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Canto Illustration Rationale

I illustrated Canto XXIII, which shows the punishment of the hypocrites. I found this canto intriguing because of its strong imagery with the golden robes, contrast between the pretended piety and the actual selves of the sinners, and strong overarching theme of weight and guilt.

I primarily wanted to convey the contrast between the apparent religiousness of these sinners and their actual nature, as conveyed by the punishment's contrast between the robes' shining exterior and their true weight. To achieve this, I balanced imagery with religious connotations, such as the shining golden exterior of the robes and the stained glass style of the image, with images with more hellish implications, such as the dark and bloody underside of the robes and the flames in the background. The darker, more secretive underside of the cape represents the sins these people committed. I used images like blood, snakes, and a quill to show crimes like murder, theft, or forgery that could have been committed under the guise of religiousness. Many of these also align with other sins and punishments in the *Inferno*, such as snakes for those of the thieves, as many sinners would have committed similar crimes to their neighbors, just in a different context. To further this, I also incorporated a golden mask on the figure's face to show deceit, as the portion of hell which contains the hypocrites is the area dedicated to the fraudulent. This also furthers the imagery of gold hiding the figure. Finally, I placed the number of the canto on the figure's shoulders to imply the burden of both their lies in

life and their literal punishment. I placed small versions of Virgil and Dante on top of the numeral to represent how they are unburdened by either guilt or the punishment in this area of Hell.