

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Daniel E. Christian*

Gilman School, Baltimore, Maryland

The chance to read Dante is my one life's most cherished, unexpected grace, and that gift continues to challenge me to "count my lucky stars" (*le stelle*) each and every day. Many "fellow pilgrims" have supported me on this wonder-filled journey into the "Big Light." They have been more than just guardian angels; they have been an entire Heavenly Host.

Thank you:

Elizabeth Craven Young for her professional transcription and excellent eye for detail. Her care made this a successful enterprise.

The editorial board of *Lingua Romana* for their decision to open the journal to Outreach Humanities and for considering Dante as the author to begin their effort in the first issue of Public Humanities.

The pastors (David Ware, Cristina Paglinauan, Caroline Stewart) and the parishioners at the Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore, for the special invitation to speak on Dante and for their genuinely warm and inclusive welcome.

Ilona Klein for her potent editorial magic on this publication project and, also, for showing, back in 1987, how immense Dante's story truly is once readers start to really look. The project is finished. "Nostra vita."

Dave Neun for taking loving care of my head and heart for over forty years and Eileen Yoffe who has taken such good care of Dave.

Paula Neun for bequeathing "book energy" to the whole family.

Kristin Neun and Lee Clarke for including me every year as family. Also, thanks to Tia and Cadia Clarke for discussing whether or not Dante is "a" poet or "the" poet. "The Poet" it is.

David and Inbal Neun for their steadfast support. Eliana and Sophia for their enthusiastic and genuine love of learning for learning's sake.

Anna Ballon for her earned wisdom and for showing me what true loyalty means.

Cindy Mobley and Bud Wachter for their devotion. Ryan Wachter for still reading books.

Sherm Bristow, Jerry Downs and Reddy Finney from Gilman School for risking everything to allow me to be an English teacher. They opened "Dorothy's Door" so I could transition from black and white to color.

Bruce Daniels (Brother “D”) for teaching me, in the quirkiest, yet wonderfully unpretentious manner, that words matter.

Father Anthony Farrell for being my college teacher/advisor and eventually for taking me on as his “son.” Most importantly, he stayed, for the long haul, in my corner 10,000%.

Mike and Mary Kiss for being such devoted and supportive friends for forty-three years. Whenever I have needed to be reminded of what the “real deal” is, I have thought of them.

Christopher Kleinhenz for demonstrating that high school Dante teachers and Dante professors are not intellectual competitors. He *always* has been enthusiastically available by phone when I have had even the most rudimentary Dante questions. Never, not once, has he made me feel like I was an annoyance because I taught high school and not college. He has treated me, just as Virgil treats Statius, insisting that I stand up straight and talk eye-to-eye!

William Stephany for conducting the NEH seminar on Dante in 1990 at the University of Vermont that simply changed my life. Also, he invented the phrase “celestial cross-pollination” which has taught me to look for connections everywhere.

Milton Burke for being my Dante lifeline for years. Our talks have opened my eyes every single time.

Sam Keen, although he probably never knew it, for being my “master and my author.”

Linda Anne Sefick for her dependable “Dante ear.”

Dante Society of America and the Robert Durling family for creating the prize honoring Professor Durling. I am grateful and touched that they saw meaningful brightness in my efforts with our Dante class at Gilman and awarded me this prize.

All the Dante students (“fellow pilgrims”) from the past thirty-six years. They consistently put their lives on the line while travelling Dante’s “long and winding road.” Because we took this trip *together* every year, Paradise continues to grow bigger and brighter. Their genuine energy has created a new category of Humanities study: “*Quantum* Dante Studies.”

My Gilman colleagues and friends: Timmy Holley, Tony Jordan, Anna Follensbee, Carl Ahlgren, Carmen Sambuco, Mike Kelly, Bill and Kelly Gildea, Will Bartz, Matt Baum, Carol Schuch, Lori Bristow, Sterling Thomas, Nick Pitruzzella, Jack Thompson, Pat Franz, Dallas Jacobs, Than’l Badder, Owen Daly, Rob Heubeck, Henry Smyth, Cesare Ciccanti, Jeff Gouline, Tim Wilkins, Yani Rosenberg, Nelson Oster, Tim Lauer, Frank Fitzgibbon, John Couture, Burke Rodgers, Arch Montgomery, Alex Vishio, Ken McNish, Clark Wight, Mercer Neale, Louise Miller, Nicole Mitchell, Angela Johnson, Brooks Matthews, Marrie Diehl, Alex Beitner, Elizabeth Stafford, Mee Wong, Becky Levy, the Lord family, Dave Allan, Carly Rizzuto, Julia Cardwell and Patrick Hastings. Whenever I have pointed out that “Dante is Everywhere,” they have smiled indulgently but sincerely and have said, “Yes, he is!” It gets no better than these people.

The Harry Chapin Foundation (Leslie Ramme, Peggy Strella and Sandy Chapin) for making sure I always had the needed materials to “pass the music on.” Chapin music has been a source of supplemental oxygen for me since 1972, and they have kept the tanks full.

The music makers who continue to feed Dante pilgrims: Pam Cardullo, Robert Ortiz, John Denver, Sean McGee, Doris Justis, David Roth, Anne Hills, David Wilcox, Harry Chapin, Jen Chapin, Tom Chapin, Yvonne Cable, Mike Kobluk, Mack Bailey.

Dante for writing this story. The *Comedy* lives.