a factor in another way, too, by largely limiting himself to culling images from magazines on the stands at that moment, so that Dante's narrative sequence was given counterpoint in the shifting register of current events—the present of each canto was matched with a contemporary moment in time. All of the drawings were made on paper of the same stock, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch Strathmore, which was a bit larger than a book page but similarly intimate in the way it was to be read. The scale of the components of the drawings were to be tied to the author's words, treated in proportion to the role they play in the text: "The space allowed for each image was a

measure made by the space occupied by the author's words, literally," he later explained to Krauss. "I was the reporter." In Canto XXXI, for example, the poets encounter the Giants, who appear to Dante as towers in the dark before he realizes that they are actually men of extraordinary size, whose grotesque features are then inventoried and measured in the text at length. Accordingly, in Rauschenberg's drawing for the canto, Olympic wrestlers on the medal stand fill more than half the page, more space than any other transferred image. Each of these constraints—of comprehensiveness, time, scale, proportionality—allowed Dante's text to structure the way that Rauschenberg worked, to make demands on his production. He held on to the relationship between text and image in the first presentation of the drawings, at Castelli's gallery in December 1960, hanging short typescript narrative summaries by Michael Sonnabend under each work. Sonnabend later recalled that Rauschenberg had approached Ciardi to ask if he might write something "so that people would know the story when they looked at the pictures," but Ciardi declared that he hated the young artist's work, and Sonnabend volunteered instead. "

Rauschenberg was severely dyslexic and did not read much. As he described in a conversation with Maxime de la Falaise McKendry, "When I'm writing, I know what I'm writing; when I'm reading, I can't see it because it goes from all sides of the page at once." One can see the Dante drawings—whose images spin within an inchoate space—as literalizing the artist's experience of reading. Yet he did read the *Inferno*, Michael Sonnabend later emphasized, recounting, with a twinkle in his voice, that "he was going to be erudite like the rest of us." Sonnabend was frequently present as the artist worked on the series. They discussed the text at length and worked on compositional schemas. And it seems that Sonnabend often read the cantos aloud to Rauschenberg. Later, when Sonnabend began creating the summaries of the cantos, he saw the task as "giving the meaning where [Rauschenberg] introduced these things," writing "every day, 34 days, one a day. That's the way we did it." One can imagine that Sonnabend's role as interlocutor, reader, and collaborator put the process back into a conversational mode more comfortable for Rauschenberg. The relationship provided Rauschenberg with a living avatar of Dante, allowing the artist to collaborate with the poet across time. Dore Ashton similarly recalled that when she was writing an essay introduction to the deluxe printed edition of the drawings published by Harry N. Abrams in 1964, she and Rauschenberg

read the poem together, speaking about Dante's ineffable pride, his sly witticisms, his digs at his artistic rivals, his occasional pique and silliness... his political shrewdness, his lyrical abandon, his extraordinary feeling for the particular, his forthright language, and above all his great artistic consistencies.³⁹

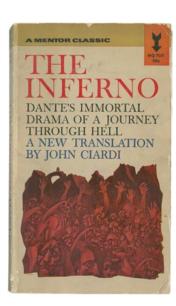
The images of Sonnabend declaiming Dante's verses, and of Rauschenberg and Ashton reading together, are in keeping with the way Dante's contemporaries would have heard the *Inferno*. In his time, as in Virgil's before him, poems were read aloud in public more than in solitude. The production of

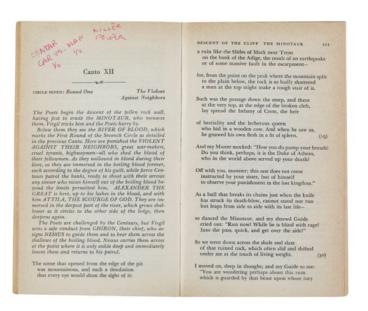
manuscripts was expensive, and only with the development of a modern print culture did silent reading become the norm. ⁴⁰ Poetry was thus an acoustic art. Dante himself was a vivid public speaker and reader, noted for his ability to entertain and his talent as a mimic. ⁴¹ He highlighted the aural quality of his text in choosing to write not in the Latin of the educated classes but in the vernacular dialect of Tuscany—language as it was spoken. He deployed a roster of effects that evoke the sounds of contemporary life, shifts in dialect and speaking style, all evincing a keen awareness of the relationship between author and listening public. And, of course, much of the *Inferno* is framed as a running conversation between Dante and Virgil, his guide and companion through the underworld, whose *Aeneid* was both source and model for Dante's own narrative journey. In accompanying Dante, Virgil provides a constant source of dialogue, beckoning, guiding, instructing, cajoling and, at times, admonishing the younger poet, and becoming, as the story progresses, a beloved companion.

Rauschenberg later described the relationship between the medieval poet and the contemporary artist, himself, as one of equals in dialogue: "Dante was sought and completed to have the adventure of what, and if, I could apply my abstract sensibility to a classical restrictive assignment," he wrote to Krauss. "A one-on-one handling and no embarrassment to either. Illustration with compulsive respect."42 In this striking image, Rauschenberg resurrects the long-dead poet, holding him in the present—he is "sought," demands respect, is capable of embarrassment. The intimacy with Dante that Rauschenberg cultivated may help explain the degree of visceral frustration, even anger, he sometimes felt toward the poet. He described how "the natural interruptions of living in New York, plus my impatience with the morality in Dante, which I didn't agree with, forced me into isolation."43 Rauschenberg's response to reading Cantos XIV and XV, in which Dante and Virgil encounter the Sodomites in Hell, among whom Virgil discovers his old and beloved teacher Brunetto Latini, was particularly fierce, taking on a sense of personal affront, of disappointment with a friend: "His morality I had to treat objectively the self-righteousness, the self-appointed conscience imposing guilt on old friends. He was the author, the hero, and the man who made the world described. He ran into his teacher, and couldn't imagine what he was doing in hell: It might not have bothered Dante, but it bothered me."44 In the drawing that Rauschenberg ultimately made for Canto XIV, he alluded to the punishment in Hell for Sodomites, who must wander eternally on burning sands, by outlining his own foot on the sheet of paper, its scale dominating the page and its indexical self-reference manifest.

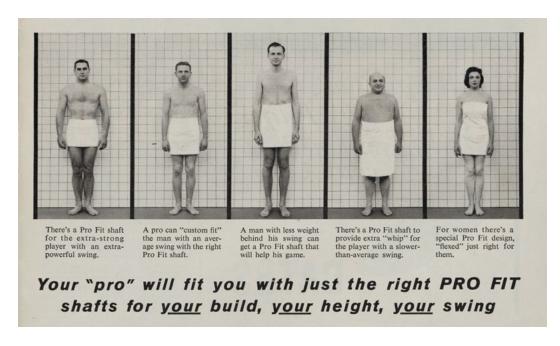
Perhaps it was the way that Dante wove together classical and Christian symbolism, contemporary politics and events, and meditations on the public sphere and inner life that allowed Rauschenberg to recognize him as a kindred spirit, if an infuriating one at times—to see in his writing an uncanny precedent for the leveling of symbolic orders high and low, learned and vernacular, that drove so much of the artist's own work. "A pair of socks," Rauschenberg had declared in speaking of his Combines, "is no less suitable to make a painting with than wood, nails, turpentine, oil and fabric." Rauschenberg's

choices of contemporary analogues for images and figures present in Dante's text were deeply considered, creating layers of allusion in the relationship between the two. Marginal notes sometimes appear in the artist's dog-eared paperback copy of the Ciardi translation, now in the archives of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation (figs. 6, 7); for instance, the first page of Canto XII, in which the Centaurs attack the poets, is marked with the words "Centar" and "car [1/2] vs. man [1/2]," a substitution of a modern conveyance for an ancient one that ultimately appeared in the corresponding drawing as a fleet of race cars circling the sinners they guard. The image Rauschenberg most frequently used for Dante, which appears for the first time in Canto II, was that of a middle-aged man with a towel draped around his waist, taken from an advertisement in Sports Illustrated for golf clubs that could fit players of all sizes (fig. 8). In the original ad, several figures wearing towels are lined up against a ruled background. Rauschenberg later said that it had appealed to him because it was "the most neutral popular image I could find on that scale."46 He confessed that he panicked when the ad stopped running in the magazine until he found back issues via a wholesaler in New Jersey.⁴⁷ When Dante and Virgil are shown together, the travelers often assume a range of contemporary guises for men on the move—a duo of ski racers, runners, scuba divers, motorcyclists, and astronauts. Sometimes the pair's journey is marked only by a double trail of footprints, shoe prints, or legs. Wit is frequent: Virgil's role as superego to the younger Dante is evoked by positioning Virgil as umpire to Dante's baseball player (Canto XXIX) and as an astronaut exhorting Dante's towel-draped everyman from space (Canto XX). George Washington, of Delaware River fame, stands in for Charon of Greek mythology, who ferries the poets across the river Acheron at the border of Hell (Canto III).48





6, 7. Cover and interior spread of Rauschenberg's copy of Dante's Inferno. The Inferno: Dante's Immortal Drama of a Journey through Hell, trans. John Ciardi (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954).
Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York



8. Detail from "True Temper Pro Fit" advertisement in Sports Illustrated, May 19, 1958, pp. 8-9

Rauschenberg's work on the later cantos, which he saw as "build[ing] up in intensity" with the increasing violence and chaos witnessed by Dante and Virgil as they descend into the lower circles of Hell, coincided with the increasingly fraught presidential election contest between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon in 1960; allusions to contemporary events grow more pointed in the later drawings.⁴⁹ In Canto XII, Dante and Virgil visit the seventh circle of Hell and encounter those who are "violent against their neighbors, great war-makers, cruel tyrants, highwaymen—those who shed the blood of their fellowmen." Rauschenberg reveals his own sympathies, presenting Dante as Kennedy and Virgil as the respected elder Democratic leader Adlai Stevenson, "the positive image of a politician" in Rauschenberg's telling, while banishing Nixon to the river of boiling blood below. "If you feel strongly, it's going to show.... The one thing that has been consistent about my work is that there is an attempt to use the very last minute in my life and the particular location as the source of energy and inspiration," he commented, all the while rejecting the idea of making more overtly exhortative artwork such as Pablo Picasso's famous *Guernica*. ⁵²

"Only the key images are to be read explicitly," Dore Ashton pointed out.⁵³ They appear against fields of overlaid washes that conjure forces of movement, foregrounding the nature of an epic as a journey through time and space. Transferred images occur in different orientations, flopped in reverse, sometimes right side up, sometimes upside down, seeming to spin and turn within an aqueous space. Rauschenberg often created ruled divisions on the page that suggest temporal sequence in the style

of comic books, photo-stories, Renaissance predellas, or, as Ashton put it, "film strips sliding downward." ⁵⁴ Sometimes the artist added elements that suggest motion—arrows, dotted lines, a bird in flight. The paper supports appear as perceptive screens, registering the rich panoply of smells, sounds, and sensations evoked in Dante's verses. Noise, for example, is rendered as staccato strokes of graphite (Cantos III and VI), the poets' entrance into a green meadow as a vision with a frame, washed in green (Canto IV), a putrid odor as a seeping ochre wash (Canto XVI). ⁵⁵ The result, Rauschenberg wrote in his failed Guggenheim application, "seems to indicate a large and complex 'view' or 'scene,' containing implications of activity and changes of movement from the literal to figurative, from the general to the specific." ⁵⁶

In his own writing, Ciardi insisted that translation was the "wrong word" when applied to poetry; the idea of "transposition" was more apt. "When the violin repeats what the piano has just played," he explained, "it cannot make the same sounds, it cannot form identical notes, and it can only approximate the same chords. It can, however, produce recognizably the same air, the same 'music.' ... It is the music one must go for, not the notes." Rauschenberg went for the music.

He conceived the translation from poetry to drawing as a dialogue between two voices; the pains with which "Dante was sought" attest to that. As Rauschenberg later stressed in his notes to Krauss, the act of sustained engagement was also one of self-construction: "Attempting Dante was a private exercise in my growth and self-exploration to face my weaknesses. A test. By doing it I had equal opportunity to alienate or to ally." In this recounting, one senses that with the Dante project Rauschenberg was pushing back against his own insecurities around his upbringing, his age, his difficulty reading, his abstract sensibility, his acceptance by the art world, and his sexuality. The finished drawings have been rightfully read as giving veiled commentary on gay love. Yet they also address companionate affection, the frictious ties of rivals, the bond between ruler and subject, and the lingering tethers between the dead and the living. As a whole, the series offers a broad meditation on myriad forces of power—those of desire, politics, and culture included—and the way that they become manifest in an individual's life. It is telling that for this artist who understood artwork as an encounter "with something already in existence," the test was structured via a chain of collaborations and dialogues stretching over time: in the encounters between himself and Dante, between Dante and Virgil long before that, and with Ciardi, Sonnabend, and Ashton, each a testament to the defining forces one being can exert on another—each encounter an "opportunity to alienate or ally."

Notes

- 1. Rauschenberg, in Rosalind Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," 1997, in Branden W. Joseph, ed., Robert Rauschenberg, October Files 4 (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002), p. 103. In an unpublished and undated interview with Calvin Tomkins conducted in preparation for Tomkins's book Off the Wall: A Portrait of Robert Rauschenberg (New York: Picador, 1980), Rauschenberg says, similarly, "I wanted to make more drawings." Calvin Tomkins Papers, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
- 2. Rauschenberg, in Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," p. 103.
- 3. Rauschenberg, in Dorothy Gees Seckler, "The Artist Speaks: Robert Rauschenberg," Art in America 54, no. 3 (May–June 1966): 84.
- 4. Rauschenberg, in Dorothy Gees Seckler, "Oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg," December 21, 1965, n.p. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Available online at www.aaa. si.edu/collections/interviews/oralhistory-interview-robert-rauschenberg-12870 (accessed July 2016).
- 5. Rauschenberg suggests this in conversation with Tomkins. Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 6. Rauschenberg, in ibid.
- 7. Rauschenberg, in ibid. It remains unclear which of the thirty-four drawings were done in New York, and which in Florida. In this quotation, Rauschenberg suggests that "the last half" were made in Florida. In another passage in this interview, he implies that he was still in New York when he took up the Sodomites passages of Cantos XIV and XV: "Once I started in on Dante, I found the natural interruptions of living in New York, plus my impatience with the morality in Dante, which I didn't agree with, forced me into isolation.... He ran into his teacher, and couldn't imagine what he was doing in

- hell. It might not have bothered Dante, but it bothered me.... Anyway I had to get out of New York."
- 8. Stuart Preston, "Cards of Identity: Dante Revisited," *New York Times*, December 11, 1960.
- 9. See Dore Ashton, *Thirty-Four Drawings for Dante's Inferno* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1964), p. 3; Roberta Smith, "Art: Drawings by Robert Rauschenberg, 1958–68," *New York Times*, October 31, 1986; and Roni Feinstein, "Random Order: The First Fifteen Years of Robert Rauschenberg's Art, 1949–1964," PhD diss., New York University, 1990, p. 351.
- 10. Branden Joseph, "Split Screens," in Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-Avant-Garde (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2003), p. 177.
- 11. Rauschenberg, in Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 12. Ibid. Tomkins notes, "In Cuba, he hit on the rubbing technique, doing it first dry, using comic strips from newspapers and magazines. Later he found it was easier to wet the paper first with turpentine. Recently he has refined the process even further, using lighter fluid and an empty ballpoint pen."
- 13. Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," p. 95.
- 14. Hal Foster develops a theory of Pop art in *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014).
- 15. Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," p. 97.
- 16. Rauschenberg, in ibid.
- 17. Rauschenberg notes this in several interviews, including in Barbara Rose, *An Interview with Robert Rauschenberg* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), p. 100, and in

- his unpublished interview with Tomkins. Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 18. Rauschenberg, Oral History Program, interview with Joachim Pissarro, April 20, 2006, p. 6. The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 19. This description appears on Rauschenberg's *Autobiography* (1968), a lithographic print in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art.
- 20. Tomkins, Off the Wall, p. 133.
- 21. Annie Cohen-Solal, Leo and His Circle: The Life of Leo Castelli, trans. Mark Polizzotti with the author (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), p. 152.
- 22. Nina Sundell, in Cohen-Solal, *Leo and His Circle*, p. 152.
- 23. Edward M. Cifelli, *John Ciardi: A Biography* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), pp. 192–93.
- 24. Dudley Fitts, "Translated into American," *New York Times*, July 4, 1954.
- 25. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy 1: Hell*, trans. Dorothy L. Sayers (London: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 100.
- 26. Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy: The Inferno, The Purgatorio, and The Paradiso, trans. John Ciardi (New York: New American Library, 2003), p. 49.
- 27. Rauschenberg, in Rose, *An Interview with Robert Rauschenberg*, p. 100.
- 28. Ciardi, footnote in Dante, The Divine Comedy: The Inferno, The Purgatorio, and The Paradiso, p. 52.
- 29. Clive James, introduction to *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, trans. James (London: Picador, 2013), p. xxi.

- 30. Rauschenberg, in Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 31. Rauschenberg, in Seckler, "The Artist Speaks," p. 84.
- 32. Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives. Rauschenberg is quoted as saying, "The concept of an artist isolating his or her favorite event can pull a particular passage into popular distortion."
- 33. Rauschenberg, in Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," p. 103. Rauschenberg put it another way to Tomkins: "If the most important thing on the page took only three words, I would make it a proportionate size." Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 34. Michael Sonnabend, in an unpublished interview with Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, 1991. Made available to the author by Martin.
- 35. Rauschenberg, in Graham Smith, "'Visibile Parlare': Rauschenberg's Drawings for Dante's *Inferno,*" *Word and Image* 32, no. 1 (January–March 2016): 84.
- 36. Sonnabend, interview with Klüver and Martin, 1991.
- 37. Julie Martin's recollection, as recounted by Robert Whitman in an interview with Alessandra Nicifero, Robert Rauschenberg Oral History Project (November 20, 2014), Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York, p. 36. Available online at http://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/artist/oral-history/robert-whitman (accessed February 2017); Joan Young and Susan Davidson, "Chronology," in Walter Hopps and Susan Davidson, eds., Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997), p. 556.
- 38. Sonnabend, interview with Klüver and Martin, 1991.

- 39. Ashton, "The Collaboration Wheel: A Comment on Robert Rauschenberg's Comment on Dante," Arts and Architecture 80, no. 2 (December 1963): 37.
- 40. William Harris, "The Sin of Silent Reading," n.d. Available online at community.middlebury.edu/~harris/ LatinBackground/SilentReading.html (accessed January 2017). Roman villas had reading rooms so that the master of the house might read without disturbing the rest of the family. See also Barbara Reynolds, introduction to Dante: The Poet, the Political Thinker, the Man (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), pp. xii—xiii.
- 41. Reynolds, introduction to Dante, p. xii.
- 42. Rauschenberg, in Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," p. 102.
- 43. Rauschenberg, in Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 44. Ibid. Martin Gayford also recalls
 Rauschenberg's distress at Dante's moralizing: "He singled out the episode in
 Canto XV when the poet encounters his old teacher Brunetto Latini among the sodomites, condemned to jog eternally across the burning sands of Hell. 'Siete voi qui, ser Brunetto?' Dante exclaims in surprise. Or, as Rauschenberg freely paraphrased, 'What a surprise seeing you here! I'm so sorry.' But he immediately protested, 'Dante wrote the fucking thing!'" Gayford, "The World in His Hands," Art Quarterly, Winter 2016, 16.
- 45. Rauschenberg, statement in Dorothy C. Miller, Sixteen Americans, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1959), p. 58.
- 46. Rauschenberg, in Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 47. Ibid.
- 48. Smith, "'Visibile Parlare," p. 79.

- 49. See Ed Krêma, "To Use the Very Last Minute in My Life: The Dante Drawings and the Classical Past," in Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume, Robert Rauschenberg, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2016), pp. 162–69.
- 50. Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Ciardi, p. 96.
- 51. Rauschenberg, in Tomkins, IV.C.19, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.
- 52. Rauschenberg, in Seckler, "The Artist Speaks," p. 84.
- 53. Ashton, Thirty-Four Drawings for Dante's Inferno, p. 4.
- 54. Ibid.
- 55. Ibid.
- 56. Rauschenberg, application to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 1958. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives, New York.
- 57. Ciardi, in Cifelli, *John Ciardi*, p. 189.
- 58. Rauschenberg, in Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," p. 103.
- 59. See Laura Auricchio, "Lifting the Veil: Rauschenberg's *Thirty-Four Drawings* for *Dante's Inferno* and the Commercial Homoerotic Imagery of 1950s America," in Thomas Foster, Carol Siegel, and Ellen E. Berry, eds., *The Gay '90s: Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Formations in Queer Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 119–54.
- 60. Rauschenberg, in Seckler, "The Artist Speaks," p. 84.

23

Harrowing a short history of Hell

Kevin Young

A goat with a tire around its belly. A dirty bed on a wall. A man falling through space. A dead president. An abandoned, stuffed bald eagle. In a certain light, Robert Rauschenberg's famed Combine paintings and artworks delineate the stuff of Hell. A canvas completely, almost completely, red.

In my high school in Kansas, we had a class called Humanities. It was great, one of those holdovers from the 1970s in which we studied not a specific area of art but all arts, team-taught of course in a large room that felt like a rehearsal space, with moveable chairs but no desks. The teachers too were holdovers, severe and inspiring in turn. I remember less in terms of specific artworks we looked at than the general ethos of adventure and connection, with two exceptions: Leonard Bernstein's Mass for John F. Kennedy (who centers one of Rauschenberg's key works) and the opening of the Kennedy Center; and Dante's Inferno in the John Ciardi translation, the very one that Rauschenberg encountered while he was making his drawings. Later, while we were in class, the space shuttle Challenger exploded while other classes at school were watching live—we weren't—and the music teacher of the team burst into the room, announcing the Dantean tragedy. It took time for it all to sink in.

Upon first reading the Inferno, I immediately took to its epic much the same. achievement built on a kind of revenge fantasy. Dante makes high art of our low impulses: vengeance, fate, sorrow, swooning, shame, deeply pained pity, feigned sympathy. It can feel a lot like dering of the famed opening stanza of the *Inferno*: high school.

Hell, a working definition: n., a place one does not wish to be yet remains far longer than one can stand or imagine.

Rereading Dante delivers different pleasures and pains. That first time at Topeka West, the poem felt quite present—for among its sorrow is also a kind of cosmic rationale, a reasoning the politics of the *Inferno* that seem awfully relevant; it is a deeply political poem. One friend says that Dante is often petty, and

placing in deepest Hell those who betrayed Dante or his causes. It seems instructive: Hell is personal.

Hell, a short history: Dante. Bosch. Milton. Blake. Rimbaud. In the West, where it most exists as an idea, Hell only accelerates across the twentieth century: The Waste Land; Pound's Hell Cantos, taking place during the Great War, then the Hell of Pisan Cantos after the Second World War, which pictures paradise, always unfinished. H.D.'s Trilogy. Sartre. Ginsberg's Howl. Baraka's System of Dante's Hell. Robert Pinsky's grand translation. Seamus Heaney's translation of the first canto. Robert Johnson's "Me and the Devil Blues" as covered by the late Gil Scott-Heron:

The Harrowing of Hell means the opposite of how it may sound: it is the apocryphal, Apostles' Creed account of Jesus' descent to Hell and saving those infants and innocents found in Limbo. Such a descent to the underworld to rescue someone has been with us at least since the Greeks; Dante's brilliance throughout the Inferno especially is to incorporate the whole of Western mythology, Greek and especially Roman myth. The poem is awfully pagan, which is to say, it feels modern and ancient at once.

Rauschenberg's drawings for Dante's Inferno manage

Heaney's translation seems to me the most perfect English ren-

In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself astray in a dark wood

where the straight road had been lost sight of.

Saying "our life" instead of mine; the passive voice of the last lines and the slant rhyme: it is hard to resolve the problems, the passions, of Dante, much less the prosody. Heaney, my onetime that Dante the naïf can only glimpse at times. These days it is teacher, is teaching us all here. I once asked him a few years after I studied with him about the translations and did he ever consider doing all of the Inferno? We were then, at that moment, at the this is true—this is another way of saying the poem is partisan, bottom of a drained swimming pool, watching my roommate perform an adaptation of Heaney's translated Sweeney Astray, the old Irish poem. We had climbed down the pool's ladder to sit and watch his beloved words said by my beloved friend. Descent means rising on the other side.

Heaney answered that he wasn't prepared to give over a decade to it, at least—and I saw then that the crossroads that Dante and Heaney described to me were real. We must pick, though often "the straight road had been lost sight of."

I thought a lot about "the middle" after that. My poetic work was just beginning, yet I had already written most of what would become my first book, in a fever it felt—by instinct and discipline—and it was suddenly being published. What was next? I turned inward—going from poems about my parents' and grandparents' Louisiana, and an often imagined state, to poems about growing up in the middle of the country. I hoped I could write that elusive thing, a personal epic, mostly built on memory. I thought of the poems as making up a trilogy—since Dante, I've always loved superstructures—made explicit as "circles" even.

But lyrics are hard, epics even harder, and a lyric epic almost impossible. Luckily I didn't publish it in that form, though certain poems have poked their heads up into other works. Instead, I wrote a lyric epic that wasn't dependent on memory, about the late painter Jean-Michel Basquiat, who painted his own thorny halos and crooked crowns.

Our failures, Hell teaches us, are instructive too.

I learned just last week that Heaney's translation of book six of Virgil's Aeneid will soon appear posthumously, giving Heaney's cast to Dante's guide. His powerful translation of Dante's third canto, "The Crossing," already concludes Seeing Things with an account of Charon the ferryman in honor of his late father. Having lost my father, and now Heaney, I must say that sometimes, capturing even one moment of the afterlife or the underworld may be enough.

The orality of Dante's poem we mostly lose in English. The terza rima or perpetual rhyme scheme he uses is near impossible in our tongue. That's why I think the best approximation of the sound of Dante, its vernacular, repetitive, interlocking rhyme, may be the blues. The blues also believe that the Devil is no abstraction. You say, the dark wood; I say, I went down to the crossroads and There's a Hellhound on my trail.

Can Rauschenberg be said to exhibit, not the blues, but the reds? That, and yellow, crawl through the greys of his Dante drawings:

a blood-red footprint; a giant spider; Satan's left eye. The Inferno's final canto, and Rauschenberg's accompanying drawing, drew me into a different direction than I might—my temptation was not to end, as Dante does, with stars, but with a cleansing rain. But yes, stars; and moreover, I had to get that Devil's eye in there, its disturbing triple heads like Cerberus, who Virgil keeps at bay with a mere word. The hounds of Hell; A Hellhound on My Trail: the way Hell hounds us.

There is another African American folk tradition in which the Devil is not a threat but a trickster. Zora Neale Hurston writes powerfully of this in Mules and Men—Lucifer rather than Satan, devilish rather than demonic. Again, we witness the European overidentification of blackness with evil being reclaimed by black people themselves. Dante, his visage a symbolic scowl, mostly avoids this.

Hell, too, is often painted by the black artist or folk preacher as here and now, whether Rastafarian Babylon or Hurston's West Hell. Both are just next door, and coming ever closer.

Scott-Heron's "Me and the Devil Blues" was released on his final album, I'm New Here, his first studio recording in well over a decade. A year later he was dead. That is, unless you believe, as he sounds on the recording, he was already gone—his voice is haunting, and haunted, not so much posthumous as pre-posthumous—taken from us by things worse than death. If you've got to pay for things you've done wrong, I've got a big bill coming, he says in one of the many interview interludes included as interstitial tracks. That is Hell's lesson, and Rauschenberg's revelation, found in another of Scott-Heron's last songs: No matter how far wrong you've gone, you can always turn around. It's never too late.

The repetition of threes, both in the blues and in Dante, finds its way into the poems you find here by me and Robin Coste Lewis. I am tempted to say they do this in opposite ways: in my sequence The Dark Wood, with its tercets and repetition of "the dead"; for Robin, in her section, Dante Comes to America: 20 January 2017, An Erasure of 17 Cantos from Ciardi's "Inferno" After Robert Rauschenberg, in which she repeats by eliminating what's there. Robin's erasure also brings to mind one of Rauschenberg's early triumphs, namely, his Erased de Kooning Drawing.

I note that neither of us included guides like Dante's Virgil—instead, it's only The Dark Road pointing us toward the needle's eye. Yet both of our approaches are ways of removing yet reinforcing the word and the world: in short, charting Hell. Here it is, coming up on your left: Step lively.

Canto I. The Dark Wood

In my living room, the skull of the coyote

discusses with me our pending appointment with bone—the canine teeth

of time. The middle of my life. His grin is not found

in the smaller antlers of the antelope once found by my father

that also flowers from the wall. Down in the square, trees

bare as bones, their crown of leaves shorn. The hounds of the constables hollering

the lure of light & gas in lanterns. Guns. My feet deep in the mud

of what is called Wood or Gardens the government built just for us. Your mama's

leopard clutch rustling with peppermints. A one-eyed cat.

A wolf in silhouette that whistle. The coyote in the quiet.

The hour of our hunger is his, only longer. $\kappa.y.$



CANTO I: THE DARK WOOD OF ERROR. 1958
Solvent transfer drawing, pencil, gouache, and colored pencil on paper, 14½ x 11½ in. (36.8 x 29.2 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously

Thank you for downloading this preview of Robert Rauschenberg: Thirty-Four Illustrations for Dante's "Inferno".

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