LAPSED BEATRICE

“...eyes so divine that my
own force of sight was overcome, took flight,
and, eyes downcast, I almost lost my senses”

- Paradiso, Canto IV

Who sings herself an exile in the light.
And in singing, shapes of the dark a palace

Where song is King. I’ll give
My body, my knowledge to her —

I’ll give it all away. But the glossed
Ceiling of what still seems

5th Avenue eyes me. Her blues
Blare from the only tower

In the mind’s star drenched sub-Hell
That nightly cries unmake me. If I am

The beloved, how then
Do I sing back? A blue sign

Flashes from the slick. Familiar letters
Arranged into a language

I don’t quite know. In my hand
The screen says turn left.
DE PROFUNDIS

...he first, I following — until I saw,
through a round opening, some of those things
of beauty Heaven bears.

- Inferno, Canto XXXIV

He pointed toward what never was
Heaven. Just the surface

Of a tunnel within a tunnel
Within a tunnel I could not see.

I thought he would never stop pointing.
But he did. Or I stopped looking. Just once

A wren I thought to be a shade
Flew through me. Then my absence here

Is final I said aloud. I pointed at me. He
was pointing too, as if to say Heaven is just

This thought. Don't get me wrong – I understood.
But struck by such boredom, I shuffled back

Into the pixeled field and saw
That contested light of the poet’s

Paradise become what I now knew
Heaven must be: Just a God

Alone, strumming the mood
Of a green guitar. How soon the mind

Gives — only Heaven knows
There’s no such thing as Heaven.
WESTWARD

“Spurred by World War I, the U.S. Army commissions Columbia faculty to create a course for the Student Army Training Corps. About the course Dean Hawkes said: "Its significance rested on the fundamental principle that in the long run man's accomplishment can rise no higher than his ideals, and that an understanding of the worth of the cause for which one is fighting is a powerful weapon in the hands of an intelligent man."

- History of the Core Curriculum, “War Issues”

Dead thinker, I texted you. Do text me back
If you want. I looked you up on Facebook too

But got distracted by a pic of West. I admit I peeped
West’s profile. If you’ll tell me, my guide, I

Wanna know: Is West the kind to delete every pic
That doesn’t jive with what West now thinks

West is? I’m just sayin…a few memories from
A few years are missing. Well, a thousand years

Of Metaphysics in Baghdad and Spanish minarets.
Tell me: Can light escape the eye to see itself?

That’s just West I guess. Just West
Styled for war in the stellate image of his Maker.