

## Via Error

### 48 Variations of Dante Variations (variations of bergvall (of dante))

by majena mafe

*Error lay at the source of all change, all species experiment. It was the author of all the still emerging undesignable variations on life... The ability of traits to persist in stillness. Evolution is the exception, stability the rule...yet faulty copying (of generic information) is the only agency for change...Species laugh off the most rigorous hierarchy... The aim is to widen the target, to embrace more than was possible before.*

*- misquoted Richard Powers, The Gold Bug Variations  
by using the word generic in stead of genetic.*

*... who works at his (her) own word in all of our sentences might trick from even the ruts of once ritual the buts and mistakes that token the actual. The poet as maker frees the thing from the prophets.*

*- Robert Duncan, footnote to "Letters for Denise Levertov; An A Muse Ment"*

*- quoted from Kathleen Fraser's essay Faulty Copying from Translating the Unspeakable, Poetry and the Innovative Necessity.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1.along the jouney ofour life half way<br>I found myself along the jouney in a darwood where the path no longer lay | I faltered<br>the path   |
| 2.at the midpoit of my life Ifound myself o a jouney the strait path therein lay vanished                           | 5.halfway along our journey I had woken in wonder at the point no longer half the way astray |
| 3alfwayway over the way of our life missed the struggle way   | 6halway through thi treckoflife I found myself halfway and half to go                        |
| 4.halfway along the forest obscured by the lost way   | 7halfay through our treck in life I found myself halway                                      |

in a dark wood and I didn't know  
where to go

8 halfway upon the journey  
I found myself in a gloomy wood  
reasoning the path direct as lost

9 halfway along the journey of my  
life  
I roused to find myself in darkness

and I faltered because the way was  
really lost

10 in the middle of our journey  
I found myself in a darkened wood  
and I reasoned the right road was  
lost for good

11. In our life's journey at its  
midway stage  
I found myself wooded obscurely  
to the right path that obscured me

12 In our life's journey at the midway  
stage  
I found myself on the path where  
the path was obscure  
where the right path, guiding, was lost

13 in the middle of our life  
I the path  
of our journey  
I found myself lost  
in the middle of the road

14, in the middle of my life as a  
journey I came upon my life as a  
midway point  
in a darkest wood for the strait road  
was more lost

15 IN the middle of my life as a  
journey I came across myself  
within a dark wood where the strait  
road was lost

16 in the middle of my life as a  
journey

I came across myself astray in a  
darkened wood  
where the strait road was lost out  
of sight

17 IN the middle of my life as a  
journey I found myself in dark  
wood: for the strait was lost

18 in the middle of a mortal life  
I wandered into a dark forest of  
darksome wood  
where the true road could no  
longer  
be seen.

19 in the midtime of my life  
I found myself in a dark wood lost

20 in the midway of this mortal life  
I reawoke inside myself  
A darker wood off the course lost...

21 just half way I woke to find  
myself inside a dark wood of the  
course off the right road.

22 midway along the path of the  
road high in our days  
I found myself within a shaky  
wood where the strait path tangled  
and lost

23 Midway along the journey of  
my life  
I woke to find myself in some dark  
woods  
For I had wandered from the  
path..

23 midway along the path of our  
lives  
I woke to find myself in some  
woods  
For I had wandered of the strait  
path.

24. Midway along the span of our  
natural life's road  
I woke in the dark

25 Midway in the journey  
I went astray  
From the strait road the way and  
woke up to me self  
Alone

26 midway in the journey in our  
kife I found meself

In a dark wood for the strat road  
was lost.

27 MIDWAY LIFES Journey I was  
aware  
That I had served the dark  
And right up to the forest the path  
stopped and appeared not  
nowhere...

28..midway Midway on lifes  
journey I found myself  
In a dark wood the right road lost

29.. Midway on the journey of our  
life I found myself within  
A darksome wood, for the right  
way was lost and lost so bloody  
losrt.

30Mway the path of life that men  
persue  
Found me in a darkwoosd astratty  
The way has been lost

31. Midwaythis way of lifewe are  
bound upon,  
I woke to find myself in a dark  
woodb  
Where theright road was lost and  
stolen

33. MIDWAY uupon the joyuney of  
my days  
I found myself in a wood so dreer  
The dirext path owhee met my  
gaze

34 Midway upon the journey of my  
life  
I found myself in a deep forest dark

fOr the path direct hAD Failed to  
keep

3535. Midway upon the journey of  
yomy life  
Our life, I found myself in a dark  
forest the right road lost

356 MidWAY Upon the  
journey ogf my life

357I found myself in a forest  
dark

358 Forthestrat rioad has  
been lost

37. Midway upon the journey of our  
life  
I fond myself in a dark forewood  
Soo dark the right road could not  
be found.

38 MIDWAY upon the hjourney of  
our life I woke to find myself astray  
in a dark wood Confused by the  
strait ways if my life

39. MIDWAY upon the pathway of  
life of life  
I found myself within a darksome  
wood  
Wherein in the proper road was  
lost to view.

40.. MIDWAY upon the road of our  
life  
I found myself within a wood  
missed

41.. on the travelling way of ones  
life half  
I gfound myself in a darkforest  
when...  
I lost the path the path was narrow  
and too strat

42Upon ther midway piint of the  
journey  
I found myself ij a dark wood  
Where the strit darkling wood  
Where .. I had gone astray

43 UPON the JOURNEY of our life  
halvesd  
I found myself gloomy  
For I had missed the proper path

44 Upon the journey of life midway  
I car upon myself in a dark wood  
Far from the the self strat the path  
astray

45. Upon the journey miwayI found  
myself in a dark wood

46...When halfway through the  
journeyi found myself in a gloomy  
wood  
Lost lost lost

47 When I had journeyed half our  
lifeaway  
I found myself shadowed ing  
thefores  
For I had the path lost in the  
shadowed forest  
For I had lostthe path that does  
not stray.

Caroline Bergvall's arrangement of  
Dante's *The Divine Comedy*-Pt. 1  
Inferno-Canto's 1-(1-3) as translated by  
1 Dale 1996, 2 Creagh and Hollander

1989, 3 Musgrove 1893, 4 Sisson 1980,  
5 Zappulla 1998, 6 Heaney 1993, 7 Ellis  
1994, 8 Pollock 1854, 9 Johnson 1915,  
10 Sibbald 1884, 11 Rosetti 1865, 12  
Johnston 1867, 13 Schwerner 2000, 14  
Durling 1996, 15 Sinclair 1939, 16  
Heaney 1993, 17 John A. Carlyle 1844,  
18 Chaplin 1913, 19 Shaw 1913, 20 Cary  
1805, 21 Phillips 1983, 22 Wheeler 1911,  
23 Musa 1971, 24 Forster 1961, 25  
Ciadri 1996, 26 Singleton 1970, 27  
Binyon 1933, 28 Pinsky 1994, 29  
Sullivan 1893, 30 Anderson 1921, 31  
Sayer 1949, 32 Bodey 1938, 33  
Broksbank 1854, 34 Wilstach 1888, 35  
Vincent 1904, 36 Longfellow 1867, 37  
MacKenzie 1979, 38 Bickersteth 1955,  
39 Edwarden 1915, 40 Norton 1891, 41  
Arndt 1994, 42 Minchin 1885, 43 Pike  
1881, 44 Fletcher 1931, 45 Cayley 1851,  
46 Langdon 1918, 47 Mandelbaum  
1980. Transcribed without asking or  
checking by Majena Mafe 2008, after  
reading each passage once, typing it  
down out along the path with one finger  
by the light of the dark without looking  
ahead...whilst sitting halfway in a dark-  
tree'd place halfway along. Repeaten the  
repeat repeatedly.



## References

Bergval, Caroline, *Fig* (Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2005)

Dante, *The Divine Comedy* pt. 1 Inferno-Canto 1-(1-3)

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita  
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura  
che la diritta via era smarrita

Fraser, Kathleen, *Translating the Unspeakable: Poetry and the Innovative Necessity* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2000)

Images of the 'dark forest' by majena mafe