In the beginning of Canto XXXI, Beatrice confronts Dante and calls for his confession on the charges she leveled against him in the previous canto: after her death, he gave himself to another and chose a wrong path, pursuing false joys and pleasures. Her death should have encouraged him to seek love and satisfaction in that which does not change and die. Being led across the Lethe by Matilda, Dante repents and washes away his sins. In *Vita nuova*, Dante traces the story of the lover's development. The sacred, transformative experience of his love for Beatrice allows them to ascend into the Empyrean (*Paradise*).
imaginazione, che me convenia fare tutti li suoi piaceri compiutamente.

(8) Elli mi comandava molte volte che io cercasse per vedere questa angiola giovanissima; onde io ne la mia puerizia molte volte l'andai cercando, e vedea la di sì nobili e laudabili portamenti, che certo di lei si potea dire quella parola del poeta Omero: «Ella non parea figliuola d'uomo mortale, ma di deo».

(9) E avvegna che la sua imagine, la quale continuatamente meco stava, fosse baldanza d'Amore a segnoreggiare me, tuttavia era di sì nobilissima vertù, che nulla volta sofferse che Amore mi reggesse sanza lo fedele consiglio de la ragione in quelle cose là ove cotale consiglio fosse utile a udire.

(10) E però che sopra stare a le passioni e atti di tanta gioventudine para alcuno parlare fabuloso, mi partirò da esse; e trapassando molte cose le quali si potrebbero trarre de l'esempio onde nascono queste, verrò a quelle parole le quali sono scritte ne la mia memoria sotto maggiori paragrafi.

Translation

Chapter II, New Life

(1) Nine times already since my birth the heaven of light had circled back to almost the same point, when there appeared before my eyes the now glorious lady of my mind, who was called Beatrice even by those who did not know what her name was.

(2) She had been in this life long enough for the heaven of the fixed stars to be able to move a twelfth of a degree to the East in her time; that is, she appeared to me at about the beginning of her ninth year, and I first saw her near the end of my ninth year.

(3) She appeared dressed in the most patrician of colors, a subdued and decorous crimson, her robe bound round and adorned in a style suitable to her years.

(4) At that very moment, and I speak the truth, the vital spirit, the one that dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart, began to tremble so violently that even the most minute veins of my body were strangely affected; and trembling, it spoke these words: Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur michi.

(5) At that point the animal spirit, the one abiding in the high chamber to which all the senses bring their perceptions, was stricken with amazement and, speaking directly to the spirits of sight, said these words: Apparuit iam beatitudo vestra.
(6) At that point the natural spirit, the one dwelling in that part where our food is digested, began to weep, and weeping said these words: Heu miser, quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps!

(7) Let me say that, from that time on, Love governed my soul, which became immediately devoted to him, and he reigned over me with such assurance and lordship, given him by the power of my imagination, that I could only dedicate myself to fulfilling his every pleasure.

(8) Often he commanded me to go and look for this youngest of angels; so, during those early years I often went in search of her, and I found her to be of such natural dignity and worthy of such admiration that the words of the poet Homer suited her perfectly: “She seemed to be the daughter not of a mortal, but of a god.”

(9) And though her image, which remained constantly with me, was Love’s assurance of holding me, it was of such a pure quality that it never allowed me to be ruled by Love without the faithful counsel of reason, in all those things where such advice might be profitable.

(10) Since to dwell on my passions and actions when I was so young might seem like recounting fantasies, I shall put them aside and, omitting many things that could be copied from the text which is the source of my present words, I shall turn to those written in my memory under more important headings.